

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Spring 2018

Dalton Hall 100C

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30 – 4 pm and by appointment

POWER AND RESISTANCE: Domination, Oppression, and the Arts of Resistance

COURSE NARRATIVE

This course investigates questions of power and politics in the context of domination, oppression, and the arts of resistance. Together we will study not just the meanings of power but also who has power and who gets to resist in concrete terms. Over the course of the semester, you will develop a theoretical vocabulary with which to analyze power in different social and political contexts; you will, moreover, learn these concepts through their use, analyzing how they function within theories of power and how different theorists and actors understand and actualize power. All of this work will culminate in your taking the theoretical insights you develop to deeper research into an area of power analysis of your choosing, allowing you to integrate the analytical work you have done over the course of the semester and connecting this with the function and significance of power in your own life today.

PROMISES AND PRACTICES

I am committed to fostering a learning community marked by imagination, creativity, honesty, openness, earnest inquiry and playful speculation. Through the structures of reading, writing, revision, and discussion that this course offers, I also seek to help you develop certain habits of mind that I consider essential to the liberal arts: to learn to listen and to speak, to read and to write, and to think with creativity and focus. I also hope that we can collaborate and learn from one another as we bring this community of learning into being, making space for silence as well as voice, for dissent as well as agreement, for personal transformation as well as political deliberation.

Given the subject matter of this course, many of our discussions in class will involve sensitive issues. You may find some of this material upsetting. Again, my hope is that together we can foster an environment of respect and openness conducive to everyone's full and honest participation. Whatever success or pleasure the course might occasion depends in large part on what all of us bring and contribute.

To develop the habits of mind described above as well as to bring the aspirations listed into being, this course will consist in a number of activities:

Energetic and involved discussion. We will learn political theory by speaking political theory. To learn the difficult concepts and arguments, you need to practice putting them into your own words, explaining them to others, and listening to others' explanations. Excellent discussion requires preparation: review of previous class discussions, taking notes in advance of class meetings, and being present and alert as much as possible during every class meeting. Through our discussions you will develop the essential speaking and listening skills necessary for developing and using the theories and applications of the theories we study.

Disciplined and careful reading. This is a reading intensive course. Reading will take the form of texts listed on this syllabus as well as independent reading in the course of your research for your research essay. This course seeks to develop you as thoughtful, patient, imaginative, and critical readers capable of identifying multiple possible readings, examining assumptions, and ready to interpret different kinds of arguments.

Frequent and varied writing. This course begins from the premise that reading and writing are deeply intertwined; because writing cements understanding, this course asks that you write in response to all of the assigned readings. This writing will come in the form of weekly responses to prompts on Moodle, responses to peers' writing, essays, and creative engagement with course material.

I have created this course with the hopes of helping all of you develop as effective speakers and listeners, intelligent readers and writers, and critical thinkers. Yet I acknowledge that without your distinctive contributions the course would amount to very little. I welcome your suggestions and criticisms and I hope that we can make this course together into something worthwhile for each and every one of us.

ACTIVITIES & EVALUATION

Because this course seeks to develop you as a speaker and a listener, a writer and a reader, and a critical thinker, we will focus our work in several areas.

1. *Contributions to class and online discussions*

Consistent and rigorous preparation for class activities as well as quality and appropriate contributions to class discussions are the most essential part for full realizing the promises of this course. Enrolling in this course signifies your agreement to contribute to the education of your fellow students and to learn from them and your professor in turn. Contributing during class sessions provides an opportunity to practice speaking and the skills of persuasion, as well to listen to, critique, and develop the arguments and analyses of your peers. (Please see my [Contribution Rubric](#) for more specific suggestions and criteria. Your contributions will count for 20% of your final grade.)

Power, according to Arendt, comes from "action in concert." Our course will seek to build power among all of its members by organizing itself into what I will call (with a nod to Arendt): Concerts. Your Concert will consist of 4 members. You will read one another's Moodle posts and share work with one another during the semester.

Before every class meeting, a member of your Concert will post on the Moodle discussion forum in response to the readings for that class period. These posts should run between 200 – 400 words and answer the following questions for the reading:

1. What are the main conclusions of the work?
2. How is this work relevant to the theories of power we have been discussing?
3. Are the author's conclusions valuable and valid? Does their work rest on any biases or assumptions?

When answering these questions please also include specific reference to the readings (with references to page numbers). I will read each of your posts prior to class and then adjust the course according to your interests, questions, and connections.

Non-posting Concert members should read and comment on this post prior to each class meeting. These postings will form the basis of our discussions and also help you to build a portfolio of notes on the major

topics of power and resistance.

2. *Critical Literature Review*

The major writing project of this course will consist of a constructive assessment of recent work on power in which you explain and evaluate an area of the literature using the work on power we read and we have discussed.

You may choose a general area indicated on the syllabus and use the work(s) listed there as a node from which to map your literature review. These areas and thinkers are as follows:

1. Violence, Power, and the State – Fanon and Arendt
2. Exploitation and Economic Power – Gaventia and Freire
3. Discursive Power – Foucault
4. Domination and Resistance – James C. Scott
5. Resistance and Democratic Power – Alinsky and Dyrness

In the opening weeks of the course, I suggest you take a little time to look at these readings and select an area of interest. Then you will begin to conduct your researches in two directions: (1) backwards, by looking at the sources that these thinkers cite and discuss; and (2) forwards, by examining how these sources have been used subsequently.

Usually critical literature reviews are designed to explain the primary questions and arguments of the field, assessing its findings and pointing to new areas of inquiry. The target audience here is not just specialists but a broader audience of anyone interested in the general issue area; you should write so that an intelligent layperson could understand you. Your review should be **no more than 15 pages** (12-pt font, 1 inch margins). While reviews can vary on format, I would like you to use the following in your own reviews:

I. Introduction: This should be brief and direct. It should very concisely state what you will develop in the work that follows: the context of the area you have chosen in terms of understandings of power more generally; the main questions and arguments within the area you have chosen; and your own assessment of the strength of these questions and arguments as well as future directions this research might take.

II. Context: This section will discuss the context of your area in terms of the theory and practice of democracy more broadly.

III. Analysis of the Arguments: This section will take us carefully, in a step-by-step analysis, through primary questions and arguments in your area of the literature. Here you will try to give a concise yet precise account of what the conversation consists of: who are the important researchers, what are their findings and arguments, who agrees or disagrees with whom, and so forth. You may ignore or only touch on the minor or technical issues; focus on the important ones.

IV. Assessment: In this section you will display the knowledge you have accrued during the course and assess how this area contributes to our broader knowledge of democracy. In other words, in this section you will demonstrate to your audience the depth and intelligence of your training and how this helps us better understand a particular problem in contemporary political theory and practice.

V. Conclusion: Your conclusion should clarify what you wish your reader to take from the review as well as what further questions or issues arise from the work you have done. You need not answer these questions; think of your review as further contributing to the discussion we have

begun in the course and preparing all of us for better, more-informed conversation about political life in the future.

You will write, submit for review, and revise sections of the review for me and others to comment on as indicated on the syllabus. *Your final grade will take into account both work submitted over the course of the semester (20% of your grade for the course) and the final product (60% of your grade for the course).*

TEXTS

As a condition of taking this course, you are required to buy personal copies of the following texts. You cannot be an effective contributor to this course without having copies of the readings annotated in preparation for discussion with you for every class meeting. These books are available for purchase at the bookstore. If you are having trouble acquiring these books, please let me know well in advance of our discussion. (New copies of these six books cost roughly \$88 in total on Amazon, which is well below the BMC recommendation for the cost of textbooks per course. Please support your fellow writers by buying these books.)

- Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970)
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Reprint, 2005).
- Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Writings, 1972 - 1977* (Vintage, 1980)
- John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness* (Illinois, 1982)
- James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Yale, 1992)
- Andrea Dyrness, *Mothers United: An Immigrant Struggle for Socially Just Education* (Minnesota, 2011)

RESOURCES

ACADEMIC SUPPORT: I encourage you to reach out to the Academic Support and Learning Resources Specialist to explore effective learning, studying, test-taking, note-taking and time and stress management strategies that are essential to success in this course and college life. Bryn Mawr students can schedule a meeting with Rachel Heiser, the Academic Support and Learning Resources Specialist by calling the Dean's Office at 610.526.5375 or emailing Rachel at rheiser@brynmawr.edu. For more information, please see this site: http://www.brynmawr.edu/deans/acad_support/learning_resources.shtml

CANADAY LIBRARY: Olivia Castello, the Social Science Librarian, can help with questions about research and technology; you can reach her at ocastello@brynmawr.edu. She is extremely helpful and knowledgeable. Do not hesitate to turn to her!

MOODLE: On our course Moodle site you can find electronic copies of course readings, a copy of the syllabus, and other useful information. Here all of my communications with the entire class will be archived under "NEWS" and course discussions conducted electronically will be archived.

WRITING CENTER: The Writing Center offers free appointments and experienced peer tutors who are there to help you at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center is located on the first floor of Canaday Library. You can get more information at <http://www.brynmawr.edu/writingcenter>

YOUR FELLOW CLASSMATES: Your fellow classmates are your best and most available resource for making sure you get the most out of this course. I encourage you to exchange information and contact one another if logistical questions arise, if you have to miss a class and want to know what happened in

your absence, or if you want to discuss readings or course topics outside of class. We will be creating an intellectual community together over the course of the semester, and you can contribute to this project by building relationships with one another just as you seek to build a relationship with me.

YOUR DEAN: In case of serious illness, family emergency, or any other situation that requires you to miss class and fall behind on coursework, please contact your dean as soon as possible.

YOUR PROFESSOR: In addition to scheduled meetings, you are welcome to meet with me during my office hours (listed above), or at an alternative time if absolutely necessary. I recommend setting up an appointment for a meeting ahead of time to ensure that we have time to talk. The best way to contact me outside of class is via email at jschlosser@brynmawr.edu; please note that I check my email 2 or 3 times a day between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you send me a message during evenings or weekends, I'll respond sometime after 9:00 a.m. on the following weekday.

POLICIES

ACCOMODATIONS: I encourage any students who think they may need accommodations in this course because of the impact of a learning difference to meet with me early in the semester. Students who attend Bryn Mawr should also contact Access Services Coordinator Deborah Alder at dalder@brynmawr.edu or 610-526-7351 as soon as possible, to verify their eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Haverford Students should contact Patty Rawlings at the Office of Disabilities Services, prawling@haverford.edu or 610-896-1290.

ATTENDANCE: *There are no excused absences from class; every class meeting is an important and unique time for learning and exchange.* If you have a good reason to miss class or come late, please tell me and I will propose a way of making up what you have missed. (If you do not have a good reason, you can tell me as well but I'm unlikely to grant you the opportunity to make it up.)

EXTENSIONS: *If you miss a peer revision or workshop session you must still have a peer read and respond to your essay according to the distributed guidelines prior to submitting your final research essay.* Writing projects submitted late will receive partial credit, with each day lowering the grade by 10%. That said, I understand sometimes you may for various reasons need more time revising your essay. If you foresee any conflicts (religious holidays, travel plans, etc.), come see me ASAP to discuss your options. In the event of illness or emergency, please also try to contact me ASAP.

INTEGRITY: I am committed to adhering to the standards regarding academic honesty contained in the Bryn Mawr and Haverford honor codes and the values of mutual trust, concern, and respect for oneself and for others upon which the bi-co community depends; I invite all of you to continue the conversation with me and with one another about how we can create the best intellectual community possible.

LAPTOPS: In order to facilitate open and direct discussion, laptop use should be kept to a minimum; if you are not typing your notes, your laptop should be closed or moved to the side so that it does not obstruct your view of other students. I consider inappropriate laptop use during class a violation of the Honor Code and will refer you accordingly.

PHONES: Please keep phones out of sight during class time. If you absolutely must use your phone, please step outside of class. Genuine emergencies excepted, if you are texting or using your phone during class I will count you as absent from the class.

SCHEDULE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>To be prepared before class:</u>
T, 1/23	Introduction: What is Power?	“Power” in <i>New Keywords</i> (on Moodle)
Th, 1/25	Violence, Power, and the State	Frantz Fanon, <i>Wretched of the Earth</i> , “Concerning Violence,” pp. 1 – 12, 15 – 28, 31 – 36, 38 - 52
T, 1/30		Hannah Arendt, <i>On Violence</i> , pp. 35 - 56
Th, 2/1	Guest Participant: Ali Aslam, Mount Holyoke College	Judith Butler, “Bodies in Alliance” (on Moodle) Ali Aslam, “Organizing the Public in Tahrir Square” (on Moodle)
T, 2/5		Frantz Fanon, <i>Wretched of the Earth</i> , “Grandeur and Weakness of Spontaneity”
Th, 2/8	Investigating Power: Library session on creating an annotated bibliography	Read Annotated Bibliography Assignment & Create an Annotated Bibliography Entry for Juliet Hooker, “Black Lives Matter and the Paradoxes of U.S. Black Politics” Optional: Engeldinger, “Bibliographic Instruction and Critical Thinking” NOTE: Meet in Dalton 20
T, 2/13	Exploitation and Economic Power	John Gaventa, <i>The Power of the Powerless</i> , pp. 3 – 25, 33 – 46
Th, 2/15		John Gaventa, <i>The Power of the Powerless</i> , pp. 47 – 83
T, 2/20	Discursive Power and Foucault	Foucault, <i>Power/Knowledge</i> , “Two Lectures”
Th, 2/22		Foucault, <i>Power/Knowledge</i> , “Truth and Power”

T, 2/27 **No Class: 360 Trip to DC**

Th, 3/1 **Research Check-in: Annotated Bibliography** NOTE: Meeting in Canaday 315

Bring at least five entries from your own research and be ready to share these. Choose your two best with which to work during our class meeting.

T, 3/6 **No class: Work on Annotated Bibliographies**

Th, 3/8 Wrap up

TBD

Annotated Bibliography with at least ten good sources due by 8 pm on Friday, March 9

Spring Break: March 9 - 16

Take a break!

T, 3/20 **Community Day of Learning**

Please write a brief reflection and post it on Moodle about your experience of the Community Day of Learning and how/if you thought about it in terms of power.

Th, 3/22 **Resisting Domination, Creating Power**

Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, pp. 1 - 69

T, 3/27

Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, pp. 70 - 136

Th, 3/29

Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, pp. 136 - 227

T, 4/3	Resistance and “Conscientization”	Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> (on Moodle)
Th, 4/5		Gaventa, <i>Power of the Powerless</i> , pp. 205 – 226
T, 4/10		Gaventa, <i>Power of the Powerless</i> , pp. 226 – 271
Th, 4/12	Critical Literature Review Check-in	No class: Bring complete outline to meeting with your Concert as instructed
*F, 4/13	360 Symposium	All students must attend afternoon sessions from 2 – 5 pm in the Ely Room at Wyndham Revised outline due on Moodle by 8 pm on Sunday, April 15
T, 4/17	Resistance and Democratic Power	Alinsky, <i>Rules for Radicals</i> (on Moodle)
Th, 4/19		Dyrness, <i>Mothers United</i> , pp. 1 - 78
T, 4/24		Dyrness, <i>Mothers United</i> , pp. 109 - 159
Th, 4/26		Dyrness, <i>Mothers United</i> , pp. 161 - 222
T, 5/1	Sharing your research	Bring five-minute talk about your findings to class.
Th, 5/3		Bring five-minute talk about your findings to class. NOTE: Final draft of critical literature review due by end of finals period.