

POLSCI 2MN3 REEL POLITICS Summer 2019

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Lecture: Monday & Wednesday
6:30PM – 9:20PM
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Course Description

This course examines struggle and resistance as depicted in and through film, essays, short stories, and other political literature. The themes explored include collective and individual resistance/struggle in the face of genocide, totalitarian/authoritarian government and socio-cultural practices, war and invasion, and racism and other forms of socio-cultural oppression. The films viewed in class will help us understand the range of violent and non-violent reactions the ensnared individuals and groups tend to display.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Understand how the mainstream media (the film industry in particular) shapes our understanding of struggle and resistance
- Expand our vocabulary and understanding of social criticism and critical theory approaches to politics
- Become more informed about the various past and present conflicts and struggles from Europe, Africa, North and South America, and Asia.

Required Materials and Texts

- There are no required texts. All films will be viewed in class and all required reading materials will be available through A2L.

Class Format

Classroom discussions and film viewings

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. First film review - 20%, due on Thursday, July 11
2. Second film review - 20%, due on Thursday, August 1
3. Four reading responses - 4 x 5% = 20%, due in-class between classes 3 and 11
4. Take-home test – 20%, due on Thursday, August 8
5. Class attendance – 10%
6. Online discussion boards – 10%

Course Evaluation – Details

Film review 1 (20%), due via A2L on July 11 (23:59)

800-1000 words-long film review. Instructions will be posted on A2L.

Film review 2 (20%), due via A2L on August 1 (23:59)

800-1000 words-long film review. Instructions available through A2L.

Reading Responses (20% (4 x 5 % each)), due in class between classes 3 and 11.

- (1) Each one of these participation papers should be roughly 350-words-long
- (2) These participation papers should discuss one of the readings from the assigned readings for the week/class of submission.
- (3) Your response papers should be discussing the critical points of the reading of your choice. That is, I am not looking for a general overview/summary of that reading. I would like you to briefly reflect on the critical discussion that takes place in that piece. Feel free to suggest further questions for reflection, make connections to films we are watching/have watched in class or to speculate on how a particular problem raised by the reading could be solved/tackled.
- (4) You can hand in only one paper per class. Unlike other course assignments, you cannot submit these papers online.
- (5) You can use any citation style. Please make sure you clearly identify the article/book chapter you are responding to.

Take-Home Test (20%), due via A2L on August 8 (23:59)

A cumulative test that contains multiple-choice, short-answer, and longer-answer questions on the assigned readings and films. The test will be posted one week before the due date.

Class Attendance (10%)

Students who miss more than four classes will lose at least 50% of their attendance mark. Students who miss six or more classes will receive 0 as an attendance mark.

Online Discussion Boards (10% (2 x 5 %)), Dates & Topics TBA

I will moderate two online discussion boards on A2L. For each of these discussion boards, you will have to write one original post and respond to one of your peer's posts. Both of these responses should engage with the course material. In total, you will need to submit at least four responses – two original posts (one per discussion module) and two peer response posts (one per discussion module).

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (June 24 & 26)

1. June 24 – Introduction

Readings: No required readings

2. June 26 – Holocaust

Film: *Pianist*

Readings: Selections from Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*

Week 2 (July 3)

1. July 3 – Rwanda Genocide

Film: *Hotel Rwanda*

Readings: Philip Gourevitch, “The Life After” & “After the Genocide.”

Week 3 (July 8 & 10)

1. July 8 – The Civil Rights Movement

Film: *Malcolm X*

Readings: Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience”; MLK, “The Letter from Birmingham Jail” & Excerpts from Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*.

2. July 10 – The War in Vietnam

Film: *Apocalypse Now*

Readings: Excerpts from Michael Walzer, *Arguing about War*

Week 4 (July 15 & 17)

1. July 15 – Irish Resistance

Film: *Bloody Sunday*

Readings: Excerpts from Michael Walzer, *Arguing about War*

2. July 17 – Life in a dictatorship I

Film: *Z (Greece)*

Readings: Selections from Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*.

Week 5 (July 22 & 24)

1. July 22 – Life in a dictatorship II

Film: *The Official Story* (Argentina)

Readings: Selections from Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Clandestine in Chile*.

2. July 24 – Life in a dictatorship III

Film: *The Lives of Others* (East Germany)

Readings: Vaclav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless” & Adam Michnik, “The Letter from Gdansk Prison.”

Week 6 (July 29 & 31)

1. July 29 – Struggles in post-communist societies

Film: *Leviathan* (Russia)

Readings: Masha Gessen, “To Be, or Not to Be” & Selections from “The Man Without a Face.”

2. July 31 - Struggles in post-communist societies II

Film: *Winter on Fire: Ukraine’s Fight for Freedom*

Readings: Timothy Garton Ash & Timothy Snyder, “The Orange Revolution” & Joshua Yaffa, “Reforming Ukraine after the Revolutions.”

Week 7 (August 07)

1. August 07 – Individual, Community, and Culture

Film – *Moolaade*

Readings: Susan Okin, “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?”

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

The movie reviews and the take-home exam are due in PDF format via the Avenue To Learn digital drop-box folders. The response papers should be submitted in hard copies in class.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

All late work will be subject to a late penalty of 2% per calendar day. The instructor will not accept any late response papers or discussion board posts.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Extensions may be granted only when a student is unable to submit written work due to reasons entirely beyond the student's control. To arrange for an alternative assignment deadline, the student must contact the instructor in writing before the assignment due date. Please note that these requests will not be considered if the student fails to provide adequate documentation (e.g., medical certificates). This late assignment penalty policy will be strictly enforced. Finally, please note that under no circumstances will any course component be re-weighted. All original assignment weights will remain in effect.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be

deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). For more information please refer to the [Turnitin.com Policy](#).

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.