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**POLS 450: THE POLITICS OF MEMORY**

This seminar attempts to explore the many ways in which we construct, appropriate and negotiate collective memory in our politics. We will read a number of texts in modern and contemporary political theory that will allow us to explore the relationship between how we construct memory, both individually and collectively, and its impact on politics in terms of its representation and use.  Texts will include Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Untimely Meditations* and Wendy Brown’s *Politics Out of History*, which asks how political theory can proceed as we become more aware of a complex temporal relationship between the past, present and future. This extensive engagement with the political theory of memory will then allow us to examine the role it plays in political life. If the past remains present through our construction of memory, how do injured societies, ethnic groups and other collectives, come to terms with their grievance for the sake of a better political future?  How does the construction of memory inscribe us in relationships of power that we seemingly cannot escape? We will examine the issue of collective memory in the area of International Human Rights, paying particular attention to issues of ethnic cleansing and genocide and the advantages and disadvantages of solutions to the problem of memory such as war crimes trials, truth commissions and indemnity legislation. The main objective of this seminar is to connect the theoretical and empirical understanding of politics through a deep and sustained engagement with the concepts of time and memory.

**COURSE RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES**

As a senior seminar, this course will require close reading of and critical engagement with influential philosophical texts. This course will require you to engage in a mode of productive thinking that recognizes how our understanding of memory, and the concept of time that structures, it shapes and influence thought and action in myriad ways.

The course is designed to help you:

* develop a broad philosophical understanding of the foundational theoretical concepts of time and memory and their political consequences
* Improve your ability to speak clearly about complex theoretical concepts
* Learn to write an independent research paper in political theory

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

As a senior seminar, this course will require close reading of and critical engagement with influential philosophical texts. This course will require you to engage in a mode of productive thinking that recognizes how our understanding of memory, and the concept of time that structures, it shapes and influence thought and action in myriad ways. We will spend most of the semester in intensive reading and discussion of these texts. In the second half of the semester we will begin to focus on writing the proposals, outlines and drafts that will assist you with completing your final paper. Along the way, there will be extensive peer reviews and individual meetings with me to help you in that task. In the second half of the semester, we will switch to individual weekly writing conference meetings and will not regularly meet as a class. This is not to be considered “time off” but rather, time to focus on and deepen your research. During those weeks, you will be required to report to me on the progress you have made on your paper that week. As mentioned, you will be meeting with me individually with me during that period to discuss your progress and talk through any challenges in depth.

As a senior seminar, this course will require active participation by all students. You are expected to come to class, ready to discuss and analyze the texts. For each class meeting, you will be required to write a one page formal response to the assigned text and pose a question for discussion. Each student will also be required to make a twenty minute presentations that sets forth the key points of the assigned text and pose questions for discussion. This formal presentation is designed to aid the student in reading the text closely, to follow its twists and turns, and to be comfortable raising questions and issues that they feel need further illumination. Each oral presentation must be accompanied by a 5-7 page written essay on the text in question. The presentation should therefore advance a clear argument, point to key aspects of the text and raise provocative questions that emerge from the examination of the text for the class.

The second half of the seminar will be structured around enabling students to write an independent research paper on the politics of memory of approximately 20-25 pages. We will engage in peer review, have one-on-one meetings and have several sessions on the methodology of political theory and the framing of the research question. A portion of the grade will come from the “work-shopping” of the final paper—writing proposals, writing outlines and peer review participation.

**OFFICE HOURS AND ACCESSIBILITY**

My office hours are on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. On Tuesday, I am available in my office from 10:30-12:30. I am also available in my office from 11:30-12:30PM on Wednesdays. Feel free to drop by to talk about the class, discuss future interests or simply to continue a conversation! In addition to these regular weekly office hours, I am often available to meet on Fridays as well, but not every week. Send me an email to set up an appointment if you need to meet to on a day when I do not offer office hours. I am also available to meet via Skype (my Skype address is smita.a.rahman) and also available to talk on the phone (773-572-6163) if we cannot meet in person. I strongly prefer to have conversations in person so while I am happy to respond to texts and talk you on the phone or skype, please try to come by office hours first.

I also offer additional office hours before presentations and before the final paper is due and will announce them in advance by email.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Violations of DePauw University’s Academic Integrity Policy will be taken very seriously and punished accordingly. All violations will be reported officially and the student will fail the assignment for which they are charged with the violation.

The complete Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/policies/integrity/>

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Texts for Purchase:

Brown, Wendy, *Politics Out of History*

Minow, Martha, *Breaking the Cycles of Hatred: Memory, Law, and Repair*

# Readings on Electronic Reserve

Agamben, Georgio, *Time and History*

Brown, Wendy, *The Time of the Political*

Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life*

Rahman, Smita, *Negotiating the Politics of Memory*

Taylor, Charles, *Modes of Secularism*

Wolin, Sheldon, *What Time is it?*

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation 20%

Weekly Responses 15%

Presentation and Short Paper 20%

Workshop Assignments 10%

Final Paper 35%

**SCHEDULE OF SEMINAR TOPICS AND READINGS**

* August 28: Introduction and Overview of the Politics of Time and Memory
* September 4: “Our” Time and the Politics of Difference (P)
  + - \*Akbar, Hyder, *Memoir: Interrogation Unbound*, in *The New York Times Magazine.* July 11, 2004.
    - \*Wolin, Sheldon, *What Time is it?* In *Theory and Event*, 1:1. 1997
    - \*Brown, Wendy, *The Time of the Political* In *Theory and Event*, 1:1. 1997
* September11: Time and Memory (P)
  + - \*Agamben, Georgio, *Time and History*
    - \*Taylor, Charles, *Modes of Secularism*
* September 18: The Presence of the Past: Complex Time and Memory (P)
  + - \*Nietzsche,  *On The Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*
    - *\**Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (excerpt)
* September 25: The Problem of Collective Memory (P)
  + - Minow, *Breaking the Cycles of Hatred: Memory, Law, and Repair* ((pp. 1-139, 154-169)
    - Rahman, *The Presence of the Past: Negotiating the Politics of Collective Memory*
    - Senior Seminar Paper Topic Distributed
* October 2: Memory and Human Rights (P)
* Minow, *Breaking the Cycles of Hatred: Memory, Law, and Repair*

(pp. 170- 288)

* Thought Paragraph Due on Senior Seminar Paper
* Library Research Presentation
* October 9: Memory and the Politics of Futurity (P)
  + - Brown, *Politics Out of History*, Chs. 1, 6, 7
    - Article submissions on Applying the Politics of Memory Due
    - Writing Workshop: How to write a Research Proposal
* October 16: Applying the Politics of Memory
  + - Articles selected by students based on Research Interest

**OCTOBER 23—NO CLASS, FALL BREAK**

* October 30 : RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE
  + - Writing Workshop: Developing a Research Outline
* November 6: No Class Meeting— Work on Research Outline
  + - Weekly Progress Report due by Friday, November 8
* November 13: RESEARCH OUTLINES DUE
  + - Individual Meetings scheduled with Instructor on Research Outline
    - Weekly Progress Report due by Friday, November 15
* November 20: WRITING CONFERENCES
  + - Individual Meetings scheduled with Instructor on Paper Drafr
    - Weekly Progress Report due by Friday, November 22
* November 27: No class meeting-- LIBRARY RESEARCH
  + - Compulsory meetings with Reference Librarian
    - Weekly Progress Report due by Monday, December 2
* December 4: In-Class Peer-Review of Paper Draftsfollowed by

Individual Meetings with Instructor

* December 11: In-Class Peer-Review of Paper Drafts followed by

Individual Meetings with Instructor

*Senior Seminar Dinner at 5PM at Almost Home Restaurant on*

*Wednesday, December 11*

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE BY EMAIL ONLY ON**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2013**