

Crisis and Critique
PP3606/PX3609
Brunel University
College of Business, Arts & Social Sciences
Department of Politics and History and the Law School
Academic Year 2015-16

Module lecturer:

Dr Peter D. Thomas
Office: MJ 229
Email: PeterD.Thomas@Brunel.ac.uk

Feedback and Consultation hours: Tuesday
15:45-16:45 and Wednesday 12:45-13:45

Module Aims

The main aim of the module is to provide students with an understanding of some of the major socio-political crises in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and the ways in which they have been understood by political theorists. This will be achieved through a contextual study of the development and transformation of key concepts and theories of crisis and critique in the twentieth and twenty-first century. Central events discussed will include the Russian revolution and its aftermaths, the crisis of the Weimar Republic, Decolonisation, and radical politics after 1968. Key theorists studied will include Weber, Gramsci, Schmitt, Fanon, and Negri. The module focuses upon developing analytical skills in political theory, close reading of key texts, the understanding of theoretical texts in historical context, research design and academic writing.

Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students will acquire an understanding of the historical development of the concepts of crisis and critique in political modernity;
- 2) Students will develop knowledge of selected major socio-political crises in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries;
- 3) Students will develop skills in the comparative analysis of different processes of social, political and cultural crises and their theoretical comprehension;
- 4) Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to read critically primary and secondary sources in the history of political thought;
- 5) Students will develop skills in the design of research projects and academic writing;
- 6) Students will develop critical self-reflection through learning how to make use of constructive feedback.

Teaching Mode

This is a Level 3 module. Contact time consists of a 90 minute session of integrated lecture and critical reading seminar activities per week.

Additional Seminars

The Brunel Social and Political Thought research group organises research seminars throughout the year. All students are welcome and encouraged to attend. More information can be found at <http://www.brunel.ac.uk/sss/politics/research-groups-and-centres/social-and-political-thought>

Assessment

Details are to be found below.

Syllabus

The seminars will be based on selected readings of original texts, indicated on the ‘reading list’ below. A selection of other texts will also be supplied by the lecturer via blackboard. This is an intensive reading seminar. Every student will be expected to have read and made notes on the specified reading. Students will be expected to actively contribute to the discussion. Please note that this is a critical reading seminar. It will be a waste of everyone’s time if you attend the seminar without having read and made notes on the required reading; please do not do so, as you will be asked to leave.

Reading list

- Max Weber, *Weber: Political Writings* (CUP, 1994).
- Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago, 2007).
- Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan* (Telos, 2007).
- Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 3 Volumes (Columbia 1992-2011).
- Antonio Gramsci, *Pre-Prison Writings* (CUP, 1994).
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Penguin, 1990).
- Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard UP, 2000).

Further suggested readings

- H. Arendt, *On Revolution* [1963] (Penguin, 2006).
- G. Balakrishnan, *The Enemy: An Intellectual Portrait of Carl Schmitt* (Verso, 2002).
- E. Bolsinger, *The Autonomy of the Political: Carl Schmitt's and Lenin's Political Realism* (Greenwood, 2001).
- C. N. Coutinho, *Gramsci's Political Thought* (Brill, 2012).
- S. R. Farris, *Max Weber's Theory of Personality: Individuation, Politics and Orientalism in the Sociology of Religion* (Brill, 2013).
- C. Galli, *Genealogia della politica. Carl Schmitt e la crisi del pensiero politico moderno* (il Mulino, 1996/2009).
- N. Gibson, *Living Fanon: Global Perspectives* (Polity, 2011).
- A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (International Publishers, 1971).
- A. Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary* (CUP, 2008).
- G. Liguori, *Gramsci's Pathways* (Brill, 2015).
- M. McNally (ed.), *Antonio Gramsci* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- W. J. Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics, 1890–1920*, (Chicago, 1984).
- J-W. Müller, *A Dangerous Mind: Carl Schmitt in Post-War European Thought* (Yale UP, 2003).
- T. Murphy, *Antonio Negri* (Polity, 2012).
- A. Negri, *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State* (Minnesota UP, 2009).
- J. Radkau, *Max Weber: A Biography* (Polity, 2011).
- J. Rehmman, *Max Weber: Modernisation as Passive Revolution* (Brill, 2015).
- A. Santucci, *Antonio Gramsci* (Monthly Review Press, 2010).
- P. D. Thomas, *The Gramscian Moment* (Brill, 2009).

Week 1 – Crisis and Critique in Twentieth Century Political Thought

Introduction to module. Introductory Lecture

Further Reading:

H. Arendt, *On Revolution* [1963] (Penguin, 2006), chapter 1.

R. Koselleck, 'Crisis', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (2006), pp. 357-400.

Week 2 – Weber: the Tragedy of Politics

Introductory Lecture to the thought of Max Weber in historical context

Background Reading:

David Beetham, *Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics* (Polity Press, 1985).

Peter Breiner, *Max Weber and Democratic Politics* (Cornell UP, 1996).

Andreas Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary* (CUP, 2008), chapters 1-3.

Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics, 1890–1920*, (University of Chicago, 1984)

Joachim Radkau, *Max Weber: A Biography* (Polity, 2011).

Week 3 – Politics as Vocation (I)

Reading:

M. Weber, *The Profession and Vocation of Politics* [*Politik als Beruf*] in Max Weber, *Weber: Political Writings* (CUP, 1994).

Week 4 – Politics as Vocation (II)

Reading:

M. Weber, *The Profession and Vocation of Politics* [*Politik als Beruf*] in Max Weber, *Weber: Political Writings* (CUP, 1994).

Week 5 – Carl Schmitt: Machiavelli in Weimar

Introductory Lecture to the thought of Carl Schmitt in historical context

Background Reading:

G. Balakrishnan, *The Enemy: An Intellectual Portrait of Carl Schmitt* (Verso, 2002).

E. Bolsinger, *The Autonomy of the Political: Carl Schmitt's and Lenin's Political Realism* (Greenwood, 2001).

C. Galli, *Genealogia della politica. Carl Schmitt e la crisis del pensiero politico moderno* (il Mulino, 1996/2009).

J-W. Müller, *A Dangerous Mind: Carl Schmitt in Post-War European Thought* (Yale UP, 2003).

Week 6 – The Concept of the Political (I)

Reading:

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago, 2007).

Week 7 - No class: Effective Learning Week

Week 8 – The Concept of the Political (II)

Reading:

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago, 2007).

Week 9 – The Theory of the Partisan (I)

Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan* (Telos, 2007).

Week 10 – The Theory of the Partisan (II)

Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan* (Telos, 2007).

Week 11 – Gramsci and Revolution in the West

Introductory Lecture to the thought of Antonio Gramsci in historical context

Reading:

‘Chronology’ and ‘Introduction’ in Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, Volume 1, translated by Joseph A. Buttigieg (Columbia UP, 1992).

Frank Rosengarten, ‘An Introduction to Gramsci’s Life and Thought’:

http://www.internationalgramscisociety.org/about_gramsci/biography.html

Chronology of Gramsci’s Life:

http://www.internationalgramscisociety.org/about_gramsci/chronology.html

A. Gramsci, Antonio Gramsci, *Pre-Prison Writings* (CUP, 1994): ‘Socialism and Culture’, ‘The Revolution against Capital’, ‘The Club of Moral Life’ ‘Football and Scopone’, ‘Two Revolutions’, ‘Some Aspects of the Southern Question’.

Background reading:

J. A. Buttigieg, ‘Philology and Politics: Returning to the Text of Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebooks’, *boundary 2*, Vol. 21, No. 2. (Summer, 1994), pp. 98-138.

G. Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary* (New Left Books, 1970).

A. Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2 Volumes, (Columbia UP, 1994).

A. Gramsci, *Pre-Prison Letters* (Lawrence & Wishart, 2014).

L. Del Fra, *Antonio Gramsci: i giorni di carcere* (1977) (available on youtube).

Week 12 – Reading the *Prison Notebooks*

Reading:

Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 3 Volumes (Columbia UP, 1992-2011).
Schedule to be discussed and confirmed in class

Background Reading:

Passive revolution

Richard Bellamy & Darrow Schecter, *Gramsci and the Italian State* (Manchester UP, 1993).
Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci and the State* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1980).
A. Morton, 'The continuum of passive revolution', *Capital & Class* 34:3 (2010), pp. 315-42.
Peter D. Thomas, 'Modernity as "passive revolution": Gramsci and the Fundamental Concepts of Historical Materialism', *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (CHA), New Series, Vol. 17, issue 2 (2006).

Civil Society, Political Society, Integral State

Norberto Bobbio, "Gramsci and the Concept of Civil Society," and Jacques Texier, "Gramsci, Theoretician of the Superstructures: On the Concept of Civil Society," in *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 21-79.
Joseph A. Buttigieg, "Gramsci on Civil Society," *Boundary 2* 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1995), pp. 1-31.
Peter D. Thomas, *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony, and Marxism* (2009), particularly chapter 4.

Hegemony and Hegemonic Apparatus

Stefan Bolinger and Juha Koivisto, 'Hegemonic Apparatus', *Historical Materialism* 17.3, 2009.
Derek Boothman, 'The Sources for Gramsci's Concept of Hegemony', *Rethinking Marxism*, 20:2 (2008), pp. 201-215.
A. Morton, *Unravelling Gramsci: Hegemony and Passive Revolution in the Global Political Economy* (Pluto, 2007).
J. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness and the Revolutionary Process* (Clarendon, 1981).

The Intellectuals and the Modern Prince

Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci and the State* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1980), particularly pp. 153-73, pp. 237-24.
Benedetto Fontana, *Hegemony and Power: On the Relation Between Gramsci and Machiavelli* (University of Minnesota Press, 1993), particularly pp. 99-131.
Anne Showstack Sason, *Gramsci's Politics* (University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
Peter D. Thomas, "Hegemony, Passive Revolution and the Modern Prince", *Thesis 11* 117, 2013, pp. 20-39.

Christmas Break

Week 17 – Reading the *Prison Notebooks*

Reading:

Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 3 Volumes (Columbia UP, 1992-2011).
Schedule to be discussed and confirmed in class

Week 18 – Reading the *Prison Notebooks*

Reading:

Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 3 Volumes (Columbia UP, 1992-2011).
Schedule to be discussed and confirmed in class

Week 19 – Reading the *Prison Notebooks*

Reading:

Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 3 Volumes (Columbia UP, 1992-2011).
Schedule to be discussed and confirmed in class

Week 20 – Reading the *Prison Notebooks*

Reading:

Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 3 Volumes (Columbia UP, 1992-2011).
Schedule to be discussed and confirmed in class

Week 21 - No class: Effective Learning Week

Week 22 – Reading the *Prison Notebooks*

Reading:

Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 3 Volumes (Columbia UP, 1992-2011).
Schedule to be discussed and confirmed in class

Week 23 – The Politics of Decolonisation

Introductory Lecture to the thought of Frantz Fanon in historical context

Reading:

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Penguin, 1990).

Background Reading:

N. Gibson, *Living Fanon: Global Perspectives* (Polity, 2011).

N. Gibson, *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination* (Polity, 2003).
L. R. Gordon, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting and R. T. White (eds), *Fanon: A Critical Reader* (Blackwell, 1996).
D. Macey, *Frantz Fanon: A Biography* (Picador, 2000).

Week 24 – The Wretched of the Earth

Reading:

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Penguin, 1990)

Week 25 – Radical Politics after 1968

Introductory Lecture to the thought of Antonio Negri

Reading:

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard UP, 2000)

Background Reading:

T. Murphy, *Antonio Negri* (Polity, 2012).

A. Negri, *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State* (Minnesota UP, 2009).

Week 26 – Empire (I)

Reading:

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard UP, 2000)

Easter Break

Week 30 – Empire (II)

Reading:

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard UP, 2000)

Week 31 – Conclusion

Return of Essays and overview of course

Assessment

You are required to submit one essay plan (formative assessment) and to submit one final essay (summative assessment). You are reminded that plagiarism, the presentation of another person's work or ideas as your own, is a serious offence and carries serious penalties. To help you avoid this potential pitfall you should consult the rules on plagiarism in the Politics and History Handbook and in the University Senate Ordinances. Please note that a percentage of coursework will be run through 'Turnitin' to detect plagiarism.

Please note: you must submit one copy of your final essay in electronic form via Blackboard. The essay is due at 12 noon on the due date.

Essay Plan (formative assessment)

- See below for guidance on essay questions.
- Essay Plan due date: in class on **Tuesday 12th January 2016**.
- Should be circa 800 words long.
- Should formulate central thesis and indicate provisional essay structure.
- Should include bibliography of at least 15 items.
- Worth 0% of the marks for the module.
- Essay plan will be discussed with module lecturer.

Final Essay (summative assessment)

- This can be chosen from the list of essay questions below, or you can formulate a question of your own choice in consultation with your lecturer. NB. In this case, you **MUST** receive approval from the lecturer before beginning your essay.
- Essay due date: **Monday 14th March 2016**.
- Should be 6000 words long.
- Worth 100% of the marks for the module.
- This essay will be returned with comments.

A note on sources

You are expected to read and use original texts for the essay; this is one of the learning outcomes that will be tested. These should go beyond the texts read for seminars.

The background reading is intended to supplement the reading for the essays. It is not exhaustive, and you are expected to consult a wider range of secondary texts for your essays.

Suggested questions for essay

a) Critically analyse the role of political leadership in the thought of two of the authors studied on the module. What are the most significant similarities and differences of their theories, considered in their historical contexts?

b) What role does the concept of hegemony play in Gramsci's theory of politics? Compare to the political theory of either Weber or Schmitt.

c) To what extent was Jürgen Habermas correct when he argued that Carl Schmitt can be regarded as a 'legitimate pupil' of Max Weber?

d) Who is the subject of politics? Critically discuss in relation to the thought of Weber and Fanon.

e) Is modern politics a 'continual crisis'? Critically discuss in relation to the thought of at least two of the authors studied on the module.

f) Essay question to be formulated in consultation with module lecturer.

Dr Peter D. Thomas
10th September 2015

Academic Skills (ASK), based in the Library, are there to help support you in developing the essential skills for university study, from how to make the most of lectures and communicate effectively to how to think critically, write academically and use statistics. ASK services and sessions are available to all students and cover a range of topics, including:

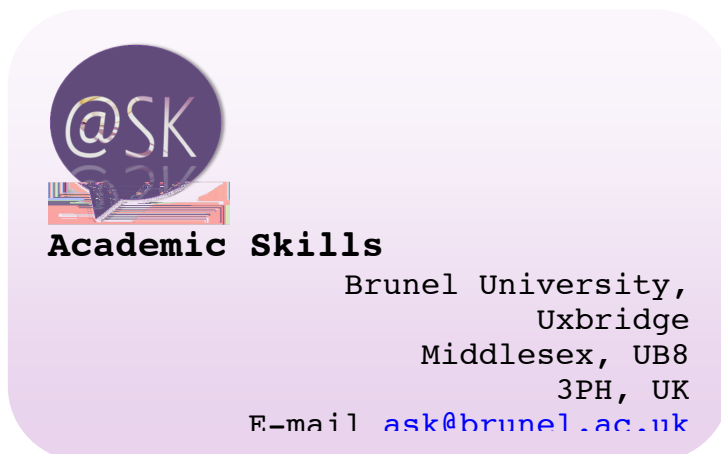
- Academic writing – planning, structuring, clarity and conciseness;
- Active and critical reading;
- Critical and analytical thinking;
- Critiquing and organising your research;
- Improving English grammar, punctuation and style;
- Presentations and projects;
- Statistics and statistical software including SPSS and Excel;
- Time management and organisation.

What can ASK do for you?

Workshops: ASK run a programme of workshops and courses within the Library on a range of academic skills and also organise events such as ASK Week. Information about what's on and timetables can be viewed on the booking calendar: <http://tinyurl.com/askbrunel>

Resources: Browse the study skills book collection in the Library and the ASK u-Link site for useful links, documents and interactive lessons. For more information on getting started for University studies see our Headstart website: <http://www.brunel.ac.uk/headstart>

Individual Advice: Drop-in to the Library:



Royal Literary Fund Fellow

Brunel's Royal Literary Fund Fellow, Anne Wilson, is available to provide students with 1-to-1 practical help with writing. This service is in room HW105 (Heinz Wolff Building) on Mondays and Fridays.

To book an appointment: email Anne.Wilson@brunel.ac.uk.