

POLI 13D: Power and Justice

UCSD Dept. of Political Science

Winter 2021

Syllabus

ALL LECTURES ARE ASYNCHRONOUS. Weekly lectures will be posted on Canvas on Monday mornings. Weekly DISCUSSION SECTIONS ARE SYNCHRONOUS and will not be recorded.

FONNA FORMAN

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Office hours: By appt.

TAs:

BIANCA FREEMAN	bfreeman@ucsd.edu	ZOOM: https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/6787973942
DISCUSSION SECTION	Wednesdays 10am Wednesdays 11am	
OFFICE HOURS	Mondays 10-12	

ANGEL PEREZ	agp005@ucsd.edu	ZOOM: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6595293971?pwd=K0FOUEFKWGRiMnl1ZSt0a3F1RndHdz09 Passcode: 1234
DISCUSSION SECTION	Thursdays 1pm Thursdays 2pm	
OFFICE HOURS	Tuesdays 9am-11am	

JACOB HELLMAN	jhellman@ucsd.edu	ZOOM: https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/6380683501
DISCUSSION SECTION	Fridays 9am Fridays 10am	
OFFICE HOURS	Thursdays 3:30-4:30 Fridays 11-12	

Introduction:

This is an introductory class in political theory. Through an examination of classic texts, case studies, news clippings, editorials, speeches, literature, documentary and film, we will explore two general themes: 1) the ways that individuals and their habits, beliefs and choices are consciously and unconsciously shaped by various modes of *power* embedded in the social and political worlds in which they live; and 2) theories and practices of resistance that have emerged to challenge modes of power deemed *unjust*. We will devote special attention this term to the subject of racial justice in America.

Course materials

All readings are provided or linked on Canvas.

You will need access to four films for independent viewing, through online sources like Amazon, Netflix, YouTube etc. Recommended sites are linked in Canvas.

Ma Vie en Rose (1997)

I am Not Your Negro (2016)

The Wave (1981)

13th (2016)

Requirements

There are no midterms or final exam. This is a writing intensive course.

Participation in weekly online Discussion Threads: (20%)

Four Review Essays / film responses due during weeks 3, 5, 7 and 10 (3-5 pages each, 12pt font, double-spaced): 20% each / 80% total

Significant improvement in written work will be considered when calculating your final grade. There is an Extra Credit opportunity, due Wednesday, March 17. If done well, Extra Credit can bump final grades by 1/3 of a letter grade (so from B to B+; or from B+ to A- etc.)

Discussion Threads: Each week, by Sunday midnight, you are required to submit at least one “entry” and one “response” in ALL of the week’s Discussion Threads. An “entry” is a well thought-out paragraph of your own. A “response” is engagement with another student’s entry. Some weeks have more discussion threads than others. We encourage you not to wait until Sunday night, but to engage the Discussion Threads throughout the week. You are of course invited and encouraged to submit as often as you wish!

We see these threads as a common space for asynchronous class discussion.

Disagreement and debate are always welcome. We see contestation as essential to democracy, and it lies at the very heart of this class on “power and justice”. But insult, name-calling, threats of any kind; racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic commentary, overt or implicit, will not be tolerated. If you find fault with these rules, or believe you cannot abide by them, you should not enroll in this class.

Attendance

Introductory Lecture will be LIVE on Day 1 – January 4 at 9am PST. After this, ALL LECTURES AND CLASS ASSIGNMENTS ARE ASYNCHRONOUS. Every week, lectures will be posted on Canvas on Monday morning at 9am. While not mandatory, we encourage you to attend your weekly discussion section. To preserve intimacy of conversation, trust, and the integrity of the moment, discussion sessions will not be recorded, or made available for asynchronous viewing.

If you can not attend your section, you can drop in to a different section. (see page 1 for times and links). We are 100% ok with this! But please note that the TA in your assigned section will be responsible for your grades. We encourage you to visit office hours!

Work-flow advice

As an asynchronous course, you will need to manage your time and the flow of course materials each week. We encourage you to develop a weekly rhythm, and engage the materials in the order they are presented in the syllabus. Some weeks contain one, or two or three lectures. You should try to **READ** and **VIEW** assigned materials before viewing the associated lecture.

So in general, some guidance:

- 1) Do the assignments first (labeled **READ** and **VIEW**)
- 2) Then - view the associated **CANVAS LECTURE**. Occasionally we will recommend that you view something *after the lecture*, and we will indicate this.
- 3) Attend Section, if possible
- 4) Don't wait until Sunday night to participate in the mandatory **discussion threads!** Especially during weeks when you also have a Film Essay due on a Sunday night!
- 5) Don't wait until the last minute to view the films. Give yourself adequate time to write your essays.
- 6) Do the Extra Credit assignment!
- 7) Be aware of due dates!

Schedule

Key:

CANVAS LECTURES (ASYNCHRONOUS)

READ / VIEW: assignments

Discussion threads

DISCUSSION SECTION

FILM + WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1: POWER: AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE

INTRODUCTION: POWER AND JUSTICE:

Monday, Jan. 4, 9am: ZOOM meeting ID: 916 1187 044 (password: Vaccine!)

(CANVAS LECTURE: INTRODUCTION)

READ: Stanley Milgram, “The Perils of Obedience”

VIEW: Milgram, *Obedience* + Zimbardo, *Stanford Prison Experiment* (documentaries)

CANVAS LECTURE: MILGRAM

Discussion thread:

What does Milgram’s experiment reveal about human behavior? Can you think of real-world examples that validate what Milgram observed?

DISCUSSION SECTION: Introductions + Milgram

WEEK 2: POWER: DISCIPLINE AND ORDER

READ: Michel Foucault, “Panopticism” + Plato, *Republic* 514a-517a

VIEW: Plato, *The Cave* (animation)

CANVAS LECTURE: FOUCAULT-PLATO

Discussion threads:

Foucault wrote that “visibility is a trap”? What does he mean? Can you give some real-world examples of this?

Can you think of real-world examples of Plato’s “cave”? How is your example cave-like?

DISCUSSION SECTION: Foucault, Plato and the “disciplinary society”

WEEK 3: POWER: TYRANNY OF OPINION

READ: John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, chs. 1-3

CANVAS LECTURE: MILL-ON LIBERTY

Discussion threads:

Is Mill's description of extreme social conformity still relevant in the 21st century? How so? Or is it a relic of Victorian England? How so?

To what extent do you agree with Mill's understanding of individual liberty in *On Liberty*? Does custom always undermine a genuinely free life? Must one surrender all cultural traditions and claims upon him/her in order to be genuinely free?

DISCUSSION SECTION: Mill and custom

FILM 1: *Ma Vie en Rose* (1997) **ESSAY Due:** Sunday, January 24

WEEK 4: POWER: TYRANNY OF OPINION - THE CASE OF WOMEN

READ: John Stuart Mill, *On the Subjection of Women*, chs. 1-3

CANVAS LECTURE: MILL-SUBJECTION OF WOMEN

VIEW: Killing us Softly (video clip)

READ: Tamir, Hands Off Clitoridectomy

Discussion threads:

In *Subjection of Women*, Mill asked, "But was there ever any domination which did not appear natural to those who possessed it"? What does this mean? To what extent are Mill's 19th century observations about enduring inequality still relevant in the 21st century? Is the subjection of women a thing of the past?

Tamir finds genital cutting to be a "deplorable practice" and yet she critiques the way the practice is used in political and ethical debates. What is her argument? Do you agree with her? Why or why not?

DISCUSSION SECTION: Killing Us Softly + Tamir

WEEK 5: POWER: TYRANNY OF OPINION - BLACK IN AMERICA

READ: Frederick Douglass, “The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro”

CANVAS LECTURE: DOUGLASS

READ: Angela Davis, “The Meaning of Emancipation According to Black Women”

READ: James Baldwin, “The Fire This Time: A Message to Black Youth” + *Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation*

CANVAS LECTURE: BALDWIN

VIEW: James Baldwin, The Fire This Time (speech)

Discussion threads:

Why for Douglass in the Fourth of July a “sham”? Is it still? Why or why not?

Why did Emancipation mean different things for black woman and black men, according to Davis?

What are James Baldwin’s central messages to his nephew, and to Oakland high school students in 1963? How are his messages relevant today?

DISCUSSION SECTION: Douglass + Davis in 2021

FILM 2: I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO (2016) ESSAY Due: Sunday, February 7

WEEK 6: POWER AND OBEDIENCE: BECOMING EVIL

READ:

Melissa Dittmann, "What Makes Good People Do Bad Things?"
 James Waller, "Perpetrators of Genocide"
 Bruno Bettelheim, "Remarks on the Psychological Appeal of Totalitarianism"

CANVAS LECTURE: NAZI POWER

VIEW: *Leni Riefenstahl, Triumph of the Will* (film; selections are noted on Canvas)

Discussion threads:

What for Bruno Bettelheim was the significance of the Nazi salute? Can you think of other practices, presently or historically, that perform in similar ways?

What does a study of "rank-and-file" killers in a genocide reveal to us, according to James Waller?

DISCUSSION SECTION: Waller: Ordinary people, extraordinary behavior

WEEK 7: POWER AND OBEDIENCE: COMPLICITY AND CULPABILITY

READ:

Bob Dylan, *Only A Pawn in their Game* (+ **VIEW** performance at March on Washington)
 Anne Applebaum, *History will Judge the Complicit*
 Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman, *Neutrality is Complicity*
 Michael Kimmelmann, *Prison Architecture and the Question of Ethics*

CANVAS LECTURE: COMPLICITY

Discussion threads:

What does Dylan mean: "it ain't him to blame"? Do you agree with him?

DISCUSSION SECTION: Culpability

FILM 3: *The Wave* (1981) ESSAY Due: Sunday, February 21

WEEK 8: JUSTICE AS RESISTANCE: CONSCIENCE

CANVAS LECTURE: JUSTICE

READ: Kristen R. Monroe, Michael C. Barton and Ute Klingeman, “Altruism and the Theory of Rational Action: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe,” *Ethics*, 1990

CANVAS LECTURE: MONROE + RESISTANCE

VIEW: *The Courage to Care* (interview film)

READ: Henry David Thoreau, *On Civil Disobedience*

CANVAS LECTURE: THOREAU

Discussion threads:

Do you think Monroe, et. al have provided a compelling critique of a “rational choice theory” of altruism? Why or why not?

Thoreau, like many theorists and activists, draws a distinction between law and justice. What is the difference between these two concepts? Give examples of their divergence, and how they might be brought more closely together.

DISCUSSION SECTION: Monroe + Thoreau

WEEK 9: JUSTICE AS RESISTANCE: STRATEGIES / TACTICS

READ: Gandhi, *Selections*

CANVAS LECTURE: GANDHI

VIEW: Mandela (speech clip)

READ:

Martin Luther King, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*
Malcolm X, *Ballot or the Bullet*

CANVAS LECTURE: KING AND MALCOLM X

VIEW: Martin Luther King, Malcolm X (speech clips)

Discussion threads:

Why for Gandhi is satyagraha strength, and not weakness? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?

Do you think the debate between MLK and Malcolm X is relevant to today's discussion about racial justice? How so? Do you find one perspective or the other more compelling? Neither? Both?

DISCUSSION SECTION: Gandhi + King + X convergences, divergences)

WEEK 10: JUSTICE AS RESISTANCE: THE PATH FORWARD

CANVAS LECTURE: PAUL WATSON

Guest Speaker: Paul Watson, President/CEO, The Global Action Research Center

READ:

Keisha N. Blain, *Violence in Minneapolis is rooted in the history of racist policing in America*

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, *Don't understand the protests? What you're seeing is people pushed to the edge*

Callie Watkins-Liu, *We Must Love Each Other and Support Each Other: Black Liberation, Black Lives Matter, and the Radical Investment in Black Humanity*

EXPLORE: Black Lives Upended by Policing: The Raw Videos Sparking Outrage

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/19/us/police-videos-race.html>

Discussion thread:

What do you see as the "path forward" to advance racial justice in America? What can / will you do? What should universities do? You can respond to any part of this question.

DISCUSSION SECTION: The Path Forward: Where do we go from here?

FILM 4: Ava DuVernay's documentary *13th* (2016) **ESSAY Due: Sunday, March 14**

EXTRA CREDIT: THE PATH FORWARD DUE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17