POL 305 A1  
MWF, 1:00-1:50  
TB-70  
Contemporary Political Theory: *Introduction to Ideology Critique*

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**Course Outline:**

Why do people often accept, and even embrace, social and political systems that obviously seem to run counter to their real interests? One traditional answer to this question is that they are in the grips of *ideology* – i.e. of forms of thought that conceal and justify power relations and thereby help to stabilize them. The critique of ideology has been a central element of Marxist approaches to politics and society. In the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the major additions to the Marxist tradition of ideology critique have come from psychoanalysis, anthropology and gender and sexuality studies. In this course we will examine some of those strains of thought in order to ask after the continuing relevance of ideology (and related notions such as alienation and domination) for a critical understanding of social and political relations and contemporary culture.

**CLASS FORMAT:**

This class is a lecture but students are actively encouraged to participate.

**COURSE TEXTS:**

Those texts not available online, or as ebooks from the University of Alberta library, will be made available.

**REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

The course requirements are outlined below. Students should note that in all but exceptional situations, all components of the course must be completed to receive a passing grade. Policy regarding missed term work is outlined in Section 23.4(3) of the University Calendar. Tests and assignments will be assigned a letter grade. The instructor will not ‘curve’ or adjust final grades according to any preset formula.

Evaluation of the following course requirements will determine students’ grades:

- **Short Assignment:** 20%
- A short paper (3-5 pages) dealing with issues and questions raised in the first module of the course. Due **Sept. 25.** I will distribute questions for this paper in the first week of classes.
• **Major Assignment, Pecha Kucha and Paper: 50%**
  This component of the course is made up of two parts which together account for 50% of your grade. The first is a **Pecha Kucha presentation** which is a very specific kind of power point presentation (more on this below). Pecha Kucha site: http://www.pecha-kucha.org/. Once again, I will make suggestions about this assignment. You will receive specific feedback on your presentations, and this part of the assignment is worth 20% of your grade.

  The presentation forms the basis for a longer paper - 10-12 pages - due on **Nov. 27**. This paper will ask students to engage intensively with one of the key areas of debate covered in the course. Students are free to design their own question, but this question must first be approved.

• **Final Take-home Exam: 30%**
  This take home exam will be distributed on the last day of classes, and is due 7 days later.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

Sept. 2: Introduction to Course and Requirements

Sept. 4: Adam Phillips - “On Pleasure and Frustration”
   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHpBa0OzBz0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHpBa0OzBz0)

   We will watch “Examined Life” because it is an important introduction to some of the themes of the course: oppression, truth, reality, and so on. We will watch the interview with Adam Phillips because it is an introduction of sorts to psychoanalysis, a mode of analysis that is central to contemporary versions of ideology critique. Using psychoanalysis, Phillips raises what he calls one of the most important ideologies of the contemporary period, which is **the demand that we be happy**. “What we are continually being sold is the capacities for pleasure,” he says, and he tells us that what we are starved of is frustration. I am hoping that Phillips can offer us an interesting first look into psychoanalysis, but also provide us with some vocabulary for thinking about reading difficult or obscure texts that might be considered ‘frustrating’.

**Unit One: Marx and Freud: The Discovery of the Symptom**

Sept. 11 Film - Slavoj Zizek “Our Fear of Falling In Love”; clips from episode One, Season One of *The Sopranos.*
Introduction to **Pecha Kucha**

Sept. 14, 16: Karl Marx: **Communist Manifesto**
Sept. 18: Film - Naomi Klein - ‘This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. Climate’
   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krYHHIrkf2M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krYHHIrkf2M)

Sept. 21, 23, 25
Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1. Section 4,
“**The Fetishism of the Commodity**”

Sept. 28, 30, Oct. 2
Sigmund Freud, “The Method of Dream Interpretation” from *Interpretation of Dreams*

Oct. 5, 7, 9
Slavoj Zizek “How did Marx invent the Symptom?” from *Sublime Object of Ideology*

**Unit Two: Althusser**

Oct. 14

**First Assignment Due**

**Unit Three: Ideology Critique, Political Economy and the Exchange of Women**

Oct. 19, 21, 23
Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex” from *Towards an Anthropology of Women*
Clip from *Third Rock from the Sun*

**Unit Three: Cruel and Happy Objects**

Oct. 26, 28, 30
Lauren Berlant, “Cruel Optimism” from *Cruel Optimism*

Nov. 2, 4, 6
Sara Ahmed *The Promise of Happiness*
“Happy Objects” and “Feminist Killjoys”

Nov. 16, 18, 20
**Pecha Kucha presentations**

Nov. 23, 25, 27:
**Longer paper due**
Amendments to the Code of Student Behaviour occur throughout the year. For the most recent version of the Code, visit [http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/](http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/)

NOTICE TO INSTRUCTORS REGARDING PLAGIARISM, CHEATING, MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS AND PARTICIPATION IN AN OFFENCE

The U of A considers plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence to be serious academic offences. Plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence can be avoided if students are told what these offences are and if possible sanctions are made clear at the outset. Instructors should understand that the principles embodied in the Code are essential to our academic purpose. For this reason, instructors will be fully supported by Departments, Faculties and the University in their endeavours to rightfully discover and pursue cases of academic dishonesty in accordance with the Code.

At the beginning of each term, we ask you to review with your students the definitions of plagiarism and cheating. We are now also asking you to review with your students the definition of Misrepresentation of Facts and Participation in an Offence. Your co-operation and assistance in this matter are much appreciated.

### 30.3.2(1) Plagiarism

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student’s own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

### 30.3.2(2) Cheating

30.3.2(2)a No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.

30.3.2(2)b No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6(4).

### 30.3.2(2) Cheating (Continued)

30.3.2(2)c No Student shall represent another’s substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student’s own work.

30.3.2(2)d No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

30.3.2(2)e No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

30.3.6(4) Misrepresentation of Facts

No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. This includes such acts as the failure to provide pertinent information on an application for admission or the altering of an educational document/transcript.

30.3.6(5) Participation in an Offence

No Student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this Code.

More information can be found at: [http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en.aspx](http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en.aspx)
EXCERPTS FROM THE CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR
FOR REVIEW WITH EACH CLASS AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY TERM

Procedures for Instructors Regarding

Plagiarism, Cheating,

Misrepresentation of Facts and Participation in an Offence

The following procedures are drawn from the Code of Student Behaviour as approved by GFC and the Board of Governors. The guidelines summarize what instructors must do when they have reason to believe that a student has plagiarized, cheated, misrepresented facts or participated in an offence. If you have questions about these guidelines, or about the policies, please talk with the senior administrator in your Faculty responsible for dealing with student discipline—usually an Associate Dean or the Appeals and Compliance Officer (Appeals Coordinator), University Governance (2-2655).

30.5.4 Procedures for Instructors in Cases Respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour

30.5.4(1) When an Instructor believes that a Student may have committed an Inappropriate Academic Behaviour Offence [30.3.2] or that there has been Misrepresentation of Facts [30.3.6(4)] or Participation in an Offence [30.3.6(5)] in cases respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour in the course that he or she instructs, the Instructor will meet with the Student. Before such a meeting, the Instructor shall inform the Student of the purpose of the meeting. In the event that the Student refuses or fails to meet with the Instructor within a reasonable period of time specified by the Instructor, the Instructor shall, taking into account the available information, decide whether a report to the Dean is warranted.

30.5.4(2) If the Instructor believes there has been a violation of the Code, the Instructor shall, as soon as possible after the event occurred, report that violation to the Dean and provide a written statement of the details of the case. The Instructor may also include a recommendation for sanction.

Possible Sanctions

One or more of the following sanctions given in 30.4.3 (2) and (3) of the Code are commonly used for plagiarism, cheating, participation in an offence, and misrepresentation of facts:

- 30.4.3(2) a.i a mark reduction or a mark of 0 on any term work or examination for reason of Inappropriate Academic Behaviour
- 30.4.3(2) a.ii Reduction of a grade in a course
- 30.4.3(2) a.iii a grade of F for a course
- 30.4.3(2) a.iv a remark on a transcript of 8 (or 9 for failing graduate student grades), indicating Inappropriate Academic Behaviour, in addition to 30.4.3(2)a.i, 30.4.3(2)a.ii or 30.4.3(2)a.iii
- 30.4.3(3) b Expulsion
- 30.4.3(3) c Suspension

The following sanctions may be used in rare cases:

- 30.4.3(3) c Suspension of a Degree already awarded
- 30.4.3(3) f Rescission of a Degree already awarded

30.6.1 Initiation of an Appeal

30.6.1(1) When a Student has been found to have committed an offence under the Code of Student Behaviour or an Applicant is found to have committed an offence under the Code of Applicant Behaviour, whether or not that Student or Applicant has been given a sanction, the Student or Applicant may appeal that decision, except in the case of a decision of the Discipline Officer under 30.5.6(2)e.ii, which remains final and is not subject to appeal. In cases where a severe sanction has been recommended to the Discipline Officer, once the student receives the final decision of the Discipline Officer, the student can appeal the decisions of both Dean and the Discipline Officer at the same time. The written appeal must be presented to the Appeals Coordinator in University Governance within 15 Working Days of the deemed receipt of the decision by the Student or Applicant. The finding that an offence has been committed, the sanction imposed or both may form the basis of appeal. The written appeal must also state the full grounds of appeal and be signed by the Appellant. The appeal shall be heard by the UAB.

PROFESSOR STEVEN PENNEY
CHAIR, CAMPUS LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE

DR STEVEN DEW
PROVOST AND VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC)

* The Campus Law Review Committee is a standing committee of General Faculties Council (GFC) responsible for the review of the Code of Student Behaviour and of student disciplinary procedures.

Updated: 27/08/2015