



Phl 820/850: Graduate Seminar

Recent European Political Philosophy

Fall 2013
Michigan State University

Prof. Christian Lotz

Tentative Schedule (last **UPDATE**: October 18, 2013)

NUMBER	DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READING	ADDITIONAL MATERIAL (voluntary)	PROTOCOL	BRIEF PRESENTATION	CONCEPT PAPER
Introduction							
1	Aug 29	Introduction	Interview with Poulantzas (copy in class); selections from Marx (copy in class)				
Radical Democracy							
2	Sep 5	Abensour/Marx	Abensour, Democracy Against the State, all forewords+introduction+chapter 1-3		Ezgi		
3	Sep 12	Abensour/Marx	Abensour, Democracy Against the State, chapter 4-6		Zach		
4	Sep 19	Ranciere	Ranciere, The Hatred of Democracy	Check http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AsOrXmsGjcE	Erik	Eian	
5	Sep 26	Mouffe	Mouffe, The Democratic Paradox, everything, except chapter 3	Check http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wfiw53A3T2k Check http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Wpwwc25JRU	Sophia		
6	Oct 3	no class	prepare Negri				
Constituent Power and Democracy							
	Oct 4+5	Fourth Workshop in Social and Political Thought	Fourth Workshop in Social and Political Thought: Global Ethics and Capitalism				
	Oct 6	Seminar with Prof. Smith, 11pm + late lunch	Negri/Hardt, Introduction to Dionysus (pdf per email); Negri, On Social Ontology (pdf per email)				
7	Oct 10	no class	prepare Negri				
8	Oct 17	Negri	Negri, Constituent Power, chapter 1, chapter 5.2, chapter 6.1			Zach	
9	Oct 24	no class	prepare Poulantzas+Althusser				
10	Oct 31	Negri	Negri, Constituent Power, chapter 7; Mouffe, On Radical Politics (Critique of Negri; pdf per email)		John	Sophia	
State, Power, Ideology							
11	Nov 7	Althusser/Poulantzas	Althusser, Ideological State Apparatuses; Poulantzas, The Political Crisis and the Crisis of the State (pdf per email); Poulantzas, The Problem of the	Check http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/sociology924-2011.htm	Eian	Erik	

Capitalist State (pdf per email)

Politics and Truth

12	Nov 14	Badiou (with guest: Prof. MacDonald)	Badiou, Metapolitics, prologue+chapter 1+4+5+10: Badiou, The Idea of Communism (pdf per email)	Check www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwzzhqJZ8Mvw (skip the first 8 minutes)	Aidan	John
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Lecture, Prof. MacDonald, 3pm

13	Nov 21	Badiou	Badiou, The Rebirth of History	Check http://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/reviewofbooks/reviews/2013/801	Jacob	Ezgi
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Leninism?

14	Nov 28	Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving		
	Dec 5	Zizek	Zizek, Revolution at the Gates, 250-312 (part of the chapter entitled "Lenin's choice")	Check http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GD69Cc20rw		Aidan

Paper

Dec 12

Final paper due

Class Meetings:

Days: TH
 Time: 6 PM - 9 PM
 Place: 530 South Kedzie Hall

Office:

Phone: 517.355.4490 [dept.]
 Place: 517 South Kedzie Hall
 Hours: TBA

Other Contact:

E-mail: lotz@msu.edu
 Home Phone: please ask
 Webpage: <http://christianlotz.wordpress.com>

Teaching Assistant: no teaching assistants

Course Description

Political Philosophy celebrated its revival as a fundamental discipline in Europe during the last decades, especially motivated by a deep discontent about our contemporary representational "democracies." All authors discussed in class are more or less opposed to the "standard" liberal tradition in political thought, such as Habermas and Rawls, and their reflections are in close contact with recent popular movements all over the world. The title of this seminar though is misleading, as it seems to suggest that there is such a thing as a "European" or "Continental" political philosophy that can be easily fixed and determined as a sub-discipline in social philosophy. In addition, the discourse is too complex for one seminar, as it would, for example, also include the Heideggerian tradition (Nancy, Lacoue-Labarthe), the poststructuralist tradition (Foucault, Derrida), the non-poststructuralist French discourse (Lefort, Castoriadis), Sartre/Beauvoir/Merleau-Ponty, and critical theory (Benjamin, Marcuse, Habermas). Unfortunately, I also decided to remove Hannah Arendt from the reading list (I intend to offer a 400-level class about Arendt in the near future). Accordingly, we will focus on selected aspects, which includes the return of anarchist ideas, its relation to the Marxist tradition, and what might be called "the political suspension of the ethical and social." The different positions that we encounter in this seminar depend on their ontological commitments. We need to ask what constitutes society if we want to understand what "political philosophy" is about.

Course Goals

Given the complexity of these recent debates, we will focus on attempts to develop radical notions of democracy and the relation between the political and the social. We will pay special attention to philosophers who revitalised the idea of an "autonomy of the political" and ask how the political is related to the state. Accordingly, the course goal is to get acquainted with a few authors central to "continental" debates

Required Texts (you do not need to purchase all of them; copies of chapters are fine)

- Ranciere, The Hatred of Democracy
- Negri, Constituent Power
- Badiou, Metapolitics
- Badiou, On History
- Abensour, Democracy Against the State
- Poulantzas, State, Power, Socialism
- Althusser, On Ideology
- Zizek, Revolution at the Gates
- Mouffe, The Democratic Paradox

Texts per pdf

- Mouffe, On Radical Politics
- Negri/Hardt, Introduction to Labor Of Dionysus: A Critique of the State-Form
- TBA

Course Requirements

- 1 presentation write-up/outline/main point (up to 600 words)
- 1 oral presentation
- 1 protocol (up to 900 words)
- 1 final paper, conference style (no more than 3300 words)

Protocol (German tradition)

The class protocol should cover our discussion in class. Protocols should have a length of 2-3 pages (around 600-900 words), and they will in and outside of the classroom force us to have an ongoing reflection on our texts that we study for class. They can also include problems or questions that the writers had either with our class discussion or with the texts itself, but above all protocols should cover what I lectured about in class and what we discussed afterwards. Protocols should clarify and discuss selected issues in question. Protocols have to be sent out to other students two days before class. I'll radically mark down late turn ins. The student who wrote the protocol will address questions during the first 15 minutes of the next class meeting, and he/she will lead the class discussion.

Presentation

Each student will be responsible for one class and for working out an introductory presentation, which should function as a platform for our discussions. Please focus on one or two aspects of the readings; desired length of presentations: no more than 20-25 minutes. Each presenter must distribute copies of his/her write-up two days before class (no more than 900 words). You should *not* read your write up in class; rather, talk through it.

General Remark

Given that this is a graduate seminar, I expect self-motivation, autonomy, as well as self-responsibility. The attendance requires the willingness to intensively study the text selected for class.

Final Paper

The class essay should be well researched and should present a substantial reflection on some parts of the material discussed in class. I expect excellent papers in regard to research, form, and content. I will fail papers that do not comply with formal standards (footnotes, literature, etc.). The paper should be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 150 words. The paper should be "conference style," i.e., you should write it as if you would present it at a conference.

DFs

I will refuse giving DFs in this class, unless you find yourself in a real emergency situation (hospitalization, etc.).

Course Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the basis of:

1 presentation write-up (write-up: 600-900 words)	10 points
1 oral presentation	20 points
1 protocol (600-900 words)	10 points
1 final paper, around 3300 words, conference paper style	60 points

	100 points

Grading:

4.0 (=A)	100 - 93
3.5	92 - 87
3 (=B)	86 - 82
2.5	81 - 77
2 (=C)	76 - 72
1.5	71 - 65
1.0 (=D)	64 - 60
0.0	< 60

GENERIC SYLLABUS (might not be applicable to each class)

Laptop/Cell Phone Policy (only for undergraduate classes)

You are not permitted to use laptops and cell phones in class. Please do not text under the table. Cell phones should be removed from tables. Failure to follow this policy will lead to unannounced assignments in class or loss of points (at the digression of the instructor).

Class Attendance

As mentioned above, I do not employ in my classes a class attendance policy. Having said this, you should be aware that class attendance is very important. When engaging in a philosophical and humanistic dialogue it is necessary to be an active and present participant in the ongoing discussion. If you miss class please do not

email me asking if you missed anything important. Every class is important. You should get a study buddy for the class; a student in class who will inform you of what you missed. If you miss a class you can come to my office hours or make an appointment to discuss the material, providing you have read the material and you simply want to see if your understanding of the material is on target. Time in office hours will not be used to repeat the class lectures.

Grading Criteria

Check out [this page for grading criteria, example of assignments, etc.](#)

Helpful information about oral presentations, paper writing and plagiarism

[Click here to find help on your presentations and your writing](#)

Online Research Sources

Unfortunately, some people think that the internet as such is a reliable source of information. If you decide to use online sources for additional information or your paper then do not just use one of the common internet search engines, such as Google; rather, use reliable academic sources, such as Britannica Online, or the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#). The [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) isn't very good, but still acceptable. Check out MSU's [library resources](#)! And, as with other sources, you must cite any online sources to which you refer in your essay.

Writing Center Information

MSU's writing center offers excellent help on all matters regarding writing and learning. Check the website at <http://writing.msu.edu> for an overview and hours. For more information, please call 517.432.3610 or send an e-mail to writing@msu.edu.

Integrity of Scholarship and Grades (Plagiarism)

The following statement of University policy addresses principles and procedures to be used in instances of academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, and falsification of academic or admission records, herein after referred to as academic misconduct. [See General Student Regulation 1.00, Protection of Scholarship and Grades.]: [download document](#) (pdf)

Academic Honesty

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY)

Drops and Adds

The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

Note on Attendance

Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.

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