COURSE DESCRIPTION: In this course, students will learn the process of moving from primary sources to interpretations through readings around a set of thematically interrelated case studies. In each case, students will deliberate the response of intellectuals to a situation involving a political struggle concerning Judaism, Jewish identity, Nazism and the Holocaust, the State of Israel, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. How the works of these philosophers and writers can be variously interpreted will be considered through the discussion of competing analyses of their interventions. The cases we will consider are the Dreyfus Affair, Heidegger’s Nazism, Levinas and Israel, Arendt and the Eichmann trial, and Badiou’s interventions into the Arab-Israeli conflict. This set of figures and flashpoints provide a skeletal overview of twentieth-century European thought. The point of the cases, however, is to provide a spur to the students own research, which would then focus on any aspect of “intellectuals and politics” (i.e. generally an individual figure and a specific political conflict) that they would want to develop in their own research, in consolation with me and at least one faculty member from their major.

Books to Purchase:


**Additional Readings are in the My Faculty Folder on the Acad_Dept_Pgm Volume on the campus server.**

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**COURSE STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION**

**Grade Breakdown:**

- Topic Presentation: 5%
- Bibliographic Survey: 10%
- Participation: 25%
- Ideas Drafts: 5%
- Five Pages of Text: 5%
- Rough Draft/Peer Editing: 10%
- Final Version: 40%

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

**TOPIC PRESENTATIONS:** You should be prepared to discuss for approximately five minutes what you plan to write your research paper on in specific terms. You should address what interests you in the topic, what you know about it prior to your research, what you hope to prove and why you think it is an important contribution. You should indicate what primary sources will be the basis of your research. You should turn in a 500 word summation statement presenting your topic.

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC SURVEY:** You should present a preliminary bibliography (that will obviously be amended as your research progresses) that is *annotated* to the greatest extent possible. This annotation should include the qualifications of the author and the subject and thesis of each book. This bibliography should provide a map to the secondary literature on your subject.

**IDEAS DRAFTS:** In the writing workshop, we will discuss two models for generating ideas drafts. Ideas drafts should contain preliminary versions of the opening paragraphs of your paper, including your thesis and argument on the subject of the paper (clearly laid out). It should also contain an outline of the argument, establish what the major points are that you seek to establish and how these relate back to your thesis, and the significant quotations that will prove each of these points.
FIVE PAGES OF TEXT: To make sure that you are making steady progress on the writing of the paper, this will serve as an opportunity to present some of your initial writing and reflections as you develop your ideas drafts.

ROUGH DRAFT/PEER EDITING: There will be two components to the grade for this assignment. The first is the quality of your rough draft, which should already be a well-written and well-argued paper – a finished version – albeit rough in areas. The second component is your peer editing of your partner's paper. Each primary peer editor will discuss their partner's paper for 5 minutes.

FINAL PAPER: This paper of 6000-7000 words can focus on any intellectual broadly understood (philosophers, writers, artists, architects, scientists, etc.) who constitutes a “public intellectual” and who has made a significant political intervention. You should choose a very specific political framework in order to narrow your research focus. The subject of the paper should be discussed with another faculty member in the discipline in which you registered for this course (philosophy, religion, history) and in consultation with me.

Course Schedule

Th  1/12   Introduction

F  1/13   Required Lecture attendance: Noam Chomsky, McCallum Ballroom, 5:00 pm

T  1/17   Noam Chomsky, the Occupy Movement and the Public Intellectual

  ●  http://www.wknofm.org/post/interview-noam-chomsky
  ●  http://www.chomsky.info/articles/19670223.htm

Th.  1/19  Required Lecture attendance: Paul Mendes-Flohr, Two Modern Prophets: Martin Buber and Martin Luther King, Hardie Auditorium, 6:00 pm

T  1/24   TOPIC PRESENTATIONS

Th.  1/26   The Dreyfus Affair

  ●  Michael Burns, France and the Dreyfus Affair, 193-200 & 1-123

T  1/31   The Dreyfus Affair II

  ●  Michael Burns, France and the Dreyfus Affair, 124-192

Th.  2/2    The Dreyfus Affair III
• Christopher E. Forth, *The Drefus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*, “Introduction” and Part I: “Masculinity and the Jewish Question” (ADP)

**T 2/7**  
The Dreyfus Affair IV

• Sarah Hammerschlag, “Introduction” and Chapter 1, “Roots, Rootlessness, and Fin de Siècle France”

**Th 2/9**  
BIBLIOGRAPHIC SURVEY

**T 2/14**  
Heidegger: Background and Biography

• Heidegger, Stassen “Introduction” and 24-48, 1-23, 70-76, 1-23

**Th 2/16**  
No class. Suggested lecture: Gordon Wood, “What Made the Founders Different,” McCallum Ballroom, 7:00pm

**T 2/21**  
Heidegger’s Existential Analysis

• Heidegger, 152-168, 174-235

**Th 2/23**  
Heidegger’s Critique of Technology and Thinking Modernity

• Heidegger, 279-305, 80-86

**T 2/28**  
Levinas’ Background and the experience of Nazism

• Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 291-296
• Howard Caygill, “Introduction” and Chapter 1 (ADP)

**Th 3/1**  
Levinas: Ethics as First Philosophy

• “Ethics as First Philosophy” and “The Trace of the Other” and “Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism” (ADP)

**T 3/6**  
Levinas on Judaism and Israel

• Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 11-27, 159-166, 172-177, 202, 216-234
Th. 3/8 Levinas on Judaism and Israel (secondary texts)

- Howard Caygill, Chapter 5 (ADP)
- Sarah Hammerschlag, Chapter 3

T 3/13 Spring Break

Th. 3/15 Spring Break

T 3/20 WRITING WORKSHOP

Th. 3/22 Hannah Arendt: Background and Overview

- “What Remains? The Language Remains”: A Conversation with Günter Gaus” (ADP)
- Peter Baehr, “Editor’s Introduction,” The Portable Hannah Arendt (ADP)

T 3/27 Hannah Arendt’s Eichmann

- Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, chapters 1-8

Th 3/29 Hannah Arendt’s Eichmann II

- Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, chapters 9-15 and “Epilogue”

T 4/3 Understanding Hannah Arendt

- Richard Bernstein, from Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question: “Zionism: Jewish Homeland or Jewish State?” “From Radical Evil to the Banality of Evil” and “Evil, Thinking, and Judging” (ADP)

Th 4/5 Easter Break

T 4/10 Evaluating Hannah Arendt (All sources available on ADP)

IDEAS DRAFTS DUE

- Richard Cohen, “A Generation’s Response to Eichmann in Jerusalem from Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem” (ADP)

**Th** 4/12 Introducing Badiou (ADP)

**FIVE PAGES DUE**

- Richard Wolin, “On the Sectarian Maoism of Alain Badiou” in *The Wind from the East*

**T** 4/17 Badiou on Uses of the Word ‘Jew’

- Badiou, *Polemics*, 157-201

**Th** 4/19 Writing Day

**T** 4/24 Badiou on Uses of the Word ‘Jew’ II

- Badiou, *Polemics*, 202-247

**Th** 4/26 ROUGH DRAFTS/PEER-EDITING DUE
The Fine Print:

Attendance, Discussion, and Participation

This class will function as a seminar, which means that each student is responsible for doing all the reading and coming to class prepared to engage critically with it. I will also come to every class modeling passionate engagement, critical reflection, and careful reading. But the success of this class will depend on the willingness of each student to join in the ongoing conversation. Listening is not enough; each student is expected to make a contribution to the discussion so that others may benefit from their insight or perspective.

I define “participation” as active engagement with the ideas, readings, and conversations that are an integral part of this course. Class attendance is necessary for class participation, since you cannot participate if you are not present. However, you do not earn a very good participation grade simply by showing up to class. Rather, you must actually contribute by joining in the class discussion, posing questions, sharing ideas, and interpreting the readings with your classmates in a thoughtful and reflective way.

I will record a participation grade for every class session so that this grade accurately reflects what actually happens in each class. Note: the best form of participation is not necessarily the person who speaks the most or with the greatest enthusiasm, but rather the student whose contributions or questions contribute the most to the general class engagement with the material—those who foster fodder for our communal conversation will see this reflected in their participation grades.

Please note that the classroom is a public space and that I will call on students and solicit responses. Your engagement with the material can also be reflected in individual conversations in office hours or via email (when that is a suitable medium for exchange), or through non-oral means (for example, by bringing in article from a publication relevant to the class material). All these forms of communication will count towards your participation grade.

Policies and Procedures

General

1. I expect you to come to each class prepared to listen, ask questions, discuss readings, and take notes. You should bring all necessary materials to class including all reading assignments for the day, your reading notes, notes from previous classes, and materials that I may ask you to prepare for a particular class session.

2. I recommend bringing questions that you have about reading assignments or about the previous class meeting if what we discussed is not entirely clear to you. I also recommend bringing a list of comments that you wish to make during class discussion so that you will be ready to contribute. If you are someone who has difficulty speaking in class for whatever reason, please speak to me about alternative ways of participating in addition to class participation.

3. You should come to every class session. Since all of our lives are complicated, however, you are allowed to miss the equivalent of one week’s worth of class time (i.e. two class periods) without it having a negative effect on your grade. I would still like to be notified by phone or email about the reasons for your absence. Please note that this policy regarding absences includes what are sometimes deemed “excused” absences. All additional absences beyond the two permitted will adversely affect your grade for the course since you cannot participate in our community of scholars if you are not present.

If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to speak first to your fellow classmates and then to me to find out what you have missed. Make sure you have at least one class “buddy” who can fill you on anything we have covered in class. I cannot reiterate for you what we have discussed in a class session, especially since much of the time the content will be provided by your classmates and outside professors. But I can help to clarify what your classmates have explained. I frequently distribute handouts or make additional assignments in class, so you need to check with me to find out if I have done so for the day of
your absence. You are still responsible for all material covered in each class period regardless of whether you attended it.

I will assign a participation grade after every class meeting to record your contribution.

Arriving late to class is a distraction to your fellow students and for our guest professors or me. This form of distraction reflects negatively on your participation. Still, I would rather have you come to class late rather than miss it, so when necessary please enter quietly and quickly.

4. You are each bound by the Honor Code as elaborated in the Student Handbook. No violation will be tolerated. Please review the Student Handbook if you are unclear about the details of the Honor Code, particularly the definitions in Article I, Section 3. If you are unfamiliar with the definition of “plagiarism,” you can find it there. On every assignment, you should reaffirm the Honor Code by writing the entire honor pledge and signing your name. No work will be accepted without an Honor Code pledge. Studying together and engaging in peer evaluations of one another’s papers is always a good idea, but make sure that your work is your own. Note that collaboration on an assignment that results in remarkably similar results, whether intentional or accidental, is a violation of the honor code.

5. I might make changes to the syllabus as the semester progresses, but I will always make changes known to you as soon as possible, and I will make reasonable accommodations for assignment due dates should the schedule changes warrant it. I also reserve the right to give unannounced writing assignments in class or to make short assignments for the next class period with no advance notice.

6. All assignments must be turned in to be eligible for a passing grade in this course. No student will be allowed to pass without having turned in every assignment.

Essays

7. All assignments is due at the beginning of class as indicated on the syllabus. When a writing assignment is given and no class is held that day, the assignment is due by 2:00 p.m. on the date due. I will accept assignments only from students who are present in class on the date on which the paper is due; I will not accept papers submitted by proxy. Late work will not be accepted except in extreme circumstances.

You are responsible for keeping a backup copy of each writing assignment for the course. In the unlikely event that I misplace your essay, I will ask you for another copy as soon as I realize that I need it. If you cannot provide a copy of any assignment to me upon request, you will forfeit your entire grade for that assignment.

Courtesy

8. Turn off all cell phones during class time unless I have approved their continued activation in advance. If you leave the classroom to answer a cell phone call, do not return. You are welcome to use laptops or tablets to take your notes, but please do not check email, Facebook, or any websites not relevant to the course material and discussion while in class.

9. Learning happens when done in an environment in which everyone feels free to express him or herself openly. Please be considerate and respectful of the opinions of others, especially as we are discussing a difficult and fraught subject. I encourage you to disagree with your fellow students and professors’ ideas, but never to disparage in any form other members of our learning community.

Disabilities

10. I am happy to make reasonable accommodations to people with documented disabilities. Please consult the appropriate College administrators before coming to see me. Once you have done so, please discuss your particular needs with me as soon as possible. Please note, however, that all students are evaluated according to the same criteria and set of expectations.