

Department of Politics MA Seminar
GPOL 6300 (CRN 6415)
Fall 2008

The whole farm was deeply divided on the subject of the windmill. Snowball did not deny that to build it would be a difficult business. Stone would have to be carried and built up into walls, then the sails would have to be made and after that there would be need for dynamos and cables. (How these would be procured, Snowball did not say.) Napoleon, on the other hand, argued that the great need of the moment was to increase food production, and that if they wasted time on the windmill they would all starve to death. The animals formed themselves into two factions under the slogan, "Vote for Snowball and the three-day week" and "Vote for Napoleon and the full manger." Benjamin was the only animal who did not side with either faction. He refused to believe either that food would become more plentiful or that the windmill would save work. Windmill or no windmill, he said, life would go on as it had always gone on—that is, badly.

--George Orwell, *Animal Farm*

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Seminar Meetings:
R., 2 – 3.50 p.m., 6 E. 16th St., Rm. 1009
Office Hours:
W. 10 – 11:30 a.m.

website: <http://groups.google.com/group/pachirat-f08-ma-seminar>
listserv email: pachirat-f08-ma-seminar@googlegroups.com

Description

What does it mean to study politics?

Our MA Seminar engages this deceptively simple question in two ways.

Eight of our fifteen weeks together (2 -6, 8, 10, and 13) are dedicated to visits from Politics Department faculty, each of whom will speak about what brings them to the study of politics, about how they go about defining “the political,” and about the methodology and methods they use to pursue answers to their questions. During these faculty led sessions, we will hear about the promises and perils of participatory democracy; sex and the state; ethnicity and its relationship to race; political judgment; hunger strikes in Turkish prisons; explanatory vs. normative theory; comparative macroanalysis; and the relationship between democracy and constitutionalism. The diversity of these substantive concerns is matched by a pluralism of methodological approaches and commitments, offering us a superb outcropping from which to map the hills and valleys that make up the contemporary terrain of this discipline we call political science (indeed, the latter part of that name is itself contested!). Not incidentally, these eight sessions are also meant to provide you with an unparalleled introduction to the professors in your newfound intellectual home.

In the remaining seven weeks (1, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 15) we examine power, a concept that lies at the heart of the study of politics. What is power? How might we theorize, conceptualize, and research it? And, how might the study of power itself constitute an exercise of power? Our investigation leads us through New Haven, Central Appalachia, the Danish town of Aalborg, a peasant village in Malaysia,

and authoritarian Syria. We will study elementary schools, prison architecture, Danish bus depots, coal mines, foot dragging, character assassination, and the ritualized joke. These motley destinations are bound together by their demarcation as sites that illuminate various and often contesting approaches to the study of power in the social sciences. Because power is a slippery beast, we will, whenever possible, keep our hands tightly wound around works that present situated studies *of* power rather than texts that theorize in the abstract *about* power. Admittedly, we will also dabble from time to time in the latter, but mostly for their capacity to illuminate, challenge, and engage the former.

We will read ten studies of power in their entirety. Many are classics in their respective disciplines and are often read, cited, and emulated across disciplinary boundaries. In and of itself, this might constitute our first lesson about the study of politics: when done well, it transgresses boundaries of discipline, methodology, and ideological orthodoxy, and opens up—rather than shuts down—avenues of thinking and acting, both in the academic and larger world. If we follow this model of willful transgression at least some distance in this seminar—learning to talk, think, write, and design studies of politics in ways that articulate the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of approaches—then we shall judge our semester of collective inquiry a success.

Requirements

1. **Participation** (25%): Your preparation, presence, and participation are crucial. Please complete the required readings, be on time for each class, bring all relevant texts, and contribute energetically to the discussions. Unexcused absences will count heavily against you. In the first week of the seminar, you must join the class website, which is accessible only to seminar members. In addition to classroom participation, you are strongly encouraged to read the submissions of your colleagues to the class listserv.
2. **Reading Reaction Papers** (25%): Five concise reactions to the weekly readings are due via the class listserv by six p.m. the day before class (i.e., Wednesday). (See the reading reaction schedule, to be distributed separately, for the weeks when your reaction papers are due.) Please paste your text in the body of the e-mail and attach it as a document (Open Text preferred, but Word is also acceptable). In the e-mail subject heading, please put your last name and the number of the reading reaction (e.g., Pachirat r1; Pachirat r2, etc.). Your reaction pieces *may not exceed 700 words* and should engage (i.e., question, critique, support, apply, argue against, signal areas of confusion, etc.) the readings: *do not write summaries!* In each response, you should relate the readings to the central question of the course: what does it mean to study politics? In doing so, you may focus on substance, methodology and method, or both, and you are encouraged to draw upon readings from prior weeks as well as the week of your focus.
3. **Discussion Leading** (25%): You and a partner have been assigned a week to lead seminar discussion. Your responsibilities include briefly summarizing the key points of the readings, formulating provocative and engaging questions to encourage critical discussion, preparing at least one hand-out to facilitate discussion, and writing a five hundred word narrative summary of the discussion to be e-mailed to the listserv before the start of the next class. Discussion leaders may use the departmental copier to make copies of handouts for class. *Note: if your discussion leading week coincides with your week to write a reaction paper, you may write your reaction paper for the following week instead.*
4. **Final Paper** (25%): The seminar's culminating project is a 10 – 15 page double spaced paper in which you will address the question: “What does it mean to study politics?” Your paper should map a course of study for the next two years that brings your substantive intellectual interests into direct and sustained dialogue with the variety of approaches and traditions developed in this seminar. More details about the final paper will be provided as the semester progresses.

5. **Plagiarism** of any assignment in this course will result in a failing grade and referral to the NSSR Dean's Office. The New School University Writing Center has prepared a useful handout on plagiarism, available at www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/documents/AvoidPlagiarism.pdf.
6. **There are no exams.**

Texts

The following books are on reserve at Fogelman Social Science and Humanities Library (65 5th Avenue) and have been ordered at Barnes and Noble, 5th Ave. & 18th St. (212.807.0099).

- George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (Signett Classics, 1996 [1946])
C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite, 2nd Edition* (Oxford University Press, 2000)
Robert Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City, 2nd Edition* (Yale University Press, 2005)
John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (University of Illinois Press, 1982)
Clarissa Hayward, *De-Facing Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2000)
Bent Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice* (Chicago University Press, 1998)
Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Vintage, 1979)
James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (Yale University Press, 1985)
Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago University Press, 1999)

All other readings are available for download under the "Files" section of the class website.

Schedule

Week One (Sept. 4) Four Legs Good, Two Legs Bad: Snowball, Napoleon, Benjamin, and the Study of Politics

Self-introductions; overview of the course

George Orwell, *Animal Farm*.

In-class discussion and writing exercise: what does it mean to study politics?

Week Two (Sept. 11) James Miller: Democracy in Dreams and in Practice

Jim Miller, *Rousseau: Dreamer of Democracy* (Hackett Publishing, 1984). Introduction pp 1-4; Chapter 5 pp. 105-122.

Jim Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (Harvard University Press, 1994). Introduction pp 13-18; Chapter 10 pp. 184-217.

Week Three (Sept. 18) Sanjay Ruparelia: Political Judgment

Isaiah Berlin, "Political judgment," In *The Sense of Reality: Studies in ideas and their history* (Ferrari Straus & Giroux, 1998) pp. 40-53.

Max Weber, "Politics as a vocation" In *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology* (Routledge, 2007), pp. 77-128.

Exchange between David Laitin and Bent Flyvbjerg in *Politics & Society*

-David Laitin, "The Perestroika Challenge to Social Science" in *Politics & Society* (Vol. 31 No. 1, March 2003 pp. 163-184).

-Bent Flyvbjerg, "A Perestroika Straw Man Answers Back: David Laitin and Phronetic Political Science" in *Politics & Society* (Vol. 32 No. 3, September 2004 pp. 389-416)

Sanjay Ruparelia, "Rethinking Institutional Theories of Political Moderation: The Case of Hindu Nationalism in India, 1996 – 2004." *Comparative Politics*, 2006.

Sanjay Ruparelia, "How the Politics of Recognition Enabled India's Democratic Exceptionalism."

Week Four (Sept. 25) Victoria Hattam: In the Shadow of Race

Victoria Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race* (Chicago, 2008). Chap. 1 (pp 1-20); chap 3 (pp 45-76); chap. 6 (pp 129-156); chap. 7 (pp 157-168).

Week Five (Oct. 2) Aristide Zolberg: Comparative Macroanalysis

Aristide Zolberg, "Patterns of National Integration," "The Making of Flemings and Walloons: Belgium, 1830-1914," and "International Migration Policies in a Changing World System," all in *How Many Exceptionalisms? Explorations in Comparative Macroanalysis* (Temple University Press, 2008)

Aristide Zolberg, "Origins of the Modern World System,: A Missing Link" in *World Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Jan., 1981) pp. 253-281.

Week Six (Tuesday, Oct. 14 at 2 p.m.) Mala Htun: The State and Gender Politics

Mala Htun, *Sex and the State*, chapter 1.

Mala Htun, "Is Gender Like Ethnicity?" *Perspectives on Politics*, 2004.

Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon, "Violence, Babies and the State: Labor and Religion in the Fight for Women's Rights" paper presented at the 2008 American Political Science Association Meeting.

Week Seven (Oct. 23) Power Elites or Ruling Class? C. Wright Mills and the Ship that Launched Three Faces

C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite, 2nd Edition* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 382 pages.

Stanley Aronowitz, "A Mills Revival?" *Logos* (Summer), 67 – 93.

Paul Sweezy, "Power Elite or Ruling Class?" in G. William Domhoff and Hoyt B. Ballard, eds., *C. Wright Mills and the Power Elite* (Beacon, 1968), pp. 115-32.

Clyde Barrows, "Plain Marxists, Sophisticated Marxists, and C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite*," *Science & Society* v. 71 no. 4, October 2007, pp. 400-430.

Week Eight (Oct. 30) Banu Bargu: Martyrs of Hunger

Banu Bargu, *Martyrs of Hunger*, selections

Week Nine (Nov. 6) Pluralist Democracy and Nondecisions: New Haven, Air Pollution, and the First and Second Faces of Power

Robert Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City, 2nd Edition* (Yale University Press, 2005), 384 pages.

Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* 2 (July, 1957), pp. 201-215.

Robert Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model," *American Political Science Review* 52 (June): 463-9.

Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review* v 56 (1962), pp. 947-52.

Matthew Crenson, *The Un-Politics of Air Pollution: A Study of Non-Decisionmaking in the Cities* (Johns Hopkins, 1971), selections.

Week Ten (Nov. 13) David Plotke: Explanatory Theory, Normative Theory, and Empirical Research

David Plotke, "Party Reform as Failed Democratic Renewal in the United States, 1968-1972", *Studies in American Political Development* volume 10 number 2 (Fall 1996): 223-288.

David Plotke, "Immigration and Political Incorporation in the Contemporary United States", in Josh DeWind and Philip Kasinitz, editors, *The Handbook of International Migration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999): 294-318.

David Plotke, "Democratic Polities and Antidemocratic Politics," *Theoria III* (December 2006): 6-44.

Week Eleven (Nov. 20) False Consciousness, Consent, and the Third Face of Power: Appalachian Miners and The Difference Realism Makes (or doesn't) to the Study of Politics

Steven Lukes, "Power: A Radical View," in *Power: A Radical View, 2nd Edition* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 14 – 59.

John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (University of Illinois Press, 1982), 267 pages.

Jeffrey Isaacs, "Beyond the Three Faces of Power: A Realist Critique" *Polity*, v. 20 n. 1 (Autumn, 1987), pp. 4-31.

Ian Shapiro and Alexander Wendt, "The Difference that Realism Makes: Social Science and the Politics of Consent" *Politics & Society*, v 20 n 2 (June, 1992), pp. 197-223.

Week Twelve (Tuesday Nov. 25) Between Habermas & Foucault: De-Facing Power, or, a Strategies-and-Tactics Approach to Danish Bus Depots

Clarissa Hayward, *De-Facing Power* (Cambridge, 2000), 214 pages.

Bent Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice* (Chicago, 1998), 290 pages.

Week Thirteen (Dec. 4) Andreas Kalyvas: Democracy, Constituent Power, and the Politics of the Extraordinary

Andreas Kalyvas, 'Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Weber, Schmitt, Arendt,' *Cambridge University Press*, 2008, pp. 1-17, 292-300

Andreas Kalyvas, "The Tyranny of Dictatorship: When the Greek Tyrant met the Roman Dictator," *Political Theory*, 2007, 35:4.

Andreas Kalyvas, "Popular Sovereignty, the Constituent Power, and Democracy," *Constellations*, 2005, 12:2.

Andreas Kalyvas, "From the Act to the Decision: Hannah Arendt and the Question of Decisionism," *Political Theory*, 2004, 32:4.

Andreas Kalyvas, "Carl Schmitt and the Three Moments of Democracy," *Cardozo Law Review*, 2000, 21: 5-6.

Week Fourteen (Dec. 11) OK, Foucault: Disciplinary Power and the Terrible Death of Damians the Regicide

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Vintage, 1979), 325 pages.

Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," "Governmentality," "The Meshes of Power," "Truth and Power," "Power and Strategies," "The Eye of Power," "Body/Power," and "Questions on Geography," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* (Harvester Press, 1980); *Space, Knowledge, and Power: Foucault and Geography*, Jeremy Carmpton and Stuart Elden, eds. (Ashgate, 2007); and Burchell Graham et. al. eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago, 1991).

Nancy Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions" in *Foucault on Modern Power* (Minnesota, 1989), pp. 17 – 34.

James Miller, "An Art of Unbearable Sensations," in *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (Harvard, 2000), chpt. 7.

Sandra Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" in *Femininity and Domination* (Routledge, 1990), pp. 63 – 82.

Week Fifteen (Dec. 18) Hegemony, Resistance, Complexity: Pilfering Peasants, Sluggish Cult Figures, and an Anti-Power approach to Politics

James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (Yale, 1985), 389 pages.

Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago, 1999), 244 pages.

Amy Allen, *Feminist Perspectives on Power*, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2005). *

Sandra Bartky, "On Psychological Oppression" in *Femininity and Domination* (Routledge, 1990), pp. 22-31.*

Emory Roe, "Against Power: For the Politics of Complexity" and "Responses to Roe" in *Transition* Volume 0, Issue 62 (1993), pp. 90 – 169.

FINAL PAPERS DUE DECEMBER 22
(email to listserv & hard copy in my mailbox)