

Political Science 310  
Contemporary Political Philosophy  
Peter Breiner

**Required Books**

Michael Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*  
Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures* ed. by Livingston and Strong (Hackett)  
Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (Harcourt Brace)  
Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (University of Chicago)  
Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (Penguin)  
Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (MIT)  
Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (Vintage)  
Giorgio Agamben, *The State of Exception* (University of Chicago)

**Description**

While contemporary politics has always involved a struggle over political ideology, we are living through a moment when some commentators want to claim that we are living in a post-ideological age while others claim we are living through a period in which intense ideological conflict has become an ineluctable part of our political life. In this course we will examine what it means to understand contemporary political theories as part of ideological contention. While not every one of the political theorists we will read explicitly addresses the concept of political ideology, they all inquire into the ways some of our fundamental political ideas change their meaning when we put them into a context in which they are being fought out against competing political ideas. Or to put the matter more simply, *they all examine what it means to put political ideas under the stress of political conflict*. As we read these theorists, we will want to ask a number of questions: First, should we test political ideas largely for their analytical rigor or should we also include their role as political ideologies in conflict with other ideologies. Second, in what ways do political ideas change under the pressures of political-ideological conflict? Do we discover their irreconcilability with other political ideas or their points of agreement? Do they become more adapted to the needs of political action and less to the need for coherent argument? Do they become more or less rational? Lastly, what are the different contexts in which political ideas are fought out? Should we view them in the backdrop of modern professional politics, the non-routine struggle of world-views, states of emergency, revolution, public discussion, or the increasing use of political ideas to control people? Whatever the answers we may find, we will be reading these theorists for their understanding of the relation of conflicting political ideas or ideologies and political circumstances.

**Course Outline**

- I. Political Theory: Analytic Argument or Political Ideology  
Michael Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*
- II. Max Weber: Political Convictions and Professional Politics—Political Struggle and Value Pluralism

“Politics as a Vocation,” “Science as a Vocation.” in *The Vocation Lectures*.

- III. Karl Mannheim: Defining Ideology and the Attempt to Launch a Political Science of Ideological Fields: Conservatism, Liberalism, and Socialism  
Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* chs 2, 3, 4 (skip chapters 1 and 5).
  
- IV. Carl Schmitt, The Critique of Liberal Politics and the Politics of Friend and Enemy  
  
Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (entire)
  
- V. Hannah Arendt: Trying to find the Political Moment within Revolution. The Meaning of the Social and the Political in the backdrop of Revolution.  
  
Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*.
  
- VI. Jürgen Habermas, Political Struggle and the Public Sphere.  
  
Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*  
Author's Preface, ch. I, chs. 2 (4-5,7), III (8, 10-11), IV (12, 15), V (16, 18-19), VI, VII.
  
- VII. Michel Foucault and Ideas as Discourse and the Microphysics of Power  
Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (entire)
  
- VIII. Emergency powers and the suspension of political-ideological conflict.  
Georgio Agamben, *The State of Exception* (entire)

### **Course Requirements**

There will be a series of short papers of 5-6 pages and a longer take-home final. The first paper covering Weber and Mannheim on the conflict of political convictions and ideologies will be due Thursday, March 6th. The second paper on Schmitt and Arendt on what counts as “the political” in struggle of political ideas will be due on Tuesday, April 8th. The take-home final on the tensions between Habermas’s concept of the public and Foucault’s attack on the public as the sphere of political conflict and the relation of both of them to Agamben’s warnings about the dangers of states of emergency will be handed out the last day of class, Tuesday May 6th. Apart from the papers, you will be expected to read the assigned texts closely and critically. **One time through will not be enough.** The papers together will count two thirds of your grade, and the final will count a third of your grade. I do adjust the grading for improvement. By the same token, should you be frequently absent from class, I will adjust the grade downward accordingly. Plagiarism, the use of someone else work without attribution, will be dealt with harshly—including an immediate failure for the class and potential reference to a university committee.

### **Office Hours**

Tu, Th 10:10-11:10 and by appt. in HU 016; Th 2-4 in Milne 220 downtown. I will be happy to meet with you at other times if you cannot make it to office hours. Office phone: 442-5277. E-mail: [breiner@albany.edu](mailto:breiner@albany.edu)

### **Electronic Reserve**

I will set up an electronic reserve for this class. The password will be pos310. There you will find a copy of the syllabus and a sheet on tips for writing a good political theory paper. Each week I will post a question or two for discussion. Each member of the class will be responsible for at least one entry on the discussion board.

## ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED READING

### **Max Weber**

David Beetham, Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics

Peter Breiner, Max Weber and Democratic Politics

Peter Breiner, "Weber and Mannheim on Sociological Prudence" in McFalls ed. Max Weber's 'Objectivity' Reconsidered

Peter Breiner, "'Unnatural Selection': Max Weber's Concept of *Auslese* and His Criticism of the Reduction of Political Conflict to Economics," International Relations 18, no. 3 (2004): 289-307.

Karl Löwith, Karl Marx and Max Weber

Wolfgang Mommsen, The Age of Bureaucracy

Wolfgang Mommsen, Max Weber and German Politics

Charles Turner, Modernity and Politics in the Work of Max Weber

Dirk Käsler, Max Weber, An Introduction to his Thought

Reinhard Bendix, Max Weber an Intellectual Portrait

Lawrence Scaff, "Max Weber's Politics and Political Education," APSR, 67, 1973.

Lawrence Scaff, Fleeing the Iron Cage

Max Weber, "The Meaning of Ethical Neutrality" in The Methodology of the Social Sciences

Max Weber, "'Objectivity' in Social Science" in The Methodology of the Social Sciences

Anthony Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory

Anthony Giddens, Politics and Sociology in the Thought of Max Weber

Randall Collins, Weberian Sociological Theory

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Crises of Understanding" in Adventures of the Dialectic

W.G. Runciman, A Critique of Max Weber's Philosophy of Science

Social Science and Political Theory

Herbert Marcuse, "Industrialization and Capitalism in the Work of Max Weber" in Negations

Wolfgang Schluchter, Rationalism, Religion, and Domination

Wilhelm Hennis, Max Weber: Essays in Reconstruction

### **Karl Mannheim**

David Kettler and Volker Meja, Karl Mannheim and the Crises of Liberalism

Vince Geohagen, "Ideology and Utopia," Journal of Political Ideologies 9, no. 2 (2004): 123 – 138.

Colin Loader, The Intellectual Development of Karl Mannheim: Culture, Politics and Planning

Karl Mannheim, Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction,

Karl Mannheim, "Conservatism: A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge," in Conservatism, ed.

David Kettler, Volker Meja, and Nico Stehr

Karl Mannheim, "Competition as a Cultural Phenomenon," in From Karl Mannheim, ed. Kurt H. Wolff

J. Rayner, "A Plea for Neutrality. Karl Mannheim's Early Theory of Ideology," History of the Human Sciences 2, no. (1990): 373-388.

Alan Scott, "Politics and Method in Mannheim's 'Ideology and Utopia,'" Sociology 21, no. 1 (1987).

Bryan Turner, "Karl Mannheim's Ideology and Utopia," Political Studies 43, no. 4 (1995): 718-728.

### **Carl Schmitt**

Carl Schmitt, Political Theology

Carl Schmitt, Political Romanticism

Carl Schmitt, The Crises of Parliamentary Democracy

Telos 71, 72, Special Issues on Schmitt

Jürgen Habermas, "Sovereignty and the Führer Demokratie," Times Literary Supplement, Sept. 26, 1986.  
John McCormick, Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism: Against Politics as Technology  
William Scheuerman, Carl Schmitt: The End of Law  
David Dyzenhaus, ed. Law as Politics  
Ellen Kennedy, Constitutional Failure: Carl Schmitt in Weimar

### **Hannah Arendt**

Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism  
Hannah Arendt Between Past and Future  
Hannah Arendt, Crises of the Republic  
M. Canovan, Hannah Arendt: Reinterpretation of her Political Thought  
Jürgen Habermas, "Hannah Arendt's Communications Concept of Power," Social Research, 44, Sp. 1977.  
R. Beiner, Political Judgment  
E. Young-Bruell, For Love of the World  
B. Parekh, Hannah Arendt and the Search for a New Political Philosophy

### **Jürgen Habermas and The Frankfurt School**

Martin Jay, The Dialectical Imagination  
D. Held, The Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School  
P. Connerton, The Tragedy of Enlightenment  
Max Horkheimer, Critical Theory  
Max Horkheimer, T. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment  
Jürgen Habermas, Theory and Practice  
Jürgen Habermas Knowledge and Human Interests  
Jürgen Habermas Legitimation Crises  
Jürgen Habermas Theory of Communicative Action  
Jürgen Habermas Between Fact and Norm  
Jürgen Habermas, "Popular Sovereignty as Procedure" in Bohman, Rehg eds. Deliberative Democracy  
Craig Calhoun ed., Habermas and the Public Sphere  
R. Bernstein, The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory  
Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas  
D. Thompson, D. Held, ed. Habermas: Critical Debates  
R. Roderick, Habermas and the Foundations of Critical Theory  
Peter Dews, ed. Habermas

### **Michel Foucault**

Michel Foucault, Knowledge and Power (interviews)  
Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization  
Michel Foucault, History of Sexuality  
Michel Foucault, The Order of Things  
Michel Foucault, Politics, Philosophy, Culture (essays)  
H. Dreyfus, P. Rabinow, Michel Foucault  
Peter Dews, "Foucault's Theory of Subjectivity" May-April, 1984 New Left Review  
C. Taylor, "Freedom and Truth in Foucault" in Philosophy and the Human Sciences  
Gilles Deleuze, Foucault