

Political Science 283: Contemporary Political Theory

Instructor: James Johnson ☞ Fall Semester 2013

Office Hours: Thursday 1:30-3:00 ☞ Harkness 312

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In this class we will explore the intersections of political theory and photography. The class will run as a seminar in which we will discuss assigned readings and images. Reading for the course is heavy and difficult. The assigned readings are by both political theorists (Arendt; Foucault; Dewey) and by photographers and critics. Your job will be to begin to draw connections among them. You need to keep up with the readings and come to class prepared to stick your neck out! In that sense this will be like a graduate seminar in which everyone is an active participant.

Books: I have NOT ordered these at the UR Bookstore. You should be able to find them all used on line at your preferred e-purveyor. You will not be able to participate in class without a copy of the book.

Hannah Arendt. 2003. *The Portable Hannah Arendt*. Penguin.

John Dewey. 1927. *The Public & Its Problems*. Swallow Press.

Steve Edwards. 2006. *Photography: A Very Short Introduction*.
Oxford University Press.

Michel Foucault. 1978. *Discipline & Punish*. Vintage.

David Levi Strauss. 2003. *Between the Eyes*. Aperture.

Susie Linfield. 2010. *The Cruel Radiance*. University of Chicago Press.

Sharon Sliwinski. 2011. *Human Rights in Camera*. University of Chicago Press.

Susan Sontag. 2003. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. FSG.

In addition to these books I will deposit a number of articles and essays on the Blackboard page for the course. I will do the same for Power Point presentations of images.

Your grade in the class will be based on Participation (10%), one short review of two films (20%) and a final paper on a topic to be negotiated with me (70%).

Films: These will be placed on reserve in the Art Library in Rush Rhees Library.

Jennifer Baichwal "Manufactured Landscapes" (2007)

Paul Carlin. "The Spectre of Hope" (2000)

Christian Frei "War Photographer" (2001)

Susan Meiselas, *et. al.* "Pictures from a Revolution" (2007)

Each of these four films explores the work of an important contemporary photographer. You will need to watch at least two of these and write a short "review" discussing the relation between the relevant photographers. See dates below.

Class Schedule - We will *aspire* to keep to this schedule of readings.

September

3 - Introduction

5 - Susan Sontag - 'Photography: A Little Summa'

10 - Patrick Maynard. 1997. *The Engine of Visualization*. Cornell University Press.
Pages 3-145.

12 - James Johnson. 2012. "Aggregates Unseen," *Perspectives on Politics* 10:659-68.

17 - *Edwards *Photography*

19 - Alan Trachtenberg. 1989. *Reading American Photographs*. Hill and Wang.
Pages 164-230.

John Stomberg. 2007. "The Genealogy of Orthodox Documentary" In
Beautiful Suffering. Ed. Mark Reinhardt, *et. al.*. University of Chicago Press.

24 - *Sontag *Regarding the Pain of Others*

26 - James Johnson. 2011. "The Arithmetic of Compassion," *British Journal of
Political Science* 41:621-643.

October

1 - *Dewey *The Public & Its Problems*

3 - *Dewey.

8 - No Class, Fall Break

10 - Film

15 - Film

17 - *Arendt *Portable Hannah Arendt*.
Film Review Due

22 - *Sliwinski *Human Rights in Camera*.

24 - Patricia C Phillips. 2003. "Creating Democracy: A Dialogue with
Krzysztof Wodiczko," *Art Journal* 62:32-49.

29 - *Foucault *Discipline & Punish*.

31 - Catch Up

November

5 - *Levi Strauss *Between the Eyes*.

7 - Patricia Phillips. 2005. "The Aesthetics of Witnessing: An Interview with
Alfredo Jaar" *Art Journal* 64:6-27.

Abigail Solomon-Godeau. 2005. "Lament of the Images: Alfredo Jaar & the Ethics of Representation" *Aperture* #181:36-47.
Alfredo Jaar & David Levi Strauss. 2009. "A New Lament," *Aperture* #197: 22-23.

12 - Judith Butler. 2009. "Torture & the Ethics of Photography." In *Frames of War*. Verso.

14 - Amelie Rorty. 1985. 'Varieties of Rationality and Varieties of Emotion', *Social Science Information* 24: 343-53.

Elizabeth Spelman. 1999. "Anger: The Diary." In Robert Solomon, ed. *Wicked Pleasures*. Rowman & Littlefield.

19 - *Linfield *The Cruel Radiance*

21 - *Linfield.

26 - John Berger. 2001. *Selected Essays*. Pantheon. Pages 279-82,286-93.

28 - No Class, Thanksgiving

December

3 - Sebastião Salgado. 2002. *Migrations: The Work of Sebastião Salgado*. (Berkeley: Townsend Center Occasional Papers #26).

5 - Ingrid Sischey. 1991. "Good Intentions." In Liz Herron and Val Williams, eds, *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography from the 1850's to the Present*. Duke University Press, 1996.

Julian Stallabrass. 1997. "Sebastião Salgado and Fine Art Photojournalism," *New Left Review* #223: 131-60;

10 - Ariella Azoulay. 2010. "What is a Photograph? What is Photography?" *Philosophy of Photography* 1:9-13.

12 - Catch Up

19 - Final Paper Due (Noon)