

**Contemporary Political Philosophy**  
**MA in Political Philosophy - Universitat Pompeu Fabra**  
Syllabus

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The main objective of this course is to provide an introduction to selected parts of the works of some of the most influential 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Century political philosophers. The course is organized around five different thematic areas. We shall study at least four of them.

Each class session will consist of about 50% lecture and 50% class discussion. Each student is expected to participate in class discussions in an informed way. This will require careful and attentive reading of the assigned material before we discuss it in class.

**I. Theories of Modernity**

—Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. by H. H. Garth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 77-128.

—Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere,” in *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics. A reader*, ed. by Steven Seidman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), pp. 231-236.

—Hannah Arendt, “Understanding and Politics,” *Partisan Review*, 20:4 (1953), pp. 377-392.

**II. The State of Exception**

—Carl Schmitt, “Definition of Sovereignty,” in *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 5-15.

—Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” in *Selected Writings. Vol. 4 (1938-1940)* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 389-400.

—Giorgio Agamben, “The State of Exception as a Paradigm of Government,” in *State of Exception* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 1-31.

**III. Feminism**

—Simone de Beauvoir, “Woman’s Situation and Character,” in *The Second Sex* (London: Vintage, 1997), pp. 608-639.

—Judith Butler, “‘Women’ as the Subject of Feminism” and “The Compulsory Order of Sex/Gender/Desire,” in *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 1-10.

—Nancy Fraser, “Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History,” *New Left Review* 56 (March-April 2009), pp. 97-117.

#### **IV. Critiques of Capitalism**

—V. I. Lenin, “Chapter I: Class Society and the State,” in *The State and Revolution*: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/staterev/> (June 2010).

—Antonio Gramsci, “State and Civil Society,” in *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, ed. by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence & Wishhart, 1973), pp. 206-276.

Contemporary:

—Ellen Meiksins Wood, “Civil Society and the Politics of Identity,” in *Democracy Against Capitalism. Renewing Historical Materialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 238-263.

—Alex Callinicos, “Equality and the Philosophers,” in *Equality* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), pp. 36-87.

#### **V. Post-Marxism**

—Ernesto Laclau & Chantal Mouffe, “Hegemony and Radical Democracy,” in *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London, New York: Verso, 1985), pp. 149-194.

—Étienne Balibar, “‘Rights of Man’ and ‘Rights of the Citizen’: The Modern Dialectic of Equality and Freedom,” in *Masses, Classes, Ideas. Studies on Politics and Philosophy before and after Marx* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 39-59.

—Alain Badiou, “A Speculative Disquisition on the Concept of Democracy,” in *Metapolitics* (London: Verso, 2005), pp. 78-95.

—Jacques Rancière, “The Rationality of Disagreement,” in *Disagreement. Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 43-60.

—Antonio Negri & Michael Hardt, “Preface” and “World Order,” in *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. xi-21.

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