

## Political Science 9504B: *Critical Political Theory*

Short Course Outline 2025 Winter term

### **Course Information**

Instructor: Nandita Biswas Mellamphy; graduate winter term; in-person on Thursday, 9AM-11:50 AM.

### **Course Description:**

This course introduces graduate students to critical approaches in political theory, and focuses on building familiarity with – and understanding of how to use – political theory and criticism perspectives and methods in developing research. The course will begin with the questions of what it means to be ‘critical,’ and how one takes a ‘critical’ approach in social science research. Moreover, what is the researcher supposed to ‘be critical’ of? The first part of the course will situate participants historically within some major theoretical and philosophical debates that have informed social sciences research, especially related to Interpretivism, Critical theory, Social Constructionism, Feminisms, and Post-colonialism.

The second part of the course will turn to a review of select reflexive and critical methodologies like narrative analysis, critical discourse analysis, gender and feminist analyses, and students will participate in workshops in which guest researchers using critical methods will talk about their research, design, and methods.

The final part of the course culminates in individual student presentations in which participants will get the opportunity to present their research ideas and course takeaways, and audience members will get to ask questions and provide peer feedback.

### **Course Evaluation Breakdown:**

Seminar (Thinklab) Participation:  $3 \times 5\% = 15\%$

Workshop Participation:  $3 \times 5\% = 15\%$

In-class essays:  $3 \times 10\%/\text{ea} = 30\%$

Research note assignment: 20%

Individual presentation: 15%

Peer-feedback of presentations:  $5 \times 1\% = 5\%$