

The University of Western Ontario

THE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF THEORY & CRITICISM

Contemporary theories of Fascism and Counter-Fascism

2018

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COURSE DESCRIPTION :

The course's aim is to examine the possibility that fascist doctrine is infiltrating contemporary political theory. Thus, we should ponder questions such as, Did Fascism end with the Allied victory over the Axis power in 1945, or has it been lying dormant and is now reawakening? Latest events in Europe and other locations, suggest that right wing nationalist parties are openly reviving the populist discourse first carried out in the early 20th century. Historically, fascist politics involved organized mass movements, armed militias and paramilitary groups who assaulted political opponents, violently suppressed critical speech, and impeded the right to assemble. Fascists scapegoated minorities, burned trade union and leftist headquarters, assassinated their leaders and beat their members. Programmatically, they attacked pacifists and defended overseas wars and empires in the name of 'living space'.

However, fascism also permeated areas of creative endeavor such as literature (poetry), architecture, visual arts and philosophy. Futurism, steered by Filippo Marinetti's incendiary pronouncements, would be an expression of fascism in Mussolini's commanded Italy. Traditions of ultra-conservatism, the ideas of Nietzsche, Wagner and other artists and intellectuals, helped to make racist doctrines respectable.

Presently, the increasing political success of the far right in Western Europe and the explosion of ultra-nationalisms in Eastern Europe beg for an assessment of the current state of debate. To deconstruct contemporary theories of fascism requires a semiology that exposes the signs and manifestations of fascist literature, fascist art, fascist political theory, and fascist regimes. The study of signs and symbols will help to reveal the structural and ideological links between fascism, capitalism and modernity (globalism).

Counter-fascist theorists and activists have developed a thematic and intellectual analysis of fascism. The course consists of a critical discussion of the origins and present manifestations of fascist doctrine. So far, contemporary fascism has been challenged by mass electoral upheavals, general strikes, and armed resistance in some locations. Popular movements in France, Spain, South Africa, Argentina and Brazil, have called for popular revolutions.

All or some of the following topics will guide the seminar discussions:

1 – The seductive nature of fascism and its signs and symbols; 2 – The 'morality' of fascism; 3 – Women and fascism; 4- Fascism and utopia; 5- Fascism and populism; 6- Proletarian fascism; 7- Fascism and capitalism; 8- Fascism and the visual arts and literature

Each participant in this course is invited to analyze an aspect of fascism and its counter-fascist response. The list of readings below will give you an opportunity to choose your preferred sources. All, or most of the readings are readily available at Weldon (some have electronic access). therefore there is no required text for this course.

REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

This course is seminar-based, and hence reading and writing intensive. The readings are a means to give you a basis for critique and discussion. Each of you is expected to give a seminar presentation *based on class readings* (choose anyone of the recommended chapters, or books) and submit a summary in written form a week after the presentation of about **five pages**. This is worth 30% of the final grade. For the second presentation, you will choose a real world example of fascist and/or counter fascist practice. In **6 to 8 pages**, you should describe its evolution and present state of affairs. This presentation is also worth 30% of the grade.

As above, you will provide a brief summary of your proposed subject and a brief rationalization of why you chose this particular example.

The final paper, of about **12 pages** should incorporate the knowledge gained through the discussions and readings and your own opinions. This paper is worth 30% of the total grade. The remaining 10% is awarded for class participation and attendance.

SEMINAR PRESENTATION

Oral presentations are to be approximately 20 minutes in length to allow time for discussion. Select an aspect of a given text that intrigues you, and that will sustain further investigation. It is advisable to select a text from readings of the week and/or previous weeks. You might wish to raise questions at the end of your presentation to further class discussion. You may utilise a power point presentation to emphasize the main points of your discussion.

The pace of an oral delivery and the amount of eye contact a speaker has with an audience often determine the effectiveness of the presentation. Speak clearly, and slowly.

Peer Assessment of Seminar Presentations

All students will participate in the assessment of seminar presentations by making constructive comments and prompting questions to further the conversation.

FOR MAIN ESSAY—SOME QUESTIONS APPROXIMATING A METHOD

For the main 12-page essay, I would suggest that you choose a contemporary theorist from our list of authors and discuss his or her contribution. You may contextualize it (situate it) within the readings and seminar discussions. A method could also incorporate a systematic reading of signs and symbols and a historical-geographical framework of your chosen topic.

I would appreciate a printed-paper for all three assignments plus an electronic version of each. In addition, I will look for consistency in the style of citation. MLA and or Chicago style.

*Please note the schedule below is provisional. If discussion is productive, we may carry over a topic from one week to another

Week 1 *HOW HAS FASCISM BEEN THEORIZED SO FAR? GENERAL DISCUSSION OF INTRODUCTORY READINGS*

- Seminar Sign Up
- Theory Discussion Leader Sign Up
- General questions about course organization, readings, presentations, etc.

Reading for general discussion for week 2:

Thurlow, Richard C. *FASCISM*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999

Week 2 *FASCIST SIGNS AND SYMBOLS*

Readings for week 3:

Passmore, Kevin. *FASCISM: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014

Week 3 *FIRST SEMINAR PRESENTATION*

Readings for week 4:

Garcia, Hugo and Mercedes Yusta, Xavier Tabet and Christina Clímaco (Eds.) *RETHINKING ANTIFASCISM: HISTORY, MEMORY AND POLITICAL USES, 1922 TO THE PRESENT*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2016

Week 4 *SECOND SEMINAR PRESENTATION*

Readings for week 5:

Santiáñez-Tiό, Nil. *TOPOGRAPHIES OF FASCISM [ELECTRONIC RESOURCE]: HABITUS, SPACE, AND WRITING IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY SPAIN*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013

Week 5 *THIRD SEMINAR PRESENTATION*

Readings for week 6:

Testa, M. *MILITANT ANTI-FASCISM: A HUNDRED YEARS OF RESISTANCE* Edinburgh: AK Press, 2015

Week 6 *FOURTH SEMINAR PRESENTATION*

Readings for week 7:

Renton, Dave. THIS ROUGH GAME: FASCISM AND ANTI-FASCISM. Stroud: Sutton, 2001.

Week 7 *FIFTH SEMINAR PRESENTATION*

Reading for week 8:

Woodley, Daniel. FASCISM AND POLITICAL THEORY: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FASCIST IDEOLOGY London; New York: Routledge, 2010.

Week 8 *SIXTH SEMINAR PRESENTATION*

Reading for week 9:

Copsey, Nigel, ANTI-FASCISM IN BRITAIN. Basingstoke, Hampshire [England]: Macmillan Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000

Week 9 *SEVENTH SEMINAR PRESENTATION*

Reading for week 10:

Poggi, Christine, INVENTING FUTURISM: THE ART AND POLITICS OF ARTIFICIAL OPTIMISM. Princeton: Princeton University Press, c2009.

Week 10 *EIGHTH SEMINAR PRESENTATION*

Readings for week 11:

Wolin, Richard LEFT FASCISM: GEORGES BATAILLE AND THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY, Constellations Volume 2, No 3, 1996

Week 11 *NINTH SEMINAR PRESENTATION*

Readings for week 12:

Bauman, Zygmunt, MODERNITY AND THE HOLOCAUST. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999

Week 12 *TENTH SEMINAR PRESENTATION*

Week 13 *COURSE REVIEW*

SELECTED READINGS

Bauman, Zygmunt, MODERNITY AND THE HOLOCAUST. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999

Baxa Paul ROADS AND RUINS: THE SYMBOLIC LANDSCAPE OF FASCIST ROME. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.

Copsey, Nigel, ANTI-FASCISM IN BRITAIN. Basingstoke, Hampshire [England]: Macmillan Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000

Copsey, Nigel, CONTEMPORARY BRITISH FASCISM: THE BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY AND THE QUEST FOR LEGITIMACY Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008

Costa Pinto, António (Ed.) RETHINKING THE NATURE OF FASCISM: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire [England]; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011

DELEUZE & FASCISM [ELECTRONIC RESOURCE: SECURITY, WAR, and AESTHETICS. Edited by Brad Evans and Julian Reid. London; New York: Routledge, 2013.

Featherstone, David, SOLIDARITY: HIDDEN HISTORIES AND GEOGRAPHIES OF INTERNATIONALISM London; New York: Zed Books, 2012

Fascinating (British) Fascism: David Britton's Lord Horror Benjamin Noys, RETHINKING HISTORY 6:3 (2002), pp. 305–318

Fogu, Claudio, Fascism and Philosophy: The Case of Actualism, SOUTH CENTRAL REVIEW 23.1 (Spring 2006): 4–22.

Folch-Serra, M. Propaganda in Franco's Time. BULLETIN OF SPANISH STUDIES, Vol. LXXXIX, Numbers 7-8, pp. 227-240, 2012

Garcia, Hugo and Mercedes Yusta, Xavier Tabet and Christina Clímaco (Eds.) RETHINKING ANTIFASCISM: HISTORY, MEMORY AND POLITICAL USES, 1922 TO THE PRESENT. New York: Berghahn Books, 2016

Griffin, Roger. THE NATURE OF FASCISM. London: Pinter Publishers, 1991

Griffin, Roger (Ed.) INTERNATIONAL FASCISM: THEORIES, CAUSES AND THE NEW CONSENSUS. London: Arnold, 1998.

Griffin, Roger and Werner Loh and Andreas Umland (eds.) FASCISM PAST AND PRESENT, WEST AND EAST: AN INTERNATIONAL DEBATE ON CONCEPTS AND CASES IN THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE EXTREME RIGHT Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2006

Heynen, Robert. DEGENERATION AND REVOLUTION: RADICAL CULTURAL POLITICS AND THE BODY IN WEIMAR GERMANY. Chicago: Haymarket, 2016.

Hillach, Ansgar and Jerold Wikoff, Ulf Zimmerman. The Aesthetics of Politics: Walter Benjamin's "Theories of German Fascism", NEW GERMAN CRITIQUE, No. 17, Special Walter Benjamin Issue (spring, 1979), 99-119.

Hobsbawm, E. J. (Eric J.). HOW TO CHANGE THE WORLD: MARX AND MARXISM, 1840-2011 London: Little, Brown, 2011

Hood, Stuart, INTRODUCING FASCISM: [A GRAPHIC GUIDE] Stuart Hood & Litza Jansz. London: Icon Books, 2013.

Italian Fascism and utopia, CHARLES BURDETT, HISTORY OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES Vol. 16 No. 1, 2003 pp. 93–108

Kerr-Koch, Kathleen. ROMANCING FASCISM: MODERNITY AND ALLEGORY IN BENJAMIN, DE MAN, SHELLEY New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2013

Marcuse, Herbert, Douglas Kellner "Technology, War and Fascism" COLLECTED PAPERS OF HERBERT MARCUSE, volume1, 1998

Mosse, George L. THE CRISIS OF GERMAN IDEOLOGY; INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF THE THIRD REICH. London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, [1966, c1964].

Passmore, Kevin. FASCISM: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014

Poggi, Christine, INVENTING FUTURISM: THE ART AND POLITICS OF ARTIFICIAL OPTIMISM. Princeton: Princeton University Press, c2009.

Pugliese Stanislao, G. (Ed.) FASCISM, ANTI-FASCISM, AND THE RESISTANCE IN ITALY: 1919 TO THE PRESENT. Lanham, Md.; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004.

Rabinbach, Anson Unclaimed Heritage: Ernst Bloch's Heritage of Our Times and the Theory of Fascism NEW GERMAN CRITIQUE, No. 11 (spring, 1977) 5-21.

Reich Wilhelm 1946 THE MASS PSYCHOLOGY OF FASCISM, 3rd rev. and enl. ed. / translated from the German manuscript by Theodore P. Wolfe. New York: Orgone Institute Press, 1946

Renton, Dave. THIS ROUGH GAME: FASCISM AND ANTI-FASCISM. Stroud: Sutton, 2001.

Rhodes, Richard. HELL AND GOOD COMPANY: THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR AND THE WORLD IT MADE. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015.

Santiáñez-Tió, Nil. TOPOGRAPHIES OF FASCISM [ELECTRONIC RESOURCE]: HABITUS, SPACE, AND WRITING IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY SPAIN. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013

Testa, M. MILITANT ANTI-FASCISM: A HUNDRED YEARS OF RESISTANCE Edinburgh: AK Press, [2015]

Thurlow, Richard C. FASCISM. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999

Wolin, Richard LEFT FASCISM: GEORGES BATAILLE AND THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY, Constellations Volume 2, No 3, 1996

Woodley, Daniel. FASCISM AND POLITICAL THEORY: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FASCIST IDEOLOGY London; New York: Routledge, 2010.

Virno, Paolo and Alessia Ricciardi Theses on the New European Fascism, GREY ROOM, No. 21 (fall, 2005), pp. 21-25