

# Radical Political Thought

<b>POLI 364</b> <b>Fall 2013</b>  <b>Trottier 1100</b> <b>T / TH 10.05-11.25</b>	<b>Professor Yves Winter</b> email: <a href="mailto:yves.winter@mcgill.ca">yves.winter@mcgill.ca</a> twitter: @whywinter <b>Office:</b> 418 Ferrier <b>Office hours:</b> TH 12-2 pm (starting Sep 12) & by appt  <b>TA: Cameron Fleming</b> <a href="mailto:cameron.fleming@mail.mcgill.ca">cameron.fleming@mail.mcgill.ca</a>
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## Description

This course introduces students to the tradition of radical political thought with a focus on the twentieth century. At its height in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, radical political theory was a type of theoretical practice that linked a philosophical and historical critique of social and political orders to a revolutionary politics, that is, to a mode of politics aimed at the overthrow of the existing order. In the mid-twentieth century, this unity of philosophical-historical analysis and revolutionary politics has come undone. In this course, we will study this breakdown and the consequences for the radical tradition in the present.

Beginning with an examination of the nineteenth-century works of Feuerbach, Marx, and Engels, we will follow two distinct but related trajectories of radical political thought in the twentieth century: (1) the revolutionary tradition (communist, feminist, and anti-colonial); and (2) the tradition of critical theory, which emerged at some distance from (and sometimes in tension with) revolutionary and working-class politics.

## Prerequisites

This is a 300-level course. In accordance with departmental regulations, this means that students must have taken a 200-level course in the same field (i.e. POLI 231 or 232).

## Learning Outcomes

The pedagogical objective is that by the end of this course students will be able to (or will have improved their ability to):

- define, identify, and discuss the themes, preoccupations, and limits of radical political theory
- contextualize the terms and concerns of political ideas
- interpret and explain challenging theoretical and philosophical texts
- recognize, distinguish, analyze, and evaluate theoretical arguments
- communicate effectively about philosophical questions
- construct coherent and sound arguments

## Required Texts

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Philcox trans.), ISBN 978-0802141323

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Jephcott trans.), ISBN 978-0804736336

Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, ISBN 978-0807014172

Enrique Dussel, *Twenty Theses on Politics*, ISBN 978-0822343288

Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, ISBN 978-1859844359

All other readings (starred \*) will be available on myCourses.

Students are encouraged to read texts in the original languages. Contact me for bibliographic information.

## Assignments and Grades

Written assignments for this course will consist of **one** (1-2 page) paper outline and **two** (5-page) papers.

A detailed grading rubric and further instructions for both paper outlines and papers will be posted on myCourses.

All writing assignments are due on the dates indicated in the syllabus. They are to be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class. Late papers will be docked one third of a letter grade for every day late, including weekends. Do not send assignments via email unless otherwise instructed.

Writing assignments should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins and 12pt font. Please number your pages and staple or fasten them together. All assignments should be spell-checked and proof-read for syntax, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Your written work will be graded on originality, reasoning, organization, clarity of exposition, and style.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION** will be graded in accordance with the policies laid out below.

Final grades are calculated according to the following schedule:

Paper Outline	25%
First Paper	30%
Second Paper	30%
Class Participation	15%

## Classroom Policies

This course includes **mandatory conferences** which will start after the add/drop period.

**Attendance** is mandatory. Students are expected to attend all class meetings (including conferences) and be in class on time. This course has the following attendance policy: (1) there are no

excused absences; (2) every student gets two absences without penalty; (3) starting with the third absence, your participation grade will be lowered by a full grade for every absence; (4) more than five absences will lead to automatic failure in this course. Exceptions to this policy will only be made for serious and documented medical conditions or disabilities.

**Participation** is essential for active and collaborative learning. Research shows that people learn more when they actively engage the material and the learning process, rather than passively listen to the instructor. Class meetings will involve various forms of active learning, including writing exercises. You are responsible for having read the assigned texts prior to the class meeting and having digested it. Prepare for class by taking notes and by thinking about questions, ideas, or problems that arise in your reading. Be sure to bring books and hard copy printouts of readings to class. Your participation grade will reflect your attendance, preparedness, and active participation in class.

McGill University values **academic integrity**. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information). Please note that I take plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty seriously, and your work will be reviewed for potential plagiarism issues by means of text-matching software.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant-e a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.

**Mobile computing devices** (but not cell phones) are permitted in class for note-taking only and only insofar as their use does not disrupt the teaching and learning process. Any other use of electronic equipment (including e-mail, web surfing, games, chat, messaging, and so on) is distracting and disruptive to fellow students and is not permitted during class time.

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#) (514)398-6009.

## **Class Schedule**

Sep 3	Introduction
Sep 5	No class / no office hours
Sep 10	Ludwig Feuerbach, "Introduction to the <i>Essence of Christianity</i> "* Ludwig Feuerbach, "The Necessity of a Reform of Philosophy"*
Sep 12	Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach"* Karl Marx "Ruthless Criticism" (Letter to Arnold Ruge, Sept 1843)*
Sep 17	Karl Marx, "Wage Labor and Capital"* Karl Marx, "Value, Price, and Profit"*
Sep 19	Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party"* Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme"*

- Sep 24 Vladimir I. Lenin, *Selected Writings on Revolutionary Organization*\*
- Sep 26 Vladimir I. Lenin, *Selected Writings on Revolutionary Strategy*\*  
Vladimir I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, chs. 1, 3, 5\*
- Oct 1 Rosa Luxemburg, “Organizational Questions of Russian Social Democracy”\*  
Vladimir I. Lenin, “One Step Forward, Two Steps Back -- Reply to Rosa Luxemburg”\*  
Vladimir I. Lenin, *Selected Writings on Imperialism*\*
- Oct 3 Mao Tse-Tung, “On Contradiction”\*  
Mao Tse-Tung, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions”\*  
**PAPER OUTLINE DUE**
- Oct 8 José Carlos Mariátegui, *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*, chapters 1-3, 5\*  
José Carlos Mariátegui, “The Problem of Race in Latin America”\*
- Oct 10 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 1-62
- Oct 15 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 97-180
- Oct 17 No class
- Oct 22 Sheila Rowbotham, *Woman’s Consciousness, Man’s World*, pp. 49-102\*
- Oct 24 Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*, pp. 3-37, 153-216\*
- Oct 29 Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. 1-62
- Oct 31 Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. 94-172  
**FIRST PAPER DUE**
- Nov 5 Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, pp. 1-120
- Nov 7 Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, pp. 203-257
- Nov 12 Enrique Dussel, *Twenty Theses on Politics*, pp. 1-68
- Nov 14 Enrique Dussel, *Twenty Theses on Politics*, pp. 69-138
- Nov 19 Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, pp. 1-57
- Nov 21 Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, pp. 58-144
- Nov 26 Giorgio Agamben et al., *Democracy in What State?* pp. 1-81, 100-120\*
- Nov 28 Review  
**SECOND PAPER DUE**