

Western University
2014-15
Political Science 2142a: **Politics and Pop Culture**

Instructor: Professor Nandita, Biswas Mellamphy

Office hours: Mondays 1:30-2:30 PM; or by appointment

nbiswasm@uwo.ca or 519-661-2111 ext. 81161

Class location and times: Mondays 11:30am-1:20pm, B&GS 0165

Requisites/Anti-requisites: N/A

Course Description:

This course explores politics and popular culture through (and in) film, television, as well as digital and print media (advertisements, blogs etc.). As Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan once famously argued in the mid-20th century, the *medium is the message: perception influences communication*. With the increasing popularity of digital culture, television news shows and reality programming, as well as new social media and networks, it is apparent that various forms of political consciousness are taking shape in and around popular culture. Today, the roles of citizen and of consumer are blurred, and the main aim of this course will be to ask whether the convergence between entertainment and politics is a good or a bad thing: can popular cultural forms create new utopian visions that fuel political change, or conversely, do they only lead to manipulation of perceptions and practices of political and cultural control? Throughout the course, we will examine selected representations of globalization, orientalism, capitalism, urbanism, consumerism, war, terrorism, transhumanism, technology, science, as well as critically acquaint students with some major political theories of international relations such as realism, idealism, constructivism, feminism, neo-Marxism and postmodernism. Topics will include:

- the ideology of humanitarianism
- the politics of fear and authority
- the politics of war and (in)security
- the politics of cyberculture and social media
- the politics of money, consumption and desire
- the politics of science and technology

Course Objectives:

- Identify and recognize diverse political concepts, problems and theories in relation to popular culture
- Conceptualize political problems theoretically and apply theoretical interpretations to critically analyze current events
- Explore the complex interrelationships between political, social, cultural and historical forces

Course Materials:

Ilan Kapoor, *Celebrity Humanitarianism: The Ideology of Global Charity* (New York: Routledge, 2013). Available at The Bookstore, or for a cheaper version try abebooks.com; also available as an online text at Weldon library.

Derek Jensen and George Draffan, *Welcome to the Machine: Science, Surveillance and the Culture of Control* (Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004). Available at The Bookstore, or for a cheaper version try abebooks.com; PDF available on course website.

Bakker, Scott. *Neuropath*. Penguin: 2008. Will be available at The Bookstore; also try abebooks.com

Film Materials: Each week, you will be assigned one or more films/shows to view as an accompaniment to the required readings. Most of these materials are available on services such as *Netflix*. It is your responsibility to come to class having viewed the assigned materials.

Other Required Course Material: As indicated by the Weekly Reading Schedule below, other articles have been assigned to accompany your reading of the primary texts. All articles not found in the course textbooks are available on the course website.

Course Website (OWL site): All the course administration, including required readings, announcements, and detailed explanation of assignments will be found on the course website. *The website has not been developed to be a replacement for attending class.*

Evaluation: Full instructions for each assignment will be posted on the course website.

- Class Engagement on *Twitter* = 20%; minimum 15 tweets directly engaging class materials covering a minimum of 8 different class lectures between September 15-December 8, 2014. See section 'Class Engagement Grading Guide' below. This is the course Twitter page: <http://twitter.com/popcultpolitics>

- Critical Book Review of *Celebrity Humanitarianism: The Ideology of Global Charity*= 30%; double spaced, typed, 1 inch margins, 3-4 pages; **OFFICIAL HARDCOPY IS DUE OCTOBER 20, 14 AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS (penalties begin as of 1:30pm on this date).** Detailed instructions for assignment will be available on the course website. For submission instructions, see section 'Submission Instructions for Critical Book Review', below. This assignment requires both a hard (printed) and soft (electronic) copy, and will be processed through the course website's TurnItIn software. For more information, see section 'Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty', below.
- Final In-class Exam (short and long answer questions)= 50%; **DECEMBER 1, 2014 DURING CLASS TIME. OFFICIAL EXAM PROCEDURE WILL BE IN EFFECT.**

Western Medical Accommodation Policy (Medical Notes): In May, 2008, The University of Western Ontario's Senate approved a medical note policy, which affects all students. Please follow the procedures as set out by the University which includes **presenting your official documentation to your Academic Counseling office (not to me)** after which an academic counsellor will make a recommendation to me regarding whether or not to grant an extension without penalty. For detailed information and forms, please visit <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>, and for further policy information please visit http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf Only in cases in which the student has presented appropriate documentation to their Academic Counseling Officer will any extensions without penalty be considered.

Accommodation for Special Needs: If you are a student with special needs, please visit Western's *Student Development Services* (<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>) to access the resources available to you. If you are seeking academic accommodation, please see me as soon as possible, ideally at the beginning of the course (for pre-established conditions, accommodation will not be considered for those who wait till the end of classes to discuss their issues with me).

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: "Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/choloff.pdf>." The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic format for plagiarism checking. (UWO Senate 2002-03)."

Policies: To discuss these policies further, please feel free to meet with me.

- *All assignments must be printed (excluding in class exercises and scheduled exams) and submitted in person on the deadline (email submissions will not be accepted unless prior*

permission has been given by the professor). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his/her assignment has been officially received (for example, if you slip your paper under my door without notifying me, I am not responsible for a 'lost' paper and this cannot be used as a grounds for appeal).

- *Assignment Deadlines:* Please consider these deadlines 'sacred'! Only in cases in which the student has presented appropriate documentation to their Academic Counseling Officer will any extensions without penalty be considered.
- *Late Penalties:* Late essay submissions may be subject to a penalty deduction of **5% a day** (from the time of the hardcopy due date as specified by the professor, until the day that the assignment is received by the instructor, including weekends and holidays).
- You are free to use your lap-tops to take notes, but no digital taping (either voice or image) of the lectures is allowed.
- Problems with accessibility to the course website cannot be used as a basis for missing deadlines or appealing your grades. This means that if you are having problems accessing the course website, **you must notify your instructor as soon as possible** and you will be directed to a computer technician.

Class engagement grading guide

Excellent (85%+)= Clearly has done and prepared questions on virtually all readings; intelligently uses this understanding and these questions in discussion; leads debate; offers analysis and comments; always has ideas on theme of reading; takes care not to dominate; asks questions

Very Good (80-84%)= Has done most readings; provides competent analysis of reading when prompted by others; thoughtful comments and questions for the most part; willing, able and frequent contributor.

Good (70-79%)= Displays familiarity with most readings, but tends not to analyze them or to relate them to the course material; has basic grasp of key concepts and occasional ideas on the main theme of the reading; arguments are sporadic and at times incomplete or poorly supported; unwilling to ask questions.

Somewhat Poor (60-69%)= Actual knowledge of material is outweighed by improvised comments and remarks; remarks in class marred by misunderstandings of key concepts; seldom contributes effectively to discussion of the main theme; often digresses in unhelpful ways; sporadic.

Poor (50-59%)= Little or no apparent familiarity with assigned material; rarely speaks; parrots text or comments of others; rarely participates.

Very Poor (below 50%)= No apparent familiarity with assigned material; never participates.

Submission Instructions for Critical Book Review Assignment: The printed version that is submitted in class counts as the official submission. You will also be required to upload the exact same version of the paper electronically through the 'Assignments' folder of your course website The

first step is to hand in the print/hard-copy version of your essay in class on October 20, 2014 at the beginning of class. The second step is to submit an electronic version through the OWL course website (TURNITIN is built into the OWL system, so you do not need to do anything other than electronically submit the paper through the course website).

Here are the instructions for the second step:

1. YOU MUST SUBMIT THE EXACT SAME PAPER AS AN ELECTRONIC COPY THROUGH OWL.
2. The **LINK OPENS OCTOBER 21, 2014 AT 6AM** – before this, you will not see the link). On or after this date and time, go to the 'Assignments' link in the Menubar of the OWL coursewebsite to access the 'Critical Book Review' link in order to upload your electronic version.
3. YOU MUST SUBMIT A COPY TO THIS LINK. IF YOU DO NOT SUBMIT YOU WILL BE ASSIGNED A '0' UNTIL YOUR ELECTRONIC COPY IS SUBMITTED AND CHECKED.
4. SUBMIT EITHER AS A *WORD* OR *PDF* DOCUMENT ONLY (OWL DOES NOT ACCEPT PAGES OR ANY OTHER FORMAT).

Weekly Reading Schedule: Subject to modification

* Available on course website

Unless indicated otherwise, all films/shows should be viewed prior to class.

Date	Required and Recommended Readings	Lecture Themes
Sept. 8	Introduction to course themes and syllabus In class viewing: The Corporation (2003)	Introduction to Politics and Pop Culture
Sept. 15	Required: *Douglas Van Belle, "Introducing the Ancient Debate". Film: <i>Pleasantville</i> (1998) and <i>The Matrix</i> (1999) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFG5c1lTkYQ http://www.slideshare.net/mczamora/exploring-dystopian-characteristics-through-film?next_slideshow=1	Dystopian Utopias: The 'Ideal' vs. the 'Real'
Sept. 22	Required: *Van Belle, "Classifying Ideologies". Ilan Kapoor, <i>Celebrity Humanitarianism</i> , p.1-11 Film: The Pervert's Guide to Cinema (2006); In class: "Ocean 2.0", http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rE7KcF3MphU	-Ologies and -Isms: Ideologies, Perceptions, and Representations
Sept. 29	Ilan Kapoor, <i>Celebrity Humanitarianism</i> , p. 12-43. "Exploring Orientalism in Disney" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLdzx9-H8Wg "Richard Gere Goes to Tibet" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITVn31L3e8g&index=2&list=PL8B49EB977D027C66	The Ideology of Global Humanitarianism: Orientalism
Oct. 6	Ilan Kapoor, <i>Celebrity Humanitarianism</i> , p. 47-82. Film: <i>Fight Club</i> (1999)	The Contents of your Wallet: 'Decaf Capitalism'

Oct. 13	Class cancelled	Thanksgiving Holiday
Oct. 20	<p>Required: Jensen and Draffan, <i>Welcome to the Machine</i>, p. 1-56.</p> <p>Lord of the Flies (1990); “Tendency to Fear is a Strong Political Influence”, http://news.brown.edu/pressreleases/2013/02/fear</p> <p>Recommended: The Power of Nightmares: The Rise of the Politics of Fear</p>	<p>Who Rules and Over Whom? Governance, Leadership and the Politics of Fear</p> <p>Critical Book Reviews DUE TODAY!</p>
Oct. 27	<p>Required: Jensen and Draffan, <i>Welcome to the Machine</i>, p. 57-111.</p> <p>“Facial Recognition Software is the Future of Mass Surveillance,” http://venturebeat.com/2014/06/01/facial-recognition-software-is-the-future-of-mass-surveillance/</p> <p>“NSA facial recognition: combining national ID cards, Internet intercepts, and commercial facial databases for millions of people,” http://boingboing.net/2014/06/01/nsa-facial-recognition-combin.html</p> <p>Films: <i>Enemy of the State</i> (1990); “So You’re Living in a Police State”;</p> <p>Recommended: “Theatres of War: The Military Entertainment Complex”</p> <p>http://www.stanford.edu/class/sts145/Library/Lenoir-Lowood_TheatersOfWar.pdf</p>	<p>The Power of an All Seeing Eye: The Politics of InSecurity</p>
Nov. 3	<p>Required: Jensen and Draffan, p. 112-167.</p> <p>Trevor Paglen, “Turnkey, Tyranny, Surveillance and the Terror State” http://www.guernicamag.com/daily/trevor-paglen-turnkey-tyranny-surveillance-and-the-terror-state/</p> <p>Dan Tynan, “In the 21st century surveillance state we are all terrorists”, http://www.itworld.com/it-</p>	<p>The New 'PR' on War: Self-Surveillance in Societies of Control</p>

	<p>management/369776/21st-century-surveillance-state-we-are-all-terrorists</p> <p>Films: A Scanner Darkly (2006).</p> <p>Recommended: Corey Mead, "Shall We Play a Game: The Rise of the Military Entertainment Complex", http://www.salon.com/2013/09/19/shall_we_play_a_game_the_rise_of_the_military_entertainment_complex/</p> <p><i>The Truman Show</i> (1998)</p>	
Nov. 10	<p>Required: Jensen and Draffan, p.168-226.</p> <p>"Cyborgs: Introduction" and "Anatomy of the Posthuman Body"; "Do Clones Dream of Uncopyrighted Sheep?". http://www.jgcinema.com/single.php?sl=cyborg-film http://www.jgcinema.com/single.php?sl=Posthuman-body-cyborg-American-film-postmodernism-Arnold-Schwarzenegger</p> <p>"MIT Scientists Plant False Memory in Mouse's Mind"</p> <p>"Is it Inception?"</p> <p>Films: <i>Bladerunner</i> (1982); <i>Inception</i> (2010)</p>	<i>The Neuro-Technopolitics of the Posthuman: Inception and Dream Engineering</i>
Nov. 17	<p>Required: Scott Bakker, <i>Neuropath</i> (2008).</p> <p>GUEST LECTURER: SCOTT BAKKER</p>	<i>Neuropolitics: The Pathology of Mind-Control</i>
Nov. 24	Open Q&A session	<i>Exam Review</i>
Dec. 1	Last Class	<i>IN CLASS FINAL EXAM</i>

**APPENDIX TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

Prerequisite checking - the student's responsibility

"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

Essay course requirements

With the exception of 1000-level courses, most courses in the Department of Political Science are essay courses. Total written assignments (excluding examinations) will be at least 3,000 words in Politics 1020E, at least 5,000 words in a full course numbered 2000 or above, and at least 2,500 words in a half course numbered 2000 or above.

Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")

"Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning.

Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence."

Security and Confidentiality of Student Work (refer to current *Western Academic Calendar* (<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/>))

"**Submitting or Returning Student Assignments, Tests and Exams** - All student assignments, tests and exams will be handled in a secure and confidential manner. Particularly in this respect, leaving student work unattended in public areas for pickup is not permitted."

Duplication of work

Undergraduate students who submit similar assignments on closely related topics in two different courses must obtain the consent of both instructors prior to the submission of the assignment. If prior approval is not obtained, each instructor reserves the right not to accept the assignment.

Grade adjustments

In order to ensure that comparable standards are applied in political science courses, the Department may require instructors to adjust final marks to conform to Departmental guidelines.

Academic Offences

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>."

Submission of Course Requirements

ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS, TAKE-HOME EXAMS **MUST** BE SUBMITTED ACCORDING TO PROCEDURES SPECIFIED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR (I.E., IN CLASS, DURING OFFICE HOURS, TA'S OFFICE HOURS) OR UNDER THE INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE DOOR.

THE MAIN OFFICE DOES NOT DATE-STAMP OR ACCEPT ANY OF THE ABOVE.

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/>

Students registered in Social Science should refer to <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/> <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/havingproblems.asp> for information on Medical Policy, Term Tests, Final Examinations, Late Assignments, Short Absences, Extended Absences, Documentation and other Academic Concerns. Non-Social Science students should refer to their home faculty's academic counselling office.

Plagiarism

"Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence." (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking: "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Multiple-choice tests/exams: "Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating."

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/>

PLAGIARISM*

In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer's words or ideas. Different forms of writing require different types of acknowledgement. The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of publication, and page number.

Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writers' ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source, these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases in their suspension from the University.

*Reprinted by permission of the Department of History

Adopted by the council of the Faculty of Social Science, October, 1970; approved by the Dept. of History August 13, 1991

Accessibility at Western: Please contact poliscie@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.