

NYU Prague

EURO-UA9301P02 - SASEM-UG9400P02 Modern Political Dissent: The Art of Defeat Fall 2018

Instructor Information

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Course Information

- EURO-UA9301P02 and SASEM-UG9400P02
- Modern Political Dissent: The Art of Defeat
- **Monday/Wednesday 12:00 – 13:20**
 - Masaryk - BB

Course Overview and Goals

Individual or minority revolt against the prevailing majority position, religious interpretation or political rule is an important but often forgotten part of history. The Modern Political Dissent class covers this phenomena combining findings from several fields like psychological response to extreme situations, modern history, political and communication theory, art and culture in opposition against perceived injustice and case studies and analyses of important examples of modern political dissent. From the interpretation of the Holocaust or torture survival ordeal and Stockholm Syndrome, students are led to analyze the context – both psychological and historical – in order to search for possible remedies. Conditions that made totalitarian ideologies so widely acceptable are studied within the context of thought reform and cult manipulations. The works of Robert J.Lifton, Stanley Milgrams and Phillip Zimbardo are used to explain the importance of individual responsibility versus obedience to authority. Role modeling and differentiation in communicating minority or dissent values to the majority society give a possibility to adjust complex strategies for change.

The format of the course is based on a combination of lectures, readings and films, discussions and group projects.

The goal of this class is to introduce students to a contextual understanding of events, developments and theories as opposed to mere memorization of historical data. Throughout the course the students are invited to personalize often critical choices made in demanding or extreme situations in order to understand the need for critical thinking based on sound personal values. The questioning of the majority beliefs, authorities and values in a mass culture and binary perception of conflict is brought forward in order to understand the role of a responsible individual in modern society and democracy.

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- better understand concepts of mass consumption societies
- understand different sources and forms of human behaviour in critical situations
- understand importance of individual responsibility and action

Course Requirements

Two papers – min. 4-5 pages with a list of used sources and literature. Two or more additional one pager on class subjects. Oral presentation on class topics – up to ten minutes. Group project presentation – if possible in PowerPoint.

Class Participation

Students are expected to take active part in class discussions and express their opinion on discussed subjects.

Following or participation in Forum 2000 conference in Prague is supported

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
attendance and participation	20%,
presentation	10%
exam	30%,
midterm paper	20%
final paper	20%

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class. All assignments and activity in the class will be worth certain number of points – the total for the semester should add up to 100.

Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Percent
A	92.5% and higher
A-	90.0 – 92.49%
B+	87.5% - 89.99%
B	82.5% - 87.49%
B-	80% - 82.49%
C+	77.5% - 79.99%
C	72.5% - 77.49%
C-	70% - 72.49%
D+	67.5% - 69.99%
D	62.5% - 67.49%
D-	60% - 62.49%
F	59.99% and lower

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: Excellent work demonstrating a critical and observant approach to the subject, sound research and an ability to express thoughts cogently and persuasively.

Grade B: Very good work.

Grade C: Satisfactory work.

Grade D: Passable work.

Grade F: Failure to achieve a passable standard.

Course Schedule

Topics and Assignments

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Session 1 Monday, September 3	Overview of course Introduction into the life in extreme. Psychological reactions to extreme stress and fear for survival. Issue of individual responsibility. Formation of individual and group identity. Knot in history situations and modernity's love for short cuts...	Reading: Karl Marx: Communist manifesto, Internet sources on industrial revolution and serfdom	
Session 2 Wednesday, September 5	Appeal of Totalitarian Ideologies. Definition of identity. Search for new identity in critical historical moments. Are we different? Would we react different? Destabilisation brought by industrial revolution. Nation state in Europe.	Hobsbawm Eric: Nations and Nationalism since 1870, Cambridge University Press, 1997	2 oral reports
Session 3 Monday, September 10	Where was Karl Marx wrong from the very beginning? Other theoretical short-cuts – science as absolutist religion against critical thinking. WWI.		2 oral reports
Session 4 Wednesday, September 12	Appeal of Fascism and National Socialism, Demise of democracy, Roles, Grey zone and Decent Nazis. Science and Arts - Experts and Artists in service to Evil.	Rober Jay Lifton: Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism	2-3 oral reports
Session 5 Monday, September 17	Leni Riefenstahl case. Roles and Choice. Individual responsibility	film - Triumph of the Will, internet sources	group discussion on pro and con of Riefenstahl claim of innocence
Session 6 Wednesday, September 19	Primo Levi – the psychology of survival, torture, guilt and suicide	Primo Levi – The Drowned and the Saved	2 oral reports

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Session 7 Monday, September 24	Roles and Identitties – Victims, perpetrators and Bystanders	Robert Jay Lifton, Eric Markusen: The Genocidal Mentality; Basic Books, NY 1990	2 oral reports
Session 8 Wednesday, September 26	Induced identity change	Robert Jay Lifton – Thought Reform, Brainwashing in Communist China	2 oral reports
Session 9 Monday, October 1	Obedience	Stanley Milgrams obedience experiments, Philip Zimbardo, Stockholm syndrome Reader text	2 oral reports
Session 10 Wednesday, October 3	Abu Ghraib experience. Are we different?	Film - Ghosts of Abu Ghraib	Class discussion
Session 11 Monday, October 8	Guilt	Karl Jaspers, Question of Guilt	2 oral reports
Session 12 Wednesday, October 10	Guiltless murderers induced identity formation	Internet sources on child soldier rehabilitation programs	Group projects presentation
Fall Break October 13-21	Fall Break		
Session 13 Monday, October 22	Cult formation, Religious and other cults, televangelist movement, escaping the reality, Jones´ tapes. Myth of modernity/postmodernity	Robert Lifton - Cult Formation	2 oral reports and class discussion
Session 14 Wednesday, October 24	David Thoreau, Trade union movement, Suffragette movement – direct action and power of example, contextual approximation of tactics and goals	Reader text, internet	2 oral reports and discussion
Session 15 Monday, October 29	Mahatma Gándhí – use of media, knowing your oponent, moral renewal vs politics. Power of multipolar inclusivity.	Reader text Richard Attenbourough film – Gandhi, excerpts	2 oral reports and discussion
Session 16 Wednesday, October 31	Anticolonial movements and their failure as dissent. Cold War.	Internet sources. Case studies.	4-5 shorter oral presentations on case studies. Types of response.
Session 17 Monday, November 5	Civil Rights Movement – use of television Strategy and tactics Art of defeat revisited	Internet sources	2 oral reports
Session 18 Wednesday, November 7	NGOs – Amnesty International, Greenpeace – human rights and environmental agenda,	Internet sources	2 oral reports

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
	internationalisation of civic activism		
Make-up Day Friday, November 9 (9am-5pm)	Make-up day for missed classes		
Session 19 Monday, November 12	Zapatista movement – internet mobilisation on global scale for even local issues, roots of terrorism, terrorism vs dissent	Reader text	2 oral reports
Session 20 Wednesday, November 14	Antiglobalisation movement and tactics, Occupy the Wall Street, inability to communicate, dissent ghettos	Internet sources	2 oral reports
Session 21 Monday, November 19	Arab Spring, consumer societies vs satellite television and social media	Internet sources Data visualisation	2 oral reports
Session 22 Wednesday, November 21	Postmodern dictatorships – Slobodan Milošević, electronic media and entertainment vs democracy	Film Stake No.12	
Session 23 Monday, November 26	Dissent under Communism. Two schools – Vaclav Havel vs Adam Michnik	Reader text Vaclav Havel - The Power of the Powerless, Adam Michnik – Letters from Prison.	2 oral reports
Session 24 Wednesday, November 28	Planning dissent strategies. Avoiding violence and confrontation, development of impossible to solve situations.		Group projects and discussion
Session 25 Monday, December 3	Central European experience. Unexpected importance of Humour	Internet sources on Orange Alternative and alikes	2 oral reports
Session 26 Wednesday, December 5	Lessons and need of dissent for democratic societies		Class discussion
Session 27 Monday, December 10	Dissent in post-modern, post-factual and post-truth situations	Internet sources	Class discussion
Session 28 Wednesday, December 12 (last day of classes)	Summary of the course		
Session 29 Monday, December 17	Final exam		
Session 30 Wednesday, December 19	Final exam		

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials

1. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Communist manifesto
2. Adolf Hitler: Mein Kampf
3. Giovanni Gentile: The Doctrine of Fascism
4. Primo Levi: The Drowned and the Saved
5. Alexandr Solzhenitzyn: Gulag Archipelago
6. Robert Jay Lifton, Eric Markusen: The Genocidal Mentality; Basic Books, NY 1990
7. Rober Jay Lifton: Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism
8. Karl Jaspers: The Question of German Guilt. Capricorn Books, New York 1961
9. Karl Jaspers: The Fight Against Totalitarianism, 1963
10. Hannah Arendt: Origins of Totalitarianism
11. Hannah Arendt: Eichmann in Jerusalem, Viking Press, 1963
12. C.J.Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy, 1967
13. Karl Popper: The Open Society and Its Enemies, Vol.1: The Spell of Plato, 1945
14. Stanley Milgrams: Obedience to Authority, An Experimental View, Harper Collins, NY 1974
15. Philip Zimbardo: The Pathology of Imprisonment, Society, 9,1972, 6, pp. 4-8
16. Jeri Laber: The courage of strangers, Public Affairs, New York, 2002
17. Juan J.Linz, A. Stepan: Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation, Hopkins Univ. press, 1996
18. Josef Korbel: The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia, Princeton University Press 1959
19. Hobsbawm Eric: Nations and Nationalism since 1870, Cambridge University Press, 1997
20. Gellner Ernst: Encounters with Nationalism, Blackwell Publishers, 1994
21. Ash Timothy Garton: The Uses of Adversity, 1989
22. Ash Timothy Garton: The Polish revolution, Solidarity, 1980-82 (1983)
23. John Kean: Vaclav Havel, Political Tragedy in six acts, Cambridge University Press 2000
24. Vaclav Havel: Power of the Powerless
25. Vaclav Havel: A Word About Words
26. Adam Michnik: Letters from Prison
27. Adam Michnik: Letters from Freedom
28. Barbara Falk: The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe, CEU Press, 2003
29. Yehuda Bauer: Rethinking the Holocaust, 2001, Yale University Press New Haven
30. Noam Chomsky: Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda, Seven Sturves Press 2002
31. Miles Hugh - Al-Jazeera: How Arab TV News Challenges America, Grove Press, 2005
32. New problems and methods of possible ISIS child soldier's rehabilitation - mission impossible?
<http://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/rehabilitating-child-soldiers-in-the-middle-east>,
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35743577>
33. Rock the Vote: Political Power for Young People – www.rockthevote.com
34. Phillips, Melanie: The Ascent of Woman : a history of the suffragette movement and the ideas behind it; London, Abacus 2007
35. Goldsmith, Jack L.: The terror presidency : law and judgment inside the Bush administration; New York, W.W. Norton 2007
36. Zapatista!: Reinventing Revolution in Mexico / edited by John Holloway, Eloína Peláez; London, Pluto Press 1998

37. Lifton, Robert Jay, Superpower syndrome : America's apocalyptic confrontation with the world; New York, Thunder's Mouth Press 2003
38. Zimbardo, Philip G.: The Lucifer effect: understanding how good people turn evil; New York, Random House 2007
39. Kohák, Erazim V. Jan Patočka : philosophy and selected writings; Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1989
40. Esposito, John L. Who speaks for islam? : what a billion muslims really think; New York, Gallup Press 2008
41. Garton Ash, Timothy: We the people : the revolution of '89 witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin & Prague; London, Penguin Books 1999

Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](https://nyu.edu/its/classes) (nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](https://library.nyu.edu) (library.nyu.edu)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](https://nyu.mywconline.com) (nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](https://nyu.edu/it/servicedesk) (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)
- **NYU Prague library:** [Tritius Catalog](https://nyu.tritius.cz/?lang=EN) (https://nyu.tritius.cz/?lang=EN)

Course Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

Absences only for medical reasons and for religious observance will be excused. To obtain an excused absence, you are obliged to supply either a doctor's note or corroboration of your illness by a member of the housing staff (either an RA or a Building Manager). To be excused for religious observance, you must contact the instructor and the Academic Director via e-mail one week in advance of the holiday. Your absence is excused for the holiday only and does not include days of travel associated with the holiday. Unexcused absences will be penalized with a 2% percent deduction from your final course grade for every week of classes missed.

Please note that Friday, November 9 (9am – 5pm) is reserved as a make-up day for missed classes. Do not schedule any trips for this day.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

According to the Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook, plagiarism is defined as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as though it were one's own. More specifically plagiarism is to present as one's own a sequence of words quoted without quotation marks from another writer, a paraphrased passage from another writer's work; facts or ideas gathered, organized and reported by someone else, orally and/or in writing. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact, not of the student's intention, it is crucial that acknowledgment of the sources be accurate and complete. Even where there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism.

The College of Arts and Science's Academic Handbook defines plagiarism similarly and also specifies the following:

“presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written), writing a paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else's idea without a reference to the source of the idea, or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both teachers have given their permission in advance).

Receiving help on a take-home examination or quiz is also cheating – and so is giving that help – unless expressly permitted by the teacher (as in collaborative projects). While all this looks like a lot to remember, all you need to do is give credit where it is due, take credit only for original ideas, and ask your teacher or advisor when in doubt.”

“Penalties for plagiarism range from failure for a paper, failure for the course or dismissal from the university.” (**Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook**)

Classroom Etiquette

Active use of laptops is welcome.

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.