

## Anti-Social Politics: Beyond Contracts, Community, and Civility

Samuel R. Galloway

Mondays: 3-5.50

Office hours: Monday, 1.30-2.50

### *Introduction*

This seminar offers a critical genealogy of social contract theory in order to question the value of politics founded on social contracts, civic duty, and community belonging. The prevailing narrative posits that without robust institutions of civil society supporting contractual obligations and associational membership democratic citizenship will suffer. Increasingly, however, theorists have argued normative and affective investments in sociality may also function to depoliticize dissent, pathologize dissatisfaction, and blunt innovative political alternatives. This course tracks this tension by interrogating the presuppositions, prejudices, and potential pitfalls of thinking within, against, and beyond theories of the political as contractual, communitarian civil society. Texts include Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Arendt, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Butler, Edelman, and Berlant.

### *Grades:*

As this course is designed to be a discussion-based seminar, students will be evaluated on the basis of their class participation (20%), in-class presentations (20%), online discussion board posts (20%), and one final term paper (40%).

**Participation:** Coming to class prepared for active participation in classroom discussion. Use of laptops is restricted to reading PDFs only, except for our designated, rotating, “scribe,” who will record and post class-notes to the Chalk-board.

**In-class presentations:** Each student will be asked to offer a five-minute (2 page, double-spaced) presentation in class on a reading of their choice. These must be submitted 24 hours in advance of presenting.

**Discussion Board Posts:** Students are exempt from two (2) posts for the course. Other wise, discussion board posts must be uploaded 24 hours before class. Posts should address themes in the text, pose questions, or offer *expansive* responses to other posts.

**Final Paper:** An 8-10 page research paper. In it students are to offer a unique reconstruction and critical evaluation of a text, a theme across texts, or a thinker in relation to the questions of this class. Students will be expected to submit a paper proposal no later than Week 8.

There will be an optional Peer-Review Draft Swap Week 9 for those who wish to participate.

### *Obligatory note on Plagiarism*

Cheating violates certain social norms of fairness, and while we are to challenge precisely these norms, we nevertheless will do so with a firm commitment to intellectual and

academic honesty. Those found engaging in unethical practices of plagiarism will be automatically failed, and referred to the Dean.

*Required Texts:*

Plato, *Republic*, Bk. II. (selections—Available Online).  
Hobbes, T. *Leviathan*. (Selections—Available Online).  
Locke, J. *Second Treatise on Government*. (Selections—Available Online).  
Rousseau, J-J. *On the Social Contract* (Selections—Available Online).  
Kant, I. “Conjectures on the Origin of Human History.”  
Hegel, G.W.F., *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. (Selections—Available Online).  
Marx, K. “On the Jewish Question.” (Available Online).  
Nietzsche, “On the Genealogy of Morals,” 2<sup>nd</sup> Essay. (Available Online).  
Heidegger, M. *Being and Time* (selections, Available Online).  
Arendt, H. *The Human Condition*; “Reflections on Little Rock,” (Selections, Available Online).  
Foucault, M. *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1; The Birth of Biopolitics; Society Must Be Defended; Security, Territory, Population* (Selections, Available Online).  
Deleuze, G. “Postscripts on the Societies of Control,” *1,000 Plateaus* (Selections, Available Online).  
Edelman, Lee. *No Future* (selections, Available Online)  
Josephs, M. *Against the Romance of Community* (selections, Available Online).  
Munoz, J. *Cruising Utopia* (Selections, Available Online).  
Butler, J. “Precarious Life,” (Available Online).  
Halberstam, J. *The Queer Art of Failure* (selections, Available Online).  
Berlant, L. “Slow Death;” *Cruel Optimism* (Selections, Available Online).  
Ahmed, S. *The Promise of Happiness* (Selections, Available Online).

*Schedule*

Week 1: March 30<sup>th</sup>

Intro to the class; Plato, Bk. II.

Week 2: April 6<sup>th</sup>

Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Ch. XIII, XIV, XVI, XVII—Available Online)  
Rousseau, *On the Social Contract* (Bk. I, ch. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8)  
Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, Chapters VII & VIII;  
Kant, “Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History”.

Week 3: April 13<sup>th</sup>

Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (Part III, Sect. 2: Civil Society—Available Online).  
(Recap and pivot)

Week 4: April 20<sup>th</sup>

Marx, “On the Jewish Question”  
Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Essay.

Week 5: April 27<sup>th</sup>

Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Part I, Division 1: IV—“Being-in-the-World as Being-With and Being a Self: The “They” and V—“Being-In as Such” (pp. 107-168.)  
Arendt, “The Social” (selections from *THC*); “Reflections on Little Rock”

Week 6: May 4<sup>th</sup> ...be with you!

Foucault—*Society Must Be Defended* (Lectures 1, 2, 3, 11)  
*The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (selections)  
*Security, Territory, Population* (Lectures 1, 2, 11, 12, 13)  
*The Birth of Biopolitics* (Lectures, 9, 10, 12);

Week 7: May 11<sup>th</sup>

**Paper Proposals Due by End of Week 7.**

Deleuze—“Postscripts,” *1,000 Plateaus* (Chapters 1, 9, 11, 13)  
(Recap and pivot.)

Week 8: May 18<sup>th</sup>

Josephs—*Against the Romance of Community* (Introduction, Chapter 1)  
Edelman, *No Future* (Chapter 1).

Week 9: May 25<sup>th</sup>

**Peer-Review Draft Swap**

Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Chapter 5, Conclusion)  
Munoz, *Cruising Utopia* (introduction, Ch. 5)  
Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Introduction, Ch. 3)  
Butler, “Precarious Life”  
Berlant, “Slow Death,” *Cruel Optimism* (Introduction, Conclusion.)

Week 10: June 1<sup>st</sup>

**Final Papers Due: June 5<sup>th</sup> (?)**

Catch-up/Wrap-up