

PARADIGM SHIFTS IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES

Open Learning Initiative, OLLive-UP, Spring Semester, 2021

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Course schedule: Tuesdays 14.00 – 15.30; Thursdays 10:45 – 12.15

Location: SR 12 Kuckhoffstr. 24

Expected workload: 240 hours

Credits 8 ECTS, 4 US Credits

Office hours: Thursdays 12.15-14.15 and by appointment

Writing workshops: One session every month, on Tuesday: 15.45-17.15

Course description

The course will offer the students the space to acquire fundamental knowledge about some of the main paradigm shifts in social and political sciences in the last fifty decades, knowledge that will constitute a solid ground for their own individual intellectual curiosities and research. By the end of the Spring Semester, the students are expected to progress to the level of a good final year Bachelor student, and to possess a solid conceptual apparatus in social and political sciences.

At the end of the course, the students must be able to successfully participate in Master level theoretical courses and to be proficient in the vocabulary pertaining the discursive, postcolonial, neoliberal, and spatial “turns”. The course draws mainly on the disciplinary common ground of disciplines like sociology, anthropology, gender studies, human geography, and political science, but it is also meant to expose the students to specific areas of interest. The central aim of the course is to get familiar with a particular way of understanding the world through specific lenses shared by these disciplines.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the Spring Semester students will:

- ✓ Master the vocabulary of several important paradigms in social and political sciences;
- ✓ Gain confidence in reading and understanding academic texts;
- ✓ Be able to confidently express academic arguments and opinions in written and oral form;
- ✓ Develop English for Academic Purposes reading, writing, and presentation skills;
- ✓ Enhance their team-work together with their colleagues;

- ✓ Address critique in a constructive, opened manner, and at the same time defend their arguments and positions.
- ✓ Understand what is meant by a social sciences perspective;
- ✓ Elucidate how social, political, and economic structures impact patterns of human thought.

Baseline requirements

The tutorial is 4 US Credit (8 ECTS). This means there will be two 90-minute classes per week, and students will be expected to dedicate a further 13 hours/week to independent study.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Failing to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. The students are required to announce if they are going to miss the class or the individual sessions. Missing a class does not exempt the student from any of the requirements associated with that session.

Please consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

Class rules

Students are encouraged to systematically participate in the class discussions and exercises, and are kindly asked *not to engage in parallel conversations, facebook and email checking, or chatting* during the sessions. Laptop use should be strictly restricted to note-taking.

Course assessment

Assignment 1:

Personal dictionary of concepts

Students will put together a personal dictionary containing all the concepts learned in class, using the readings, official dictionaries, and the class discussions.

The dictionary will be a continuous assignment, which means students have to demonstrate weekly progress. Students are requested to send the definitions of the

main concepts in their readings to the instructor and to their colleagues. The definitions will be posted in the evening before the class at the latest and can be accompanied by questions that address anything that seems unclear, comparisons with other readings, or connections with particular empirical cases.

Academic skills to be acquired or improved:

- ✓ Extracting essential information from reading;
- ✓ Synthesizing ideas of multiple authors;
- ✓ Learning the concepts.

Assignment 2:

Mid-term in-class presentation

The presentation represents the foundation for the final paper. It gives the students the opportunity to brainstorm together with the instructor and their colleagues, while simultaneously improving their academic presentation skills. The students will have 20 minutes to present the topic, the theoretical frame, the research methods, and the structure of their final essay.

*Using PowerPoint or other presentation tools is not a requirement.

Academic skills to be acquired or improved:

- ✓ Improving the students' academic presentation skills;
- ✓ Actively responding and addressing critical comments in professional settings;
- ✓ Providing clarity of argumentation in a presentation.

Assignment 3:

Final paper (3,000 words)

Based on the tutor's and the colleagues' detailed feedback during and after the mid-term presentation, the students will write a research paper, which will be submitted by the end of the semester. The paper has to be based on an empirical case and to make use of the methodological and theoretical instruments acquired by the students in the Fall and in the Spring semester. They have to choose their case, to construct their research object, to conduct a small investigation, to analyze the data, and to find an appropriate theoretical frame for their essay.

* In order for the students to be able to present their research paper at the final OLive end of the year conference, they have to decide the topic of the essay in the first two weeks of the semester, in agreement with the course instructor, and to pursue their empirical investigation immediately.

**The students will be required to reply to the tutor's comments on the final essay.

Academic skills to be acquired or improved:

- ✓ Improving the students' academic writing skills;
- ✓ Actively responding and addressing critical comments;
- ✓ Understanding the idea of “editing” and “polishing” an academic text;
- ✓ Constructing a good abstract;
- ✓ Providing clarity of argumentation in writing;
- ✓ Building essential and expanded academic bibliographies;
- ✓ Making decisions regarding the intellectual dialogues one wants to join (or not);
- ✓ Supporting these decisions by appropriate arguments;
- ✓ Deciding between “fundamental”, “up-to-date”, “fashionable” and “useful” literature.

Assignments due dates

- Assignment 1: continuous assessment; final deadline: May 17, 2021;
- Mid-term assignment: March 23, 2021, in class;
- Final assignment: May 14, 2021.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

According to Bard College policy on late submission of papers as detailed in the Student Handbook, essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grade breakdown

Assignment 1: 20 percent of the grade
Assignment 2: 20 percent of the grade
Assignment 3: 40 percent of the grade
Class participation: 20 percent of the grade

Office hours

Students are always encouraged to ask for the tutor's support in the learning process, as well as for supplementary materials if needed. In addition to the office hours, the students can request an appointment with the tutor whenever they feel it is necessary for their progress. Together with the tutor, they will find a mutually convenient time for a meeting.

Schedule

Module 2 corresponds to the Bard Berlin Spring term with 14 weeks of teaching.

Please follow the Academic Calendar at BCB for the structure of the Fall term: <https://berlin.bard.edu/for-students/academic-calendars/>

Teaching starts: Tuesday, February 2

Fall Break: March 29- April 5 (1 week)

Completion Week: May 17-21

Semester ends: Friday, May 21

Course materials

The students are not required to purchase a course reader. The readings will be accessible in a digital version.

Readings

Readings are for Tuesday, unless otherwise specified. This will allow students to be already familiar with some of the ideas and concepts covered in the lectures and in the class discussions.

Writing workshops

The students will benefit from three writing workshops and detailed feedback on their final essays. The three writing workshops use students' own research papers for the course in order to illustrate different aspects of academic writing that they have to make progress with by the end of the semester. There is a scaffolding of the final paper, with the instructor covering both the research and the writing aspects, and with continuous feedback before and after the mid-term presentation.

Writing workshop 1: Tuesday, February 23: Writing about data.

Writing workshop 2: Tuesday, March 16: Literature reviews and intellectual dialogues. Building an argument.

Writing workshop 3: Tuesday, April 27: Structure of an academic paper. Introduction and Conclusion

THE DISCURSIVE TURN

WEEK 1: Discourse: An initial vocabulary (1) + Introductory session
(February 1-5)

February 2: Introductory session: Syllabus, assignments
February 4: Discourse: An initial vocabulary (1)

WEEK 2: Discourse: An initial vocabulary (2)
(February 8-12)

Readings:
Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*. "Preface" and "Las Meninas"

WEEK 3: Governmentality
(February 15-19)

Readings:
Foucault, Michel. "Security, Territory, Population". In *Lectures at the College de France*

WEEK 4: Discourse and power beyond the West
(February 22-26)

Readings:
Hall, Stuart. 1992. "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power". In *The Formations of Modernity: Understanding Modern Societies an Introduction*, (275-332). Oxford: Polity Press.

THE POSTCOLONIAL TURN

WEEK 5: Postcolonialism: An initial vocabulary

No readings

WEEK 6: Eurocentrism as secularism
(March 8-12)

Readings:

Mahmood, Saba. *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. Introduction (1-28)

WEEK 7: Representation and the colonial subject (1)
(March

Readings:

Hall, Stuart. "The Spectacle of the "Other"". In *Representation*, edited by Stuart Hall.

WEEK 8: Representation and the colonial subject (2) + Mid-term presentation
(March 22-27)

March 23: Mid-term presentation

March 25: Watch: "A Passage to India", directed by David Lean

No readings

WEEK 9: Spring break
(March 29-April 5)

THE NEOLIBERAL TURN

WEEK 10: Historical landmarks
(April 5-9)

Readings:

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

WEEK 11: From Fordism to flexible production
(April 12-16)

Readings:

Harvey, David. 1990. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Part II (121-200). Oxford: Blackwell.

THE SPATIAL TURN

WEEK 12: The city
(April 19-23)

Readings:

Lefebvre, Henri. *Writings on Cities*. Fragments to be announced.

WEEK 13: The region
(April 26-30)

Readings:

Allen, John, Doreen Massey, and Allen Cochrane. 1998. *Rethinking the Region*. Introduction, and Part 1 (page 7-62). London and New York: Routledge.

WEEK 14: The state and the global
(May 3-7)

Readings:

Brenner, Neil. 2004. "Introduction: Cities, States, and the 'Explosion of Spaces'". In *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mitchell, Timothy. 1991. "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics". *The American Political Science Review*, 85 (1): 77-96.

WEEK 15: Borders and in-betweenness
(May 10-14)

Readings:

Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1987. Chapter 2, "Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan" (Don't worry, it is in English). *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.