

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Code / Title : HA4033 Political Theory and Psychoanalysis

Pre-requisites : HA1002

No. of AUs. : 4

Contact Hours : 52

Course Aims

In this course you will examine a selection of some of the most influential contributions to the study of the intersection of psychoanalytic and political theory. Mostly eschewing Sigmund Freud's own political analyses, we begin with an investigation of some of the most notable articulations of his metapsychology, or the philosophy of the psychical apparatus. The psychoanalytic starting-point is the recognition of an unconscious, an inner subjective life that fundamentally structures our specifically human existence in indeterminate ways. This recognition poses fundamental challenges to various established models of political reason. It can no longer be taken for granted, for example, that political determinations may be potentially grounded in transparent and rational processes of reflection and deliberation that are capable of fully revealing to us our collective interests and goods. Rather, political theory must recognize the unconscious desires, emotions, affects, and motives that subterraneously influence our outward behaviours and orientations. Through the study of various 20th century clinical analysts as well as social theorists influenced by psychoanalysis – such as Wilhelm Reich, Herbert Marcuse, Norman O. Brown, Cornelius Castoriadis, Franz Fanon, and Jessica Benjamin – we will investigate various important political issues complicated by the Freudian discovery of the unconscious, including the psychology of fascism, the desire for voluntary servitude, the nature of autonomy, the ground of gender hierarchy, and many more. After having completed the course you will have gained a deeper appreciation of the psychological factors and motivations which influence the decision-making of political actors.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Identify and explain the significance of most of the key Freudian metapsychological concepts highlighted in the class.
2. Explain how these concepts are deployed in various post-Freudian traditions of psychoanalysis and social theory.

3. Interpret certain contemporary political issues and problematics in light of the theoretical frameworks studied.
4. Analyze and interpret complex textual material related to political theory.
5. Present your opinions on various political concepts in a coherent and logical way, both orally and in writing.

Course Content

Week 1 – Introduction and Overview
Week 2 – Freudian Metapsychology I
Week 3 – Freudian Metapsychology II
Week 4 – Psychoanalysis and Film
Week 5 – Psychology and Fascism
Week 6 – Psychoanalytic Marxism I
Week 7 – Psychoanalytic Marxism II
Week 8 – Psychoanalysis and History I
Week 9 – Psychoanalysis and History II
Week 10 – Psychoanalytic Feminism I
Week 11 – Psychoanalytic Feminism II
Week 12 – Psychoanalysis and Autonomy I
Week 13 – Psychoanalysis and Autonomy II

Course Assessment

CA1 - Class Participation	: 10%
CA2 - Critical Reading Responses	: 20%
CA3 - Short Essay	: 30%
CA4 - Major Essay	: 40%
Total	-----
	100%