

Psychoanalytic Political Theory

Full Title Course

Psychoanalytic Political Theory

Course Catalogue Number

7323A070FY

Credits

6 EC

Entry requirements

Completed the first year and at least 42 ECTS from the second year of the bachelor's degree program in Political Science. Students participating in the Minor Political Theory must be previously admitted to the Minor. For students participating in an exchange program, please see "Recommended Knowledge" for more information.

Instruction language

The seminars will be taught in English.

Time Periods

Block 1 (September 2023 – October 2023)

Location

See <https://rooster.uva.nl>

Video recording lectures

Unless pandemic-related restrictions require otherwise, the seminars will not be recorded.

Lecturer(s)

Adrian Kreutz	a.p.c.kreutz@uva.nl
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Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand and engage with the cornerstones of psychoanalytic thought, as it applies to the study of politics, in both its history and conceptuality.
- Critically analyse the concepts put forward by psychoanalysis and assess their applicability to the study of politics.
- Learn to apply unfamiliar theoretical tools in the analysis of political issues.
- Write in correct English at an academic level about political theoretical, social scientific and policy texts and issues.
- Practical knowledge of how to write a well-structured essay that manages to state a thesis supported by arguments.

Course Content

This course looks at the conceptual and methodological grounds of psychoanalytic approaches to political theory. We will also explore the history and the texts of major psychoanalytic theorists who have influenced the development of psychoanalytically informed political thought (Freud, Jung, Klein, Lacan, Reich). We will also look at contemporary applications of psychoanalytic theory to issues of racism, gender, nationalism, and political violence.

Teaching methods/learning formats

The course consists of 2 seminars per week of 2 hours each for six weeks, across Block 1 (Monday, 13 - 15; Wednesday 9 - 11). In Week 7 I offer individual supervision for your assignment, and Week 8 you will write your final paper. The course will be conducted in a seminar-setting, with lively discussion in which all have a voice. Students will be assigned a number of key-readings per week. These are the basis for class discussions on both days of teaching. The suggested readings will help you dive deeper into the material, and perhaps can help you write your final essays. Students are expected to have done the readings beforehand and to have prepared questions for discussion.

Course Evaluations & Adjustments of the Course

This will be the first time this course is taught.

Personal safety and security

We want students to be assured they have a positive environment and a safe basis for their studies. We firmly hope you'll never experience at the UvA an unsafe situation or undesirable behaviour (e.g., sexual intimidation, aggressive or violent behaviour, bullying, discrimination). Should this nonetheless occur, then please know that there are different individuals and institutions you can turn to.

Please see <https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/social-safety/social-safety.html>

Manner & Form of Assessment and Assessment Requirements & Criteria

Examination takes the following form:

1. End-of-term paper of max. 2500 words (67%)
Deadline: 27. October, 2023
2. Weekly Essay Questions (33%)
Deadline: every Wed

1. End-of-term paper (67%)

The end-of-term paper of max. 2500 words is due by **23:59 on Friday October 27, 2023**. The word limit includes footnotes but excludes the bibliography. The final essay must be written in English. The paper must be submitted via Canvas, and will be graded in the usual way, 1 - 10. Guidelines on how to write a political theory essay can be found on Canvas. You are expected to come up with your own research question. Supervision will be provided in Week 7. Please make use of this opportunity to discuss your essay ideas and think early about suitable topics and approaches.

2. Weekly Essay Questions (33%)

On Wednesdays, Weeks 1 - 6, I expect you to come prepared to class with essay questions answered (see weekly course description for essay questions). Please submit your answers (max. 500 words) by 17:00 on Tuesdays via email (a.p.c.kreutz@uva.nl). Those will be graded 1 - 10, in the normal way.

During Wednesday classes we will discuss your answers. Please be prepared to present your answers in class and engage in critical discussion.

Late assignment/ re-sit policy

Late papers and assignments are not accepted. A resit opportunity exists for the end-of-term paper provided:

1. The initial essay has received a grade of 5 or lower.
2. The grade cannot be higher than a 7.

Inspection of exams/assignments, feedback

Feedback will be given within 2 weeks.

Rules regarding Fraud and Plagiarism

The provisions of the Regulations Governing Fraud and Plagiarism for UvA Students apply in full. Access this regulation at:

<https://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/plagiarism-and-fraud/plagiarism-and-fraud.html>

Please note that plagiarism includes not only intentional fraud but also sloppy referencing. For instance, according to UvA regulations plagiarism includes: “failing to clearly indicate in the text – for instance by means of quotation marks or a particular layout – that literal or near-literal quotations have been included in the work, even if a correct reference to the sources has been included.” Presenting someone else’s words as your own, even unintentionally, is a form of theft and will be treated as such.

Date Final Grade

The final grade for non-resit students will have been posted on Canvas by **November 17, 2023**.

===== BLOCK 1 =====

Week 1: Civilisation

Key-Readings

- Sigmund Freud: *Civilisation and its Discontents*, Penguin Modern Classics, 2002
- Herbert Marcuse: *Eros and Civilisation*, Routledge, 1987, p. 3 - 11
- Stephen Frosch: *The Politics of Psychoanalysis, An Introduction to Freudian and Post-Freudian Theory*, Palgrave, 1999, Introduction
- Charles Rycroft: *Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, Penguin References, 1995
Please read the entries on Unconscious, Repression, Projection, Oedipus Complex, Elektra Complex, Interpretation, Resistance, Defence, Denial, Desire, Anxiety, Death Drive, Eros, Ego, Superego, Id, Transference, jouissance, Reality Principle, Sublimation, and Civilisation

Suggested Classics

- R. D. Laing: *The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*, “Introduction” and “The Bird of Paradise”, Penguin, 1990
- Philip Rieff: “Psychology and Politics: The Freudian Connection”, *World Politics*, Vol. 7(2), 1955
- Philip Rieff: “The Origins of Freud’s Political Psychology”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 17(2), 1956

Suggested Readings

- Eugene Victor Wolfstein: “Psychoanalysis in Political Theory”, *Political Theory*, Vol. 24(4), 1996
- Samo Tomsic & Andreja Zevnik: Introduction to *Jacques Lacan Between Psychoanalysis and Politics*, Routledge, 2013

Essay Question

Why did Marcuse think that “today the fight for life, the fight for Eros, is the political fight”?

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Week 2: Change, Not Adjustment

Key-Readings

- Stephen Frosch: *The Politics of Psychoanalysis, An Introduction to Freudian and Post-Freudian Theory*, Palgrave, 1999, p. 155 - 195
- Stephen Frosch: “Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Society: What Remains Radical in Psychoanalysis?”, Gipps, R. (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Psychoanalysis*, 2018
- The Radical Therapy Collective: *The Radical Therapist/Therapy means Change, not Adjustment*, Pelican Books, 1974, Introduction (copies will be provided on Canvas)

Suggested Classics

- Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, Stanford University Press, 2000
- R. D. Laing: *The Divided Self*, Penguin Modern Classics, 2010

Suggested Readings

- Eli Saretsky: *Political Freud*, Columbia University Press, 201, p. 1 - 15
- Floyd Matson: “The Political Implications of Psychoanalytic Theory”, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 16(4), 1954
- Jacqueline Rose: “We Are All Afraid, But of What Exactly?”, *The Jacqueline Rose Reader*, Duke University Press, 2011
- Daniel Adelman: *Invisible Fist of the Market, Fight Club and the Therapeutic Lures of the Market*, in Van der Wees, C. & Hennessy, K. (eds.) *Psychoanalysis, Politics, Oppression and Resistance*, Routledge, 2022
- Yannis Stavrakakis: *The Lacanian Left*, SUNY Press, 2007

Essay Question:

What, if anything, is radical about psychoanalysis?

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Week 3: Interpretation as Method

Key-Readings

- Paul Ricœur: *Freud and Philosophy*, Yale University Press, 1977, Introduction
- Susan Sontag: *Against Interpretation*, Penguin Modern Classics, 2009, p. 3 - 14
- Rita Felski: *The Limits of Critique*, University of Chicago Press, 2015, Introduction

Suggested Classics

- Sigmund Freud: *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Penguin Modern Classics, 2002
- Karl Marx: *The German Ideology*, Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, 1987

Suggested Readings

- Jacqueline Rose: “States of Fantasy”, *The Jacqueline Rose Reader*, Duke University Press, 2011.
- Philip Rieff: *Freud, The Mind of a Moralist*, University of Chicago Press, 1979
- Eli Saretsky: *Political Freud*, Columbia University Press, 2017, Chapter One
- Martha Cottam (et al.): *Introduction to Political Psychology*, Routledge, 2015, Chapter 10

Essay Question

Make use of the method of redescription in political critique! Provide one example!

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Week 4: On Violence, and Violence against Women

Key-Readings

- Jacqueline Rose: *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, “Feminism and the Psychic” & “Feminine Sexuality – Jacques Lacan and the *école freudienne*”, Verso, 1986
- Stephen Frosch: *The Politics of Psychoanalysis, An Introduction to Freudian and Post-Freudian Theory*, Palgrave, 1999, p. 196 - 240.

Suggested Classics

- Herbert Marcuse: *Eros and Civilisation*, Routledge, 1987, p. 197 - 222
- Sigmund Freud: “Family Romances”, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume IX (1906-1908)*; p. 235-242

Suggested Readings

- Sianne Ngai: *Ugly Feelings*, Harvard University Press, 2007, Chapter on “Envy”
- Jean Laplanche: “Gender, Sex, and the Sexual”, *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, Vol. 8(2), 2007

Essay Question

Does the issue of gender oppression have a psychic solution? Discuss.

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Week 5: Resistance and Subjectivity

Key-Readings

- Edward Said: *Freud and The Non-European*, Verso, 2014
- Jacqueline Rose: Afterword to *The Holocaust and the Nakba*, Bashir, B and Goldberg, A (eds.), *The Holocaust and the Nakba: A New Grammar of Trauma and History*, Columbia University Press, 2018

Suggested Classics

- Jacqueline Rose: *The Last Resistance*, “The Concept of Evil”, Verso, 2017
- Edward Said: *Orientalism*, Penguin Classics, 2015
- Frantz Fanon: *A Dying Colonialism*, Grove Press, 1994

Suggested Readings

- Martha Cottam (et al.): *Introduction to Political Psychology*, Routledge, 2015, Chapters 12 - 14
- Michelle A. Stephens: “We Have Never Been White: Afropessimism, Black Rage, and What the Pandemic Helped me Learn about Race and Psychoanalysis”, *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, Vol. 91(1), 2022.

Essay Question:

“The West is always responsible for non-Western violence against the West”.
Critically discuss Jacqueline Rose’s statement

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Week 6: Modern Political Psychology

Key-Readings

- Matthias Fatke: “Personality Traits and Political Ideology: A First Global Assessment”, *Political Psychology*, Vol. 38(5), 2017
- Adrian Kreutz: “Moral and Political Foundations”, *Moral Philosophy and Politics*, Vol. 10(1), 2023
- Stephen Frosch: “Psychoanalysis as Political Psychology”, in Nesbitt-Larking, P. (et al.) (eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Political Psychology*, 2014

Suggested Classics

- Adorno (et al.): *The Authoritarian Personality*, Verso, 2015
- Wilhelm Reich: *The Mass-Psychology of Fascism*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1980

Suggested Readings

- Alan Gerber (et al.): “The Big Five Personality Traits in the Political Arena”, *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 14(1), 2011
- Martha Cottam (et al.): *Introduction to Political Psychology*, Routledge, 2015, Chapters 1 -3
- Sianne Ngai: *Ugly Feelings*, Harvard University Press, 2007, Chapter on “Anxiety”

Essay Question

Is psychoanalytic insight missing from contemporary political psychology?

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Week 7: Supervision

Think of a research question and research design

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Week 8: Essay Writing

Write your essay!