

## POLITICAL SCIENCE 108: POSTMODERN POLITICS

Marquette University  
Spring 2006, MW 1:00-2:15, Lalumiere 396

Professor Ryan Hanley

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Office Hours: MW 11:00-12:00 and by appointment

**Course Description:** Postmodernism is now passé. But the fact that it is no longer fashionable makes it possible to assess objectively the strengths and the weaknesses of its critique of modernity. This course will examine several principal elements of the postmodern critique of contemporary social and political life, focusing particularly on postmodernism's analysis of the effects of capitalism and consumerism, the effects of the rationalist legacy of the Enlightenment, the role of institutions and science in organizing modern power relations, and the political effects of anti-foundationalism.

**Attendance and Expectations:** Attendance at every meeting is expected. Roll will be taken at each meeting and excessive absences will result in your termination from the class. But students are expected to do more than simply show up; thorough preparation prior to each meeting and active participation while in class are also necessary if one hopes to master the material and receive a high grade. In preparing for class you should read assignments with the maximum possible care. To help you prepare most effectively for class discussions I will distribute a short set of study questions on the assigned reading prior to each meeting. In class you are expected to listen carefully to the contributions of your colleagues and to engage others through your own contributions. Students can expect to be called on. Those inexperienced in or uncomfortable with talking in class are encouraged to come to see me early in the semester so that we can together develop useful strategies for effective participation.

**Requirements and Grading:** The final course grade will be comprised of four components. The first three components are three five-page papers and associated oral examinations, each worth 25%. For each assignment, each student will write a five-page paper and be individually examined on that paper in an Oxford-style one-on-one tutorial with the instructor. The other 25% of your grade will be determined by the quality of your class participation. Please note that this means that the quality of your class participation can affect your final grade in either an upward or downward direction. As the course proceeds we will discuss the standards by which both your class participation and your joint written papers/oral examinations will be evaluated. Finally: late papers will not be accepted unless I authorize an extension in advance.

**Texts and Readings:** The course has three required texts, all available for purchase at BookMarq: Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (Viking/Penguin, 1998); Paul Rabinow, ed., *The*

*Foucault Reader* (Panethon, 1984); and Walter Kaufman, ed., *The Portable Nietzsche* (Viking/Penguin, 1976). In addition to these, the schedule of reading and written assignments below lists several required articles. “OL” denotes articles available online via the library’s electronic reserve system.

**Schedule of Reading and Written Assignments:** The following schedule is unlikely to change, but please know that I reserve the right to amend it if necessary.

Week 1 of January 16: Introduction

W: Introduction

Week 2 of January 23: Our Postmodern Society (I)

M: DeLillo, *White Noise*, ch. 1-16 (pp. 3-79)

W: DeLillo, *White Noise*, ch. 17-21 (pp. 80-163)

Week 3 of January 30: Our Postmodern Society (II)

M: DeLillo, *White Noise*, ch. 22-32 (pp. 167-241)

W: DeLillo, *White Noise*, ch. 33-40 (pp. 242-326)

Week 4 of February 6: Postmodernism Defined

M: Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* (selections) (OL)

W: Lyotard, “What is Postmodernism?” and Habermas, “Modernity vs. Postmodernity” (both OL)

Week 5 of February 13: Capitalism and Consumerism

M: Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (selections) and *Consumer Society* (selections) (both OL)

W: Jameson, “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” (OL)

Week 6 of February 20: Tutorial Week #1

M: Individual Meetings

W: Individual Meetings

Week 7 of February 27: Enlightenment: Reason, Technology, Power (I)

M: Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (selections) (OL)

W: Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?” in Rabinow, pp. 32-50

Week 8 of March 6: Enlightenment: Reason, Technology, Power (II)

M: Foucault, “Truth and Power” and “Nietzsche, Genealogy and History,” in Rabinow, pp. 51-100

W: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, selections, in Rabinow, pp. 170-213

Spring Break: March 13-17

Week 9 of March 20: Enlightenment: Reason, Technology, Power (III)

M: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, selections, in Rabinow, pp. 214-56

W: Foucault, “Right of Death” and “We Other Victorians,” in Rabinow, pp. 258-72, 292-300

Week 10 of March 27: Enlightenment: Reason, Technology, Power (IV)

M: Foucault, “Repressive Hypothesis” and “Preface”, in Rabinow, pp. 301-29; 333-39.

W: Strauss, "Three Waves of Modernity" and Habermas, "Entry into Postmodernity" (both OL)

Week 11 of April 3: Tutorial Week #2

M: Individual Meetings

W: Individual Meetings

Week 12 of April 10: Anti-Foundationalism (I)

M: Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 121-58

W: Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 158-86; 191-211

Week 13 of April 17: Anti-Foundationalism (II)

M: No Class – Easter Holiday

W: Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 211-257

Week 14 of April 24: Anti-Foundationalism (III)

M: Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 264-79, 398-416

W: Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 465-492

Week 15 of May 1: Anti-Foundationalism (IV)

M: Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 492-529

W: Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 529-563

Exam Week of May 8: Tutorial Week #3