With the rise of right-wing and populist movements around the world, the entrenchment of global social and economic inequalities, global climate change and environmental disasters, and mass resistance movements to authoritarianism and capitalism, we find ourselves in uncertain times, often struggling to make sense of that which afflicts our human condition. This course is a survey of how power operates in and shapes the world around us. It asks: How is order maintained in societies across time and geographical location? How do acts of resistance, opposition, and revolutionary movements usurp power and change societal dynamics? What kinds of politics and analysis does this historical juncture call for?

This course will combine the works of theorists and philosophers as diverse as Marx, Weber, Foucault, Gramsci, Fanon, Saïd, Bourdieu and Lenin, among others, with ethnographic and anthropological texts to understand how power, subjection, hegemony, and ideology come to bear on historical and contemporary issues. It will survey a broad range of topics such as nationalism, the state, militarism, racism, populism, empire, colonialism, capitalism, neoliberalism, gender, infrastructure and technology, globalization, security regimes and surveillance, revolutionary movements, and violence and terror.