

**Political Science 304.66
Power**

Professor Leonard Feldman

Hunter College, Fall 2010
Mondays 5:35-8:15 pm
Roosevelt House Room 204

Professor Feldman's Contact Information:

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This seminar will be devoted to exploring rival theoretical formulations of the concept of power. What is power, and who has power? We will examine issues such as the balance between popular power and institutionalized power, the relationship between the state and economic power, ideological power and the question of "false consciousness" and social science debates concerning the multiple dimensions of power.

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Texts to purchase at Shakespeare & Co.:

Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*

Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*
James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*
John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*
Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*
Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

Additional articles will be posted to Blackboard. You are responsible for printing out copies and bringing them to class.

Blackboard

I will make extensive use of Blackboard throughout the term. Some readings (marked with an asterisk on the class schedule below) will be made available as PDF documents on the Blackboard site for our class. Review sheets, essay topics and reading questions will also be posted there for you to download. Finally, I will also make use of Blackboard's communication functions to send important email announcements to you. Thus it is very important for you to (a) check Blackboard regularly and (b) make sure that the email address that Blackboard has registered for you is an email address you check regularly. If it isn't, change your email address on Blackboard by clicking "Update Email" on the upper left-hand tools menu.

Four Assignments/Requirements:

1. Consistent **attendance** and **active participation** in discussion (20% of grade).

You are expected to bring the book and/or paper copies of the articles being discussed to seminar. Whether or not you completed a response paper for that session, you should be prepared with questions, confusions, criticisms and passages marked for discussion.

2. A **5-6 PAGE essay** (20% of grade)

The essay will ask you to apply two competing theories of power to a specific political conflict or cultural text such as a film (details coming soon)

DUE: NOVEMBER 12TH BY 4 PM.

3. A **take-home final exam** 12 Pages (35% of grade)

DUE FRIDAY DECEMBER 17TH BY 4 PM.

Question will be handed out December 6th.

(A 12-15 page research paper may be substituted for the take-home final with permission of the instructor. If you elect to do a research paper, YOU MUST CONSULT WITH ME BY WEEK 6 (October 18-22nd), 1-2 PAGE PROSPECTUS DUE WEEK 8 (November 1st) AND ROUGH DRAFT DUE WEEK 12 (November 29th).)

Both the five page essay and the take-home final need to be uploaded to turnitin.com

To do so, visit <http://turnitin.com> and set up an account if you do not have one already. You will enter the following course ID and password:

Course ID: 3437242

Password: hegemony

4. Eight **response papers** (2 pages each). 25% of grade.

You choose when, but:

- NO LATE RESPONSE PAPERS ACCEPTED
- NO EMAILED RESPONSE PAPERS ACCEPTED
- RESPONSE PAPER IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF SEMINAR AND MUST COVER THE READINGS FOR THAT DAY

I **strongly** recommend you start doing these immediately. It is very easy to let this assignment slide and then be unable to complete the required 8 papers by the end of term. (We have 13 meetings and 8 response papers. So you can skip writing a response paper a maximum of 5 times. Plan accordingly.)

*******A Note About Response Papers**

Response papers are not simply a page or two of rambling thoughts. They should be organized, focused, thoughtful, critical, reflective, and questioning.

→ It's best if your response paper is divided into 3 sections.

First section: Summary. Provide an overview of the week's readings. What were the central arguments in the readings? If we're reading a book, what is the central thesis of the text? If we are reading multiple authors, what is the central disagreement or area of debate? (1/2 page)

Second section: Critical analysis. Select one particular problem, issue, theme or argument in the readings for focused attention. Develop the author's argument, and, if appropriate, compare it to other readings. This section can include an evaluation of the reading including criticisms of any shortcomings. (1 page)

Third section: Questions. In a concluding paragraph, raise one or two thoughtful questions about the readings. What issue or problem would you like to discuss further? (1/2 page)

Grading: √+, √, √-

All √+: A

All √s: B

All √-: D

Mostly √- with a couple √ : C

Mostly √+ with a couple √ : A-

(Failure to complete all 8 response papers will result in a deduction of 1 grade per missing response paper.)

(You can do MORE than 8 response papers and I will drop the lowest grade.)

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

I. Who Has Power?

1. 8/30 Introduction

9/6 No class: Labor Day

2. 9/13 A classic debate: corporate power and contemporary democracy
Gabriel Almond, "Capitalism and Democracy," *PS: Political Science and Politics*

Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* chpts 2 and 4.

II. What is Power? The three faces/dimensions of Power

3. 9/20 The First Face of Power: The Pluralist Definition

Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power"

Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model"

Dahl *Who Governs* pp. 223-245

Lukes, *Power* pp. 1-5, 14-19

4. 9/27 The Second Face of Power: The Mobilization of Bias

Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, "Two Faces of Power"

Bachrach and Baratz "Decisions and Nondecisions: An Analytical Framework"

Bachrach and Baratz, "Power and Its Two Faces Revisited"

Lukes, *Power*, pp. 20-25

5. 10/4 The Third Face of Power: Hegemony

Lukes, pp. 25-29

Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*, Preface, chpts 1-4

(In class: "Matewan")

III. Exploring Hegemony: Thick versus Thin Theories of Ideological hegemony

10/11: NO CLASS, Columbus Day

6. 10/18 A “thick” theory of hegemony
Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*, chpts 6,7 and 10.
(In class: “Matewan,” finish)

7. 10/25 A “thin” theory of hegemony
James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*
Lukes, pp. 124-134

IV. Beyond the three faces of power?

8. 11/1 Disciplinary Power
Peter Digeser, “The Fourth Face of Power”
Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

9. 11/8 Disciplinary Power, cont’d
Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* finish.
Charles Taylor, “Foucault on Freedom and Truth”

Paper assignment due 11/12 by 4 pm.

V. Power and the State

10. 11/15 Capitalism, Subjectivity and the Modern Liberal State
Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus”
Butler, *Psychic Life of Power*, excerpt

11. 11/22 Consent to Authoritarianism
Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*

12. 11/29 Power and State Punishment
Kaufman-Osborn, *From Noose to Needle* chpts 3 and 7.

VI. Popular Power

13. 12/6 Redefining power:
Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*

14. 12/13 Power of the People
Jason Frank, *Constituent Moments*, excerpt

Take-home final due Friday December 17th