

Political Science 211-228 Wed.:3:10-5:00

Spring 2000 Office hrs: T-Th:11:00- Mervat Hatem 12:30; 3:30-4:30 p.m &

Wed. 2:00-3:00 p.m

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### Non-Traditional Approaches to World Politics

#### Description:

This seminar is designed to examine the nature of the intellectual challenges facing "positivist" international relations theories and the possible contributions they can make to understanding world politics. As a starting point, we will evaluate the state of the field of international relations: its primary theoretical and methodological occupations and its recent debates. Then, we will discuss the critiques offered by the proponents of poststructuralism, feminism and critical theory.

Next, we will look at the work done to deconstruct the "nation-state" as the primary unit of analysis in international relations theories and how multicultural, gender and postcolonial theories offer alternative conceptualizations of that key category. Finally, we will look at postmodernism as a new analytical language, method and critique of modernity and which international relations theories embrace as its primary social and political project.

#### Organization:

The following books have been ordered through Howard University bookstore and will form the focus of our discussion:

-Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski, eds., International Theory: Positivism and Beyond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

-Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat, eds., Dangerous Liaisons, Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

-Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutcheon, eds., A Postmodern Reader (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993).

These edited books will represent the primary readings for the course. They will also serve as a source for student presentations to assist discussions in class.

### Grading:

Your grade will reflect your oral and written performance in the seminar. As part of the effort to stimulate student participation in class discussions, you will be regularly asked to do oral presentations of the assigned readings. In addition, you will be asked to write 3 short research papers (15 pages each) on topics to be assigned.

The paper topics will be closely related to our readings for the class. The goal of each paper will be to give you an opportunity to critically discuss these readings and to develop an independent opinion regarding the views they put forward. A list of questions to guide your discussion in each paper as well as the date by which each assignment is due will be provided to you ahead of time. Late papers will not be accepted.

Each one of the papers will count for 25% of your final grade. The remaining 25% will be based on the quality (preparation, organization and thoroughness) of your oral presentations in class and the seriousness with which you take these assignments including showing up for them.

### Good Luck and Welcome to the Course Course Outline

#### I. Introduction to the Course (Jan. 12)

#### II. Positivism and its Challengers:

Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski, eds., International Theory: Positivism and Beyond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

(a) Chapter 1: "The International Debates", (Jan. 19).

(b) Part II: "Positivism and its Legacies", (Jan. 26).

(c) Part III: "Analytical Silences", (Feb. 2).

(d) Part IV: "Intellectual Openings", (Feb. 9).

(e) Part V: "Future Directions", (Feb. 16).

\* First paper assignment is due on Feb. 23, 2000.

\*\* Late papers will not be accepted.

III. Deconstructing the "Nation-state" and Multicultural, Gender and Postcolonial Alternatives.

Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat, ed., Dangerous Liaisons, Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1997).

(a) Part I: "Contesting Nations", (Mar. 1).

(b) Part II: "Multicultural and Diasporic Perspectives", (Mar. 8).

(c) Part III: "Gender and the Politics of Race", (Mar. 15).

(d) Part IV: "Postcolonial Theory", (Mar. 29).

\* Second paper assignment is due on April 5, 2000.

\*\* Late papers will not be accepted.

#### IV. Postmodernity

Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutcheon, eds., A Postmodern Reader (New York: State University of New York: 1993).

(a) Part I: "Modern/Postmodern", (April 12).

(b) Part II: "Representing the Postmodern", (April 19).

(c) Part III: "Political Entanglements and Complicities" (April 26).

\* Third paper assignment is due on May 2.

\*\* Late papers will not be accepted.