PLSI 387 GWAR—NON-WESTERN/COMPARATIVE POLITICAL THOUGHT (GWAR COMPLIANT)
Spring 2010, Wednesdays 6:10-9:50

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Office Hours:
Tuesday 3:45-4:45
Wednesday 3:30-4:30
Or by appointment if necessary

Course Description:

To speak of “non-Western political thought” is to assume that there is something called “the West” against which non-Western political thought defines itself. When we speak of “the West,” what do we mean? Is it simply a geographical space or is it also a culture, a set a values, or a way of life? Are these values timeless and universal? Does the West “own them”? Do these values take on different forms when they move to other geographical spaces?

This course examines these questions from a variety of different perspectives. We will begin the course with texts by political theorists from the Global South who write about the problem of the West. What is Western civilization? Should it be defined on the basis of its values or of its practices? Is Western civilization worth imitating? If so, what should be imitated? If not, how does one escape it, given the legacy of European colonialism?

In the second half of the course, we will read texts by thinkers located in the Global North, who focus on if and how those in the West can meaningfully and respectfully engage with forms of political thought produced in the Global South, in light of European colonialism and imperialism. These texts attempt to bring Western and non-Western political thought into dialogue as equals. However noble, this project runs a number of risks that we will be paying attention to as we read these works. For instance, do these projects still privilege the West by measuring the value of “other” ideas on the basis of their ability to contribute to discussions whose parameters have been largely established in and by the West? Do attempts to remedy this imbalance—by locating globally marginalized discourses in privileged specific sites—often replicate binary oppositions such as East/West, theory/experience, philosophy/history, native/foreign, and the study of politics/politics that are questionable both empirically and ideologically?

Prerequisite: passing English 214 with a C- or its equivalent.

Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) components:
This course is designed to be GWAR compliant. Accordingly, the course will be capped at 25 students with no exceptions. There will be a minimum of 15 written pages required in this class and at least one of the assignments will have to be rewritten and resubmitted after getting comments from the professor. Both the draft and the final version of that paper will be graded.

Student learning outcomes:
Students taking this course will be able to:

• describe the complications of thinking about the “non west” through the perspective of western dominated theory.
• critically analyze some of the key texts that examine the relationship between “north” and “south” or “east” and “west.”
• apply their knowledge about the conceptions of “non-western” thinkers like Gandhi and Fanon to the work of western thinkers who are themselves, attempting to think about the “non-west.”
• describe the concept of the “non-west,” so that it becomes more of a question than a certain set of values or principles.

Required Texts:
The following texts (in the order in which we read them) are required and can be purchased at the campus bookstore or elsewhere. You should purchase the editions listed below and bring them to class so that we may refer to specific passages and analyze them together. The books are on reserve in the library as well.

Gandhi, M.K. Hind Swaraj and Other Writings. South Asia Books. [Abbreviated in syllabus as HSOW]

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First draft</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Papers will be graded on a scale of 60 to 100, with 100 reserved for papers of the most outstanding quality. A grade of 95 is equivalent to an A and is most likely the highest grade students will receive. An average of 95 for the course means you will get an A in the course.

Course Organization and Requirements:
Classes will be a combination of lecture and discussion, with a primary emphasis on discussion. We will devote a significant amount of class time to discussing writing conventions. You should always come prepared to ask questions and discuss materials we are reading for that day. I also ask a lot of questions in class. Sometimes we will break up into smaller groups so that you may discuss particular issues or fulfill a particular in-class assignment. Please note that I reserve the right to give pop quizzes if I feel that students are not doing the reading. I will base this decision on the quality of participation. The grades will be factored into your participation grade. We may also do some writing exercises in class, which I will collect and grade, based on your response to the draft and other feedback.

Since participation is so important, I ask that students refrain from using cell phones and laptop computers in class. Other disruptive activities that should be avoided include arriving late or leaving early, speaking while your classmates have been given the floor, and getting up in the middle of class. I expect everyone to treat each other and me with goodwill and respect. This is compatible with lively and impassioned debates.
You will be required to write three 5 to 8 page papers. There will be a required draft for the first paper and that draft will be part of your overall grade. Paper topics along with more detailed guidelines for writing papers and a clear description of what constitutes A-work will be distributed in class as the deadline for the paper approaches. I only grant extensions on papers in extreme cases and you should submit requests prior to the due date of the paper. For every day that a paper is late, 3 points will be deducted from the paper grade.

**Attendance:**
Your attendance is **required**. I will pass around an attendance sheet. Active participation in class is expected and frequent absences will significantly reduce your final participation grade. You are allowed one (1) absence after which your participation grade will be reduced by 5 points for each absence. However, your mere presence in class is not sufficient to receive a good participation grade. You must actively participate in class discussions in constructive and engaged ways. You do not have to have all the answers in order to participate. You just have to have read and thought about the material.

**Student Disabilities:**
It is important that this course be accessible to all students. Please let me know if you have any disabilities or medical conditions for which reasonable accommodations can be made. I will do my best to ensure that your needs are met. More information can be found at the Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC). The may be contacted by phone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472), by email (dprc@sfsu.edu) or you may visit them online at http://www.sfsu.edu/~dprc/ or in the Student Service Building.

**Academic Dishonesty and Academic Resources:**
Cases of plagiarism (presenting the ideas or writing of others as one’s own i.e. failing to cite ideas or writing that you yourself have not generated) carry stiff penalties, including an F for the paper and/or the course. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism or appropriate citation practices, do not hesitate to ask me. The SFSU web page (http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/StudentHelp/Plagiarism.html) has information on plagiarism. All students should review this link. We will also be reviewing what plagiarism is before the first paper is due. A list of writing and tutoring resources can be found at http://www.sfsu.edu/~lac/writing.htm.

**Class Schedule and Readings:**
All readings are to be completed by the date for which they are assigned. Please note that the syllabus is subject to change. In the event that there is a change, all students will be given ample notice.

Jan. 28—Introduction: Overview of writing in the discipline of political science

I. What is “the West” and is it for everyone?

Feb. 4—*Hind Swaraj* in *HSOW*, chapters 1-2 (pp. 5-18) and chapters 4-12 (pp. 24-65) [Suggested: Anthony J. Parel’s “Introduction.”]

Feb. 11—*Hind Swaraj* in *HSOW*, chapters 13-14 (pp. 66-74) and chapters 16-20 (pp. 79-119)


Feb. 25—*Discourse on Colonialism*, pp. 31-78 [Suggested: pp. 81-94] *BSWM*, introduction (pp. xi-xviii) and chapter 1 (pp. 1-23) [Suggested: chapters 2-3 (pp. 24-63)]

March 4—*BSWM*, chapters 4-5 (pp. 64-119) First draft due.
March 11—*BSWM*, chapters 6-8 (pp. 120-206).

II. What is “the East”? Who is “the other”? According to Whom?

March 18—*Orientalism*, Introduction and chapter 1 (pp. 1-110). First paper due.

March 25—No class—Spring break.

April 1—*Orientalism*, TBA Second paper assigned. In class discussion about integrating comments and feedback from first paper into writing process.

April 8—*EM*, chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 3-43)

April 15—*EM*, chapters 3-4 (pp. 49-122) and conclusion (pp. 154-168)

April 22—*CA*, pp. 1-50. Second paper due.

April 29—*CA*, pp. 51-123. Third paper assigned.

May 6—*CA*, pp. 127-182

May 13—*CA*, pp. 185-241.

May 20<sup>th</sup>—Third paper due.