POL3124: Anarchism and World Ordering (2017-2018)

Department of Politics
Module Handbook

POL3124

Anarchism and World Ordering

30 credits
2017-2018

Seminars, Term 1: Tuesdays 11:30-13:30, Amory B105
Term 2, t.b.c.

Module convener and seminar tutor:
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Module Description

With the end of the Cold War and the collapsing hegemony of Marxist-Leninism on the left, many on the right claim that the neo-liberal world order constitutes the ‘end of history’ (Fukuyama 1989). And yet capitalism is in crisis and protest erupts everywhere. In the aftermath of the so-called ‘battle for Seattle’ in 1999, Occupy Wall Street and the anti-G8 demonstrations, this liberal triumphalism is once again contested. Today it is the anarchists and anarchism that provides the intellectual and practical framework for thinking about alternatives to capitalism across large swaths of the left. Once consigned to Trotsky’s ‘dustbin of history’, the development of ideas of horizontalism, general assemblies, anti-hierarchical organising and a DIY philosophy, has caught many by surprise. Few if any have more than a superficial understanding of this infamous tradition in the history of political thought. Moreover, and ironically from the perspective of a discipline that has anarchy at its heart, IR has failed routinely to engage with anarchist thought. This research-led module will provide you with a unique account of this resurgence by locating anarchism as a social practice in the historical development of ‘the international’.

Module Aims

By approaching the development of ‘the international’ from the perspective of anarchist international political theory, you will come to see the world through a unique set of lenses. This will help clarify your own views on a range of topics form global capitalism to international law, climate change and US Empire. This research-led module will provide a deep and broad understanding of anarchist approaches to world ordering and explore how anarchist practices themselves shape the contemporary world order. The module follows a broadly chronological structure, showing how anarchists have responded to the world ordering projects of their opponents, and how contemporary anarchist theory might help us think about world ordering more generally. The aim is to use historical experiences of anarchist theory and practice to shed light on the origins and trajectory of the contemporary neo-liberal world order and to evaluate these sets of critiques in the light of wider debates in International Relations and political theory.

Intended learning outcomes

Module Specific Skills and Knowledge:
1. contrast historic and contemporary world orders;
2. identify the contrasts and similarities in anarchist thought as it evolved over time;

Discipline Specific Skills and Knowledge:
1. demonstrate understanding of anarchist approaches to international relations
2. critically engage mainstream accounts of international relations from an anarchist perspective;

Personal and Key Transferable/ Employment Skills and Knowledge:
1. present complex arguments with clarity and concision;
2. identify spurious conclusions and distinguish rigorous from merely persuasive argument;
3. express complex ideas clearly in both written and oral form.

Teaching Program

The teaching program consists of 11 weeks of seminars in two terms. There will be no lectures on this module. You are therefore expected to read extensively in preparation for class. The seminars will provide you with an opportunity to discuss a specific set of questions pertaining to
the issues covered in the readings.

Learning and Teaching Methods

This module is demanding and in order to get the most out of it you will need to read a huge amount of material. All students will be expected to have prepared for the seminar by covering the essential readings scheduled for each topic. This is the basis from which class discussion will develop. If you do not read in preparation for class, you undermine the learning of those that do. Please consider this before you decide to attend without having read all the essential readings.

You will find that discussion is more interesting if you go ‘off piste’ and read whatever interests you from the additional readings. The additional readings are not substitutes for the essential readings, but should be read alongside them. Remember, the more you put into your preparation, the more rewarding you will find the seminars. Good discussion depends on the prior preparation of everyone involved!

The learning method of this seminar is student-led. Each week two students will give a class presentation that will be a direct answer to one or more of the seminar questions (listed below). Presentations will be followed by a short question and answer session which will open up the discussion to follow. You are being encouraged to learn how to ask a good question and, as presenters, how to give convincing answers. The seminar presentation schedule will be drawn up in the first meeting. Seminar participation will be structured using a variety of activities: small group work, go-rounds, quizzes, class debates and individual study.

Assessment:

Formative
Formative group presentation - 10 minutes

Summative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of assessment</th>
<th>% of credit</th>
<th>Size of the assessment</th>
<th>ILOs assessed</th>
<th>Feedback method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One group presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>Written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20 weeks</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>First summative essay</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3,500 words</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second summative essay</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3,500 words</td>
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The formative and summative presentation (10%)
In term 1 and 2 you will present in groups of three. The first presentation is formatively assessed. In term 2 your group presentation will be summatively assessed. For your class presentation you should answer the key question for that week. Imagine you are preparing an answer to an essay question and present the argument and structure of the essay. You are welcome to write your essay on the subject of the presentation, so use this opportunity to prepare. You are also encouraged to be as innovative as you like with your presentation. If you want to produce a video blog or record your presentation in advance, feel free to do so. We will play it back in class. You will be assessed on your ability to answer the question directly, structure your answer
coherently and present fluently. Use PowerPoint, Prezi or any other software you like, and handouts are often, though not always, useful.

**Class participation**
Your attendance will be recorded each week and your participation is required for 20 of the 22 classes. This participation constitutes 10% of your mark for the year.

**Summative essay questions (40% and 40%)**
For your first summative essay, you are encouraged to answer one of the key seminar questions. However, if there is a topic you would like to pursue that is not covered, you are welcome to do so as long as you discuss your topic with the module leader first.

For the second summative essay you are encouraged to develop the subject of the first essay into new areas or in more depth. There will be dedicated time set aside for you to discuss your essay topics with the module leader.

**Essay submission dates:**
Essay 1: Friday 12th of January, 2018
Essay 2: Tuesday 20th of March, 2018

**Essay Writing Guides and Assessment Criteria**
You can find lots of advice relating to essay writing on the Politics Undergraduate Handbook, ELE page, which includes essay writing tips and the full marking criteria adopted in each year. See here: [http://vle.exeter.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3832](http://vle.exeter.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3832)

**General Reading Lists**

**Introductory texts:**
There are no set texts for this course. However, if you are new to anarchism, each of the following books provides an excellent introduction.


**These are some good anthologies and edited collections**


**Journals and Periodicals**

*Anarchist Studies* [http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/anarchiststudies/](http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/anarchiststudies/)


*Perspectives on Anarchist Theory* [http://anarchiststudies.org/perspectives/](http://anarchiststudies.org/perspectives/)


**Journal special issues and forums on anarchism**

*Anarchy and IR Theory, Journal of International Political Theory* 13/3 2017

*Geographies of Anarchism, Antipode, 44/ 5, 2012, Anarchism and anthropology, Critique of Anthropology, 32/2 June 2012


*Symposium on James C. Scott’s The Art of Not Being Governed, Perspectives on Politics 9/1, 2011

*Anarchism and International Relations, Global Discourse, 1/2, 2010


*On Postanarchism, SubStance, 36/2, 2007


*Anarchism and Al Qaeda, Terrorism and Political Violence 20/4, 2008

**Some useful websites**


An Anarchist FAQ Website [http://www.infoshop.org/AnAnarchistFAQ](http://www.infoshop.org/AnAnarchistFAQ)

Anarchist Studies Network: [www.anarchist-studies-network.org.uk](http://www.anarchist-studies-network.org.uk)

Center for a Stateless Society [http://c4ss.org/](http://c4ss.org/)


Summary Seminar Outline

Semester 1

Part 1: Introduction
Week 1: Introduction: What is anarchism?
Week 2: Anarchy, anarchism and international relations
Week 3: Feminist methods and anarchist worldviews

Part 2: Key concepts
Week 4: Capitalism and private property
Week 5: Democracy and the state
Week 6: Anarchist ethics
Week 7: Anarcho-Syndicalism

Part 2: Anarchist world ordering 1880-1918
Week 8: The global spread of anarchism
Week 9: Anarchism and terrorism in the 19th and 20th century
Week 10: The anarchists and the Great War
Week 11: Essay skills week

Semester 2

Part 3: Anarchist world ordering, 1936-present
Week 12: The Spanish Revolution and Civil War
Week 13: Noam Chomsky on Empire
Week 14: Post-Anarchism and world order
Week 15: Anarcha-feminism and world order
Week 16: Prefiguration, lifestyle politics and global order
Week 17: Murray Bookchin and social ecology
Week 18: Anarchism and the cooperative movement
Week 19: Decolonizing anarchism
Week 20: Anarchism and law
Week 21: Anarchy, anarchism and IR theory revisited
Week 22: Conclusions, reflections and the great anarchist quiz of 2018!
Detailed reading lists

Part 1: Introduction

Seminar 1: Introduction: What is Anarchism?

Summary: In this seminar we will discuss the aims and objectives of the module, the broad themes and approaches, and the assessments. We will also discuss your own preconceptions of anarchism and where these ideas might have come from.

You are advised to have read one of the following before the first class


Seminar 2: Anarchy, Anarchism and International Relations

Summary: This module is structured in a way that assumes little or no background in political theory or International Relations theory. Nevertheless, some background in both is needed to introduce you to the intellectual significance of the module. This class if therefore designed to bring us all up to speed on the disciplinary focus.

Key question: Critically evaluate the anarchist definition of the concept of anarchy.

Essential reading


Seminar 3: Feminist Standpoint and Anarchist Method

Summary: How do we approach the question of anarchism and world ordering? After all, anarchists have not been world leaders, diplomats, CEOs, or any of the other traditional figureheads of world order. In this class we will explore a different way of thinking about world ordering, one informed by feminist and critical methods, which sees the world constructed from the bottom up, in the relationships we build and sustain in our everyday lives.
**Key question:** How does seeing the personal as political help us reframe what are international politics?

**Essential reading:**


**Additional reading**


Part 2: Key Concepts

Seminar 4: Private Property and Capitalism

Summary: Anarchism emerged primarily as a critique of the rise of private property and capitalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. What they objected to was the private exclusive ownership of capital and the transformation of labour into a commodity that could be traded. While Weber famously saw this as a process of rationalisation and protestant thrift, Marx saw it as a transformation in the mode of production, and Durkheim in the mode of social organisation, the anarchists saw the emergence of capitalism as the transformation of slavery. In this class we explore this argument in some depth.

Key question: What, if anything, is gained from understanding capitalism as a transformation of slavery?

Essential reading:
Michael Bakunin, ‘The Capitalist System’ available at
http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bakunin/capstate.html


Additional reading


Rosencil, Sasha, Disarming patriarchy: feminism and political action at Greenham. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995)


### Seminar 5: Democracy and the state

**Summary:** Anarchists are routinely cast as enemies of democracy. But anarchists have been inveterate experimenters when it comes to democratic practice, going well beyond majoritarianism. The issue for anarchists is less whether democracy is good or bad, but the institutional and ideological context in which it is enacted.

**Key question:** Critically assess the anarchist claim that liberal accounts of democracy curtail rather than enhances liberty.

**Essential reading:**

**Additional Reading:**


**Seminar 6: Anarchist Ethics**

**Summary:** How do anarchists answer the standard questions of moral philosophy, such as where do conceptions of the good come from, or what is permissible? In this class we will explore the relationship and tensions between the ways anarchists understand personal and collective conceptions of the good. In the following class we look at the institutional means through which the good might be realised.

**Key question:** Do we have a moral obligation to obey the state?

**Essential reading**


Egoumenides, Magda *Philosophical Anarchism and Political Obligation* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014). (Introduction and any other chapter)

**Additional Reading**


**Summary 7: Anarcho-syndicalism**

**Summary**: Historically speaking, the mass anarchist movement has been a workers movement, constituted primarily in the *syndicats*, or revolutionary unions. These have also tended to be federations, rather than top down administrative machines. The linking of freedom and self-determination with unionism has a long history in anarchist thought. In this seminar we will look at this relationship between federalism, syndicalism and anarchism and explore its limits and the potential it offers for thinking about future world orders.

**Key question**: Is anarcho-syndicalism a viable strategy for radical change today?

**Essential Reading**


Berry, David. and Constance Bantman, *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010). - Introduction

**Additional readings**


Bernerí, C. ‘Peter Kropotkin: His Federalist Ideas’, *War Commentary*, May 1942


Part 3: Anarchism and world ordering 1880-1939

Seminar 8: The global spread of anarchism

Summary: Anarchism was a European movement for less than a decade (the 1840s). Proudhon’s writings attracted first Marx and Bakunin, from Prussia and Russia respectively, then Ramon de la Sagra from Spain. Soon his ideas had crossed the Atlantic where they were taken up by Josiah Warren and Benjamin Tucker, while the Spanish connection took anarchist ideas to the Caribbean and Latin America. Anarchist ideas travelled with sailors to Japan, China and the Philippines, later India, Africa and Australasia. By the time of the outbreak of WWI, anarchism had gone global galvanising working class revolutionaries wherever the processes of industrialisation created a new working class, and wherever indentured servitude remained the norm.

Key question: Compare and contrast the rise of anarchism in two non-European countries between 1860 and 1919. (For your second summative essay you might consider a more contemporary focus.)
Essential Reading

Additional Reading
International Review of Social History, 52 (2007), 407-444


Turcato, Davide. ‘Italian Anarchism as a Transnational Movement, 1885-1915,’


**Seminar 9: Anarchism and Terrorism**

**Summary:** Anarchism’s association with terrorism is deeply embedded in the public consciousness. In this session we will explore this relationship with particular reference to the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and whether these early movements are mirrored in contemporary forms of terrorism or not.

**Key Question:** What, if anything, can we learn about the contemporary world order, by comparing nineteenth century anarchist terrorism with contemporary terrorism?
Essential Reading:

Additional reading:

Seminar 10: The anarchists and the Great War

Summary: Anarchists have, on the whole, been opposed to violence against people. They have routinely campaigned against war, and have been leaders of mutinies and often pacifists.
However, as always, the story is complicated. In this seminar we will look at anarchist approaches to World War I.

**Key question:** Should anarchists support and fight in wars between states?

**Essential reading**


**Additional reading**


Lakey, George. ‘Nonviolent Action as the Sword that Heals: Challenging Ward Churchill’s “Pacifism As Pathology”,’ (March 2001) available at: [http://www.trainingforchange.org/nonviolent_action_sword_that_heals](http://www.trainingforchange.org/nonviolent_action_sword_that_heals)


**Seminar 11: Essay skills week**

In this seminar we will discuss the dos and don’ts of essay writing, and work through your essay ideas.

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**Semester 2**

**Part 3: Anarchism 1936–present**

**Seminar 12: The Spanish Revolution and Civil War**

**Summary:** The Spanish revolution is often held to be the last historical example of living anarchism before it was extinguished forever. As we will see, this has proven to be a premature prognosis. What the Spanish revolution and civil war did illuminate was how far the international community was willing to go to stop the spread of anarchist ideas. By 1939, the Spanish anarchists were fighting the Nazis, Mussolini’s fascists, Franco’s *falangistas*, and Stalin’s Red Army. Meanwhile the League of Nations dithered and the British, French and Americans signed a non-intervention pact, consigning the democratically elected republican government and the anarchists to their fates. The war that broke out in Europe in 1939 mirrored the ideological battle lines that had split Spain.

**Key question:** Critically assess the threat (if any) of Spanish anarchism to world order in the 1930s.

**Essential reading:**


**Additional readings:**


**Seminar 13: Chomsky on Empire**

**Summary:** Noam Chomsky is one of the most widely known public intellectuals alive today and not only is he an anarchist, and emeritus professor of linguistics at MIT, he writes about international affairs as a hobby. What’s surprising is that professional IR academics ignore his work. Chomsky’s writings on the revolving door between policy makers and academia, and the complicity of the latter in the US imperial wars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, provide a unique perspective on the relationship between anarchism and global order, putting the modern university at its heart.

**Key question:** Identify and assess Chomsky’s anarchist critique of US Empire.

**Essential reading**


**Additional reading**


Noam Chomsky, ‘Just War Theory’, Lecture given to cadets at Westpoint Military Academy, 4/2/06. (1 hour) Available at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeQhgNkZvZM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeQhgNkZvZM)


Seminar 14: Post-anarchism and world order

Summary: In this seminar we will investigate the links between anarchism and poststructuralism. Poststructuralist critiques of the state, and the new conceptions of power and ontology that emerged from the writings of Foucault, Deluze and Guttari, and other, struck many as being anarchistic and were explored for what they might bring to anarchist thinking. Not only did they employ a conception of power that was far wider than the instrumental or materialist one so common elsewhere, but postructuralist theories also pinpointed the largely negative role of the state and governmentality on social order. Contemporary anarchists have been quick to redeploy these points of critique. We will investigate this linkage in this seminar and assess the novelty and analytical claims of this post-anarchist move.

Key question: How does a postanarchist starting point change how we conceptualise global order?

Essential reading

Additional reading
Karatzogianni, Athina. and Andrew Robinson, Power, Resistance, and Conflict in the Contemporary World: Social Movements, Networks, and Hierarchies (London: Routledge, 2010). (chapter 1)


### Seminar 15: Anarcha-feminism and world order

**Summary:** To the extent that both anarchists and feminists seek to remove domination from social relationships, there seems little distance between the two. However, male anarchists have been reluctant to embrace the implications of the feminist critique of anarchism. Do we need the state, or some form of political structure, to realise gender equality? This question has been at the heart of anarchist feminism.

**Key question:** Is a non-feminist anarchism possible or desirable?

**Essential reading**


**Additional reading**


Sebeka 16: Prefiguration, lifestyle politics and global order

**Summary:** Syndicalism was the revolutionary tactic of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century anarchism. By the beginning of the new millennium, and in the aftermath of the decimation of labour movements worldwide, anarchists developed new theories of revolutionary
agency linked more to everyday life than workplaces alone. Taking up ideas developed by feminists, contemporary accounts of prefiguration point to a politics of direct action intimately connected with one’s personal or private life and choices.

**Key question:** Are anarchist lifestyle choices prefigurative of a new world order?

**Essential reading**

Uri Gordon, ‘Prefigurative Politics between Ethical Practice and Absent Promise’, *Political Studies*, forthcoming.


**Additional reading**


Seminar 17: Murray Bookchin and Social Ecology

Summary: Anarchism and radical environmentalism have long been associated in popular imagination. One key strand of this is the anarchist social ecology pioneered and developed by Murry Bookchin and John Clark amongst others. Social ecology demands the complete reorientation of our relationship with nature, from one of domination to one of harmony. In this seminar we explore the ideas and legacy of Bookchin.

Key question: Critically evaluate Murray Bookchin’s social ecology.

Essential readings:

Additional readings:


**Seminar 18: Anarchism and the Cooperative Movement**

**Summary:** It is estimated that one in six people on the planet is a member of a cooperative. It is not difficult to draw links from Kropotkin’s theory of mutual aid to worker self-management and then to the cooperative movement, or between the mutualist ideas of Proudhon and contemporary cooperatives. While cooperatives are not synonymous with anarchism, some are and increasingly many are aligning workers’, producers’ and consumers’ cooperatives with anarchist principles. One of the key features of the cooperative movement is its peasant and agricultural base, groups traditionally thought to have been left behind by industrialisation and so not within the purview of traditional left-wing analysis.

**Key question:** Can cooperativism be a revolutionary movement?

**Essential reading:**


**Additional reading:**


See also: Cultivate.Coop info page on management structures: 
http://cultivate.coop/wiki/Worker_co-operative_structures

The International Cooperative Alliance, ‘What’s a co-op?’ Available at: #
http://www.kellogg.ox.ac.uk/MEOB
http://usaskstudies.coop/

### Seminar 19: Decolonizing Anarchism

**Summary:** Anarchism boasts a proud tradition of anti-fascism, from the rise of Mussolini, through the Spanish Civil War, WWII and since. Anti-racism has also been at the heart of anarchism’s egalitarianism, as well as its self-image. But this is not to say that individual anarchists have not been racists, nor that anarchists as a group do not replicate colonial thought and practices in their activism and writings, however unintentionally this may often be. In this class we will explore this mixed heritage.

**Key question:** Give a critical assessment of the legacy of racism in anarchist thought and practice.

**Essential Readings:**


**Additional Readings**


**Seminar 20: Anarchism and Law**

**Summary:** There is a small but not insignificant tradition of anarchist thinking about law. Given that anarchists reject the nation state as the central framing point for political theory and practice, how they think about law immediately has transnational connotations, and might also be best understood from the perspective of international law. Proudhon argued that international law, pacts and treaties between states in anarchy, provided a suitable template for thinking about law in general. This account of law runs contrary to the Kelsonian or Austinian accounts of law that demand a sovereign power or supreme constitution from which to derive their legitimacy. We will explore this set of issues in this class.

**Key question:** Is international law anarchist law?
Essential reading

Additional reading
Holterman, Thom. and Henc van Maarseveen (eds), Law and Anarchism (Montreal: Black Rose, 1984).

Seminar 21: Anarchy, Anarchism and international relations revisited
Summary: Having now surveyed a large part of the history of anarchist thinking about the international it is time to focus in on the conceptual structure of the international political theory of anarchism. Our main focus in this class will be anarchy, arguably the defining concept of the discipline of IR. From this focus we will ask wider questions such as, which are the main categories, claims and hypotheses of such an anarchist international political theory? How do anarchists understand the role and methods of theory? What is ‘the international’ from an anarchist perspective?
**Key question:** Is anarchy the problem or the solution in world politics?

**Essential reading**


**Additional Readings**


**Seminar 22: Conclusions and the great big anarchist quiz of 2018!**