

POLI 396 – Radical and Utopian Politics – Spring 2024
Mondays 5:00-7:30 PM, SCI A112

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Office Hours: Tues. 2:00-3:00 pm, Weds. 12:00-1:00 pm, and by appointment

Course Description

Why do people rebel? What visions and blueprints for the future have revolutionaries and utopian theorists put forth? What strategies are used to pursue radical social change? How and why are revolutionary and utopian visions altered in the process of their pursuit? What explains the success and failure of revolutionary and other movements for social change? What impact have radical and utopian politics had on our world? What forms are radical politics taking today? What are the connections, as well as the disjunctions, between current ideas and movements and those of the recent past? These are some of the questions we will grapple with, without assuming we can definitively answer any of them.

Utopian imaginings, rebellion, and revolution have been and continue to be an essential part of changing the world. In this course, we will examine several modern radical and revolutionary projects and ideologies. We begin with Marxism, which was birthed in the nineteenth century and played a central role in the twentieth. After an introduction to theoretical Marxism, we will study how it played itself out in the first great social revolution of the twentieth century, the Russian Revolution. From there we will look at two other ideologies that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century and which also shaped the 20th century in important ways: fascism and social democracy. In examining these three ideologies, we will maintain a dual focus on ideas and the ways they have interacted with structure and historical circumstance to produce political strategies for social change, which in a dialectical manner produced new sets of circumstances and realities. We will deepen our understanding of these movements and ideologies and how they shaped history by playing a Reacting to the Past (RTTP) game situated in the Weimar Republic of Germany during the tumultuous and consequential years of 1929-1932.

During the second half of the course, the focus broadens beyond Europe, class politics, and capitalism to debates about violence and nonviolence, anti-colonialism, ecological critiques of capitalism and modernity, and social protest in the 21st century including the Arab Spring. At the end of the course, we will consider the relevance of utopian visions today and prospects for social change. Is our world today in need of new visions for the future? If so, is the idea of utopia necessary and important? What are the opportunities and obstacles to challenging and changing the status quo in today's world? These are questions with which we will conclude.

Course Objectives

- 1) Dream. Allow ourselves to entertain and engage ideas and visions for changing the world.
- 2) Develop knowledge of languages and theoretical tools that allow us to critique both the world as it is, as well as radical projects for social change. This will be done through reading, discussion, and writing.
- 3) Gain a strong understanding of consequential ideological traditions that continue to shape our world.
- 4) Create a classroom community that allows for creative, respectful, and wide-ranging discussion and sharing of complex and controversial ideas and problems, thereby developing our skills in democratic discourse and debate. We will build this community through regular classroom discussion and the RTTP simulation.
- 5) Develop skills in public speaking, bargaining, and negotiation through participation in the RTTP game.
- 6) Gain an understanding of the ways our world has been shaped by radical politics and utopian visions.

Assigned Texts

Text Rental

- Vincent Bevins. 2023. *If We Burn: The Mass Protest Decade and the Missing Revolution*. New York: Public Affairs.

Books Available for Purchase at the UWSP Bookstore

- Sheila Fitzpatrick. 2017. *The Russian Revolution, 4th Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mahatma Gandhi. *Selected Writings*. Dennis Dalton, Editor. Hackett Publishing, 1996. **Note: This book is also available for free online through e-Reserves.**

E-Book to Purchase

- Robert Goodrich. 2023. *Democracy in Crisis: Weimar Germany, 1929-1932*. UNC Press.

NOTE: From hereafter referred to as *Gamebook*.

Students will need to purchase this Gamebook individually. It is available in both paperback and eBook formats. The list price for the paperback is \$30.00 and for the eBook \$19.99, or less. It is available from all eBook vendors, including [VitalSource Bookshelf](#) and Amazon Kindle. VitalSource titles can be read directly on your computer, you don't need a reader.

We will be using the Gamebook starting in Week 5 and you will need to read it during the previous week; so, make sure you have access to this book by **February 13th**.

e-Reserves

All additional readings and some films will be made available on Canvas in the e-Reserve module.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade will be based on your performance in the following areas:

Attendance and Participation	12%
Hypothes.is Annotations (4)	20%
Film Questions (2)	6%
Canvas Quiz on Gamebook	6%
Reacting to the Past Game Participation	20%
Papers/Text of Speeches for RTTP Game (3)	12%
Final Exam	24%
<hr/> <i>TOTAL</i>	<hr/> <i>100%</i>

Attendance and Participation

Class sessions will combine both lecture and discussion with an emphasis on discussion. During weeks 6-8 we will be playing a Reacting to the Past game or simulation. This game will be highly interactive, and student led. You will not be able to participate in our discussions or in the game if you are not in class. Thus, attendance and active participation in class discussions are crucial parts of this course and will count for 12% of your grade. You are expected to attend all class sessions and to come prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day as well as any films shown that week. More than **one** unexcused absence will result in a lowering of your attendance grade; **if you accumulate more than three unexcused absences (3 weeks), you will receive a failing grade for Attendance and Participation**, which means you will earn anywhere from 60-0% of the total possible 12 points and risk failing the course. In addition to attendance, active participation in class discussions is expected. I will keep track of both attendance and participation and will refer to this when I calculate this portion of your final grade.

Reading Annotations Using Hypothes.is

We will be using a new online tool that is linked in Canvas to engage in social annotations of many of the reading assignments. In the Course Schedule below, you will see 7 annotation assignments highlighted in YELLOW. Each student is required to complete at least 4 of these assignments. Extra annotation assignments will be counted as extra credit. Instructions for how to use Hypothes.is and expectations for these assignments will be posted in a guideline document on Canvas. These annotations will count for 20% of your grade.

Films and Film Questions

There are four required films for this course. I show a couple in class but you will be expected to watch the others outside of class. *These movies are an important part of the curriculum and viewing them is mandatory.* All but one of these films are available streaming through our library and links are provided through Canvas. Brief assignments on 3 of the films are highlighted in BLUE in the course schedule. Students are required to complete 2 of these assignments and can skip one. Students who complete all 3 of the film question assignments will earn extra credit.

Reacting to the Past

Weeks 5-8 will be spent playing a Reacting to the Past game focused on Weimar Germany and the eventual breakdown of democracy. This game was chosen to deepen students' understanding of key political ideologies that we are grappling with during the first half of the class, namely communism, fascism, and social democracy. In addition, you will learn about conservatism. This game also illustrates the risks that democracy faces when contending with challenging circumstances and the rise of extremism.

There are several graded components associated with this game:

- 1) Quiz on the Gamebook (6%).
- 2) 3 short papers that will serve as speeches for the simulation (12%).
- 3) Overall grade awarded at the end of the simulation based on the quality of your participation (20%).

This will be a highly interactive experience. For it to come off successfully we will need the commitment of all to be in attendance and to carry out their responsibilities within the game.

Important Note: Unlike a written assignment, there will be **NO MAKE-UP** for the RTTP game. The only exception would be some grave and unforeseen extenuating circumstance, like a serious illness or accident. Therefore, if you know now that you will be unable to attend class meetings during Weeks 5-8 (2/19, 2/26, 3/4, 4/11), you should speak to me ASAP and possibly consider dropping the course.

Due to differences in personality and assigned roles, some students may participate more visibly than others. Regardless of these differences, all can in their own way engage actively in the game.

Final Exam

The only exam will be the final exam which will be given during finals week. A study guide and information about exam format will be distributed later on in the semester.

Communicate with your instructor!

If you find yourself having trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure to let me know as soon as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing me along with your other instructors when difficulties arise during the semester so that we can help you find a solution. The best ways to contact me are through email, approaching me in the classroom, or visiting me during office hours. If you would like to meet with me via Zoom, just let me know and I will be happy to set up a meeting with you.

Tutoring and Learning Center

The Tutoring-Learning Center (TLC) helps students in all disciplines become more effective, confident learners. We believe all learners benefit from sharing work with knowledgeable, attentive tutors. The TLC offers four service areas:

- [Academic Coaching](#): Build skills in studying, time management, test-taking, online learning, and more by working with a peer or professional coach.
- [Course Content Tutoring](#): Practice problems, deepen understanding, and prepare for exams in natural resources, STEM, world languages, and more.
- [Reading/Writing](#): Brainstorm and refine papers, essays, lab reports, citations, résumés, scholarship applications, personal writing, and more using tutoring in-person or through our [Online Writing Lab](#).
- [Tech Essentials](#): Develop computer literacy and learn to use UWSP-related applications such as Canvas, Microsoft 365, and Zoom.

All tutoring services are free to UWSP students. There are two ways to meet with our tutors:

- **Make a One-on-One Appointment:** Students can self-schedule using [Navigate](#), contact us at tlctutor@uwsp.edu or 715-346-3568, or stop into CCC 234. On the Wausau campus, contact wautlc@uwsp.edu or 715-261-6148. On the Marshfield campus, contact roleary@uwsp.edu or 715-389-6530.
- **Visit a Drop-In Tutoring Center:** No appointment is needed! Students can view our [Drop-In Tutoring Schedules](#) page to see our availability.

Academic Integrity, Turnitin, and AI

At UW-Stevens Point we place great emphasis on academic integrity and honesty. Plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, helping others commit these acts, and any form of dishonesty compromise the educational process and devalue the achievements of all students. All work you submit to this, and all your classes must be original and completed individually unless collaboration is explicitly allowed. Always acknowledge your sources, cite appropriately, and give credit where it's due.

If instances of alleged academic dishonesty are identified, appropriate actions will be taken in accordance with the institution's policies ([UWSP Chapter 14](#)). These actions could include revising the assignment, receiving a lower grade or no credit for the assignment, receiving a lower grade for the entire course, or facing more serious academic consequences.

While other professors may have different policies, in this class I do not permit the use of generative AI for writing assignments. Developing strong competencies in reading, analyzing, and writing will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism. Please refrain from using Chat GPT or other similar programs. Your written work will be run through a plagiarism detection program (Turnitin), which now has a feature that detects the use of AI. So do yourself a favor and avoid using AI for work done for this class.

If you are unsure if something might be considered academic misconduct, you are struggling to understand the content or an assignment, or you have fallen behind for whatever reason, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. By nurturing a community of support, honesty, and respect, we ensure that academic pursuits and your experiences at UW-Stevens Point are both meaningful and genuine.

Equal Access and Disability Accommodations

If you have a condition that may impact your learning and/or participation in course activities, please contact the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#). The DRC will engage in an interactive process with students and identify appropriate academic accommodations and auxiliary services in accordance with the University's legal obligations. Instructors, students, and DRC staff work collaboratively to establish any necessary adjustments or supports. Accommodations are rarely applied retroactively so it is vital that students make timely requests.

Please let me know if you have questions. The DRC is located in 108 Collins Classroom Center and can be reached at 715/346-3365 and drc@uwsp.edu.

An Inclusive Classroom: It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs are addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to create a classroom environment that is respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, political viewpoint, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. If there is a dynamic in the classroom that impedes your learning in any way, please come and talk to me about it.

If you have experienced a bias incident (an act of conduct, speech, or expression to which a bias motive is evident as a contributing factor regardless of whether the act is criminal) at UWSP, you have the right to report it. The [Dean of Students webpage](#) has links where students can report several types of incidents, including bias, sexual assault, and academic misconduct.

Classroom Etiquette

- **Cell phone and laptop usage:** Research supports the idea that having visual access to a cell phone diminishes our ability to learn. Checking social media, texts, emails, and messages is unprofessional and disrespectful to our class community. Please turn off or mute your phone during class; I will do so as well.

Having said that, it will often be useful to access online readings during class either on your phone or laptop. That is an appropriate use of your electronics during class. However, surfing the web, texting, or watching something unrelated to our class is not an appropriate use during class. If I notice you using your phone or laptop inappropriately during class, I may ask you to share what you are researching or simply to put it away. Thank you for following these guidelines as they help create a positive learning community.

- **Eating and drinking:** This is a long class. If it is helpful, feel free to bring a snack and a drink to help tide you over. Break time will be a good time to have a snack. If you want to eat during class, please do so quietly and avoid bringing in odorous and or messy foods. Drinks are always permissible.
- **Arriving and leaving class:** Arriving late or leaving during class is disruptive. Please make every effort to be on time. If you know in advance that you will be arriving late or will need to step out early, please let me know before class begins.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1 (1/22): Introductions & “Germinal”

Assignment: Canvas questions on “Germinal.”

In-class screening: “Germinal,” French film based on the novel by Emile Zola (Running time:144 mins.)

Week 2 (1/29): Marxism

Assignment: Reading Annotation using Hypothes.is

Readings:

- Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels. “The Communist Manifesto.” In *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, pp. 157-186. (e-Reserves)
- Karl Marx, “Alienated Labor.” In *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, pp. 58-68. (e-Reserves)

Week 3 (2/5): The Russian Revolution: Utopian Visions & Revolutionary Challenges

Assignment: Reading Annotation using Hypothes.is

Readings (Total of 104 pages):

- Excerpts from Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*,
 - Required: Ch. 1, pp. 16-32
 - Required: Ch. 2, pp. 41-45, 50-58, 62-68
 - Skim or skip these sections:
 - pp. 45-50 - “The February Revolution & Dual Power”
 - pp. 58-62 - “The Political Crises of the Summer”
 - Required: Ch. 3, pp. 69-73 and 85-93
 - Skim or skip these sections:
 - pp. 73-79 – “The Civil War, the Red Army, and the Cheka”
 - pp. 79-84 – “War Communism”
 - Required: Ch. 4, pp. 108-112, Section titled “The leadership struggle.”
 - Skim or skip the rest of this chapter.
 - Skip or skim Ch. 5
 - Required: Ch. 6, entire, pp. 150-174
- Richard Stites. “The Dreamer in the Kremlin.” In *Revolutionary Dreams*. Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 37-46. (e-Reserves)
- Richard Stites. “Utopia in Life: The Communal Movement.” In *Revolutionary Dreams*. Oxford U. Press, 1989, pp. 205-207 & 213-222. (e-Reserves)
- Athlyn Cathcart-Keays. “Moscow’s Narkomfin Building.” *The Guardian*, May 5, 2015. (e-Reserves)

Recommended Readings:

- Jonathan Brent. “The Order of Lenin: ‘Find Some Truly Hard People.’” *New York Times*, May 22, 2017. (e-Reserves)
- Kristen R. Ghodsee. “Why Women Had Better Sex Under Socialism.” *New York Times*, August 12, 2017. (e-Reserves)

Week 4 (2/12): Origins of Social Democracy & Fascism in Europe

Assignment: Reading Annotation using Hypothes.is

Readings (Total of 85 pages)

Excerpts from Sheri Berman, *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. (e-Reserves)

- Ch. 1 Introduction, pp. 1-18 (skip “The Plan of the Book”)
- Ch. 2, The Background and the Foundations, pp. 20-28; 35-46 (skip section on France)
- Ch. 3, “Democratic Revisionism Comes of Age,” pp. 47-54.
- Ch. 5, “From Revisionism to Social Democracy,” pp. 96-99 (end at paragraph beginning with “To justify this equivocation...”; pp. 109-115 (section titled “Standing at the Sickbed of Capitalism”).
- Ch. 6 The Rise of Fascism and National Socialism, pp. 125-126; 136-151.

Week 5 (2/19): Reacting to the Past Game Set Up

Assignment: Canvas quiz on Historical Background and Mechanics of the Game (Ch. 3)

Readings in Gamebook:

- Ch. 1 – Introduction
- Ch. 2. Historical Background
- Ch. 4 – Roles and Factions
- Ch. 3 – The Game

In-class activities:

1. Discuss chapters on Historical Background and Roles and Factions.
2. Distribute roles.
3. Meet with factions.
4. Review game mechanics.

Week 6 (2/26): Reacting to the Past Game Sessions 1 & 2

Assignment: Paper #1 – Text of speech for first or second session. Due in Canvas by noon on Feb. 26th.

Optional Assignment: Watch All Quiet on the Western Front

Readings in Gamebook:

Ch. 5 – Core Readings – In this chapter read the core readings for your faction; if you have time, go ahead and read some of the others as well.

Week 7 (3/4): Reacting to the Past Game Sessions 3 & 4

Assignment: Paper #2 – Text of speech for second or third session. Due in Canvas by noon on March 4th

Week 8 (3/11): Reacting to the Past Game Sessions 5 and Debriefing

Assignment: Paper #3 – Text of speech for fifth session. Due in Canvas by noon on March 11th

In-class activities:

1. Complete Session 5
2. Debrief the game and class critique

March 16-24 – Spring Break – Enjoy!!!

Week 9 (3/25): No class – Professor Collins will be attending National Model UN in New York City

Assignment: Canvas questions on “Gandhi.”

Watch: “Gandhi” (Running time: 3 hours, 11 mins.)

Readings: Begin reading assignment for 4/1.

Week 10 (4/1): Gandhi on Nonviolence and Freedom

Assignment: Reading Annotation using Hypothes.is

Readings (Total of 115 pages)

Excerpts from Mahatma Gandhi, *Selected Political Writings*.

- Part I:
 - Introduction (pp. 3-22)
 - Introduction (p. 29)
 - “The Crime of Chauri Chaura” (pp. 31-34, start with italicized section on p. 31)
 - “Non-violence”, “My Path”, and “On the Verge of It” (pp. 41-44)
 - All selections from “Satyagraha, Civil Disobedience, Passive Resistance, Non-cooperation” (including section introduction in italics) to “Duty of Disloyalty” (pp. 50-81)

- Part I: pp. 97-151.

Week 11 (4/8): Political Violence and Terrorism

Assignment: Reading Annotation using Hypothes.is

Readings

- Selections from Louise Richardson. *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*. New York: Random House, 2006. (e-Reserves)
 - Ch. 1 – “What is Terrorism?” (entire)
 - Ch. 3 – “What Causes Terrorism?” (pp. 38-48 & 60-70)
 - Ch. 4 – “The Three Rs: Revenge, Renown, Reaction” (pp. 71-79)
 - Ch. 7 – “Why the War on Terror Can Never Be Won” (pp. 169-180 & 193-199)

- Other readings TBA

Week 12 (4/15): Ecologism & Environmental Activism

Assignment: Reading Annotation using Hypothes.is

In class screening: “This Changes Everything.” 2015 feature film by Avi Lewis based on Naomi Klein’s best-selling book of the same name. (Running time 90 minutes).

Readings:

Philosophical Treatises on Ecologism

- Selections from *Political Ideologies*, Ch. 7 “Ecologism”, Matthew Festenstein and Michael Kenny, eds. Oxford University Press, 2005. (e-Reserves)
 - Introduction
 - Ernst Schumacher, from *Small is Beautiful* (Abacus, 1974).
 - Arne Naess, from *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).
 - Murray Bookchin, from *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (Black Rose Books, 1986).

Climate Politics and Activism Today

- Kara Moses. “Civil disobedience is the only way left to fight climate change.” *The Guardian*, May 13, 2016. (e-Reserves)
- Other readings TBA

Background and Other Recommended Readings:

- Pope Francis. *Encyclical: Laudato Si*, 2015.
- [Andrew Chatzky and Anshu Siripurapu. “Envisioning a Green New Deal: A Global Comparison - Backgrounder.” Council on Foreign Relations. Last updated February 1, 2021.](#) (e-Reserves)
- Joshua Busby. “Why Climate Change Matters More Than Anything Else.” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 97, Issue 4, July 1, 2018. (e-Reserves)

Week 13 (4/22): The Arab Spring and the 2010 Protest Decade

Assignment: Canvas questions on “The Square”

Watch: “The Square”, Jehane Noujaim, director. A documentary on Tahrir Square and three years of revolutionary political upheaval in Egypt. (104 mins.) Available on Kanopy through UWSP Library.

Reading: Bevins, *If We Burn*, pp. TBA

Week 14 (4/29): The Mass Protest Decade and the Missing Revolution

Assignment: Online discussion on reading

Reading: Bevins, *If We Burn*, pp. TBA

Photo Show: [Clarie Harbage and Hannah Bloch. “The 2010s: A Decade of Protests Around the World.” National Public Radio, December 31, 2019.](#)

Week 15 (5/6): Conclusions and Exam Review: Radical and Utopian Politics Today

Assignment: Find an example of radical and utopian politics today to talk about and share with the class. Could be a movement, ideology, event, political party, non-fiction book, literature, artistic movement, etc.
No assigned readings

Finals Week – Thursday, May 16th 5:00-7:00PM – Final Exam