

POLS 600: Scope and Method in Political Science

Sankaran Krishna

Fall 2016

Fridays 9:30 to Noon.

This graduate seminar will serve as a broad introduction to the idea of the political, as well as an introduction to the faculty of this department and the ways in which they approach the political, and go about their work as students of politics. To me, a useful way of conceptualizing politics is to regard it as a means to denaturalize the worlds we live in: to ask questions like “how did things come to be thus?” “how did our current ways of being, living and knowing emerge and consolidate themselves as normal or commonsensical?” “what kinds of labor – intellectual, material and psychological- go into producing our lives and what are the ways in which such labor is gendered and raced?”

We will interweave the close and detailed reading of some classical political texts with sessions with faculty members from our department telling us how they do what they do. Some of the works we will be examining over the weeks will be: Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question”; Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation”; Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”; Toni Morrison, “Playing in the Dark”; Judith Butler, “Undoing Gender”; Frantz Fanon, “Black Skin, White Masks”; Audre Lorde, “Sister Outsider”; Edward Said, “Orientalism,” Gregoire Chamayou, “Manhunt”; William Connolly, “Identity\Difference”; Charles Tilly, “State making as organized crime”; Richard Ashley, “The poverty of neorealism”; Mrinalini Sinha, “Colonial Masculinities” and a number of other readings.

You can expect to read –on average- a book or its equivalent every week and there will be a number of different sorts of writing that you will do over the course of the semester. A 5-page long distillation of what you think of as constituting the political will be due at the end of the semester. If you have any further questions regarding POLS 600 (which is “strongly recommended” for all new incoming grad students to the program) email me at krishna@hawaii.edu