

Political Science 338G

Topics in Political Theory: Contemporary

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T-TH 3:00 – 4:15 in Saunders 624

This version of political science 338G is focused on leviathans and assassins, i.e., on the macro power of authoritarian regimes and the micropolitics of reaction. We will begin by reading Thomas Hobbes's classic text *Leviathan* and follow up with attention to contemporary realizations of Leviathans, guided in part by my analysis of Hobbes's text: Michael J. Shapiro, "The Light of Reason..." (*Political Theory* 45: 3, 2017, available electronically thru the UH library) in which I read the text along with the Hungarian writer, Laszlo Krasznahorkai's "The Werckmeister Harmonies" (a section in his novel *The Melancholy of Resistance*) and its cinematic version, directed by Bela Tarr. We will follow up with popular culture texts – novels, stories, and films - that feature authoritarian regimes and the micropolitical acts of individuals that respond to them. Those enrolled are required to write weekly reflection papers, based on the assignments. There will also be mid term and final writing exercises that constitute what administrators regard (and require) as "exams." Grading: Everyone enrolled begins the course with an A. It remains your grade if you maintain presence to the course (coming to class and doing the written assignments adequately).

The books to acquire for the course (some – the first 4 on the list - ordered thru the UH bookstore but are also available from online booksellers in paperback or ebook versions) are:

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Penguin Classic edition)

Laszlo Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance* (New Directions paperback)

Don DeLillo, *Libra* (Penguin Books: Reissue edition)

Leonardo Padura, *The Man Who Loved Dogs* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux: Reprint Edition)

Justin Cartwright, *The Song Before It's Sung* (Bloomsbury)

Laurent Binet, *HHhH* (Picador)

Henk Van Woerden, *The Assassin* (many used paperbacks available in Amazon.com)

(Additional readings will be uploaded on our Lulima site.)

Reading/Discussion/Viewing schedule TBD