# *Politics, International Relations, and Popular Culture*

**Seminar**

## LECTURER

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## DURATION

Days and hours:
- **Mondays (19 October to 30 November), 9:45-11:15**
- **Office hours: Tuesdays, 11.30-13.00** (link will be provided in USOSmail)

Place: Online course
Academic Year: **2020/2021**
Summer term: **15 h**

## EVALUATION

1. **Presence.**
2. **Two short assignments on Google Classroom (5 points each).**
3. **Class participation (10 points).**
4. **Take-Home Quiz (15 points).**

## COURSE AIMS/OBJECTIVES

The course is aimed at discussing selected aspects of the way socio-political phenomena as well as international relations are presented in popular culture. Specific social and political problems of contemporary world will be discussed in class along with the analysis of their coverage in selected pieces of popular culture.

## LITERATURE AND COURSE MATERIALS

Essential readings will be provided on Google Classroom.

Some further readings as well as recommended popular culture texts will also be provided on Google Classroom whenever possible.

Due to the copyright restriction students are not allowed to share received course materials with third parties.

Presentation will be made available to students here. They will be removed from the site at the end of the term.

## COURSE POLICIES

Classes are taking place via Zoom application.

During the classes students' cameras must be turned on.

Students are obliged to use their name and surname while logging to the meeting. Please make sure, you are not using any nicknames.

Presence as well as participation will be checked and marked at the end of each class (presence will additionally be registered by Zoom).

## GOOGLE CLASSROM AND ZOOM

In order to be able to use all the features of Google Classroom you need to log in with your University email (@student.uw.edu.pl). For more information see: https://it.uw.edu.pl/en/uslugi/UslugiMojaPocztaGmailStudent/.

The above rule applies to Zoom.

# COURSE SCHEDULE/CONTENT

## 1. INTRODUCTORY CLASS

## 2. POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN POPULAR CULTURE (*POLITICAL FICTION*)

**Problems**:
- Popular culture – definitions and interpretations.
- Politics and society in popular culture – introduction.
- Political fiction - art as a way of understanding politics.

**Essential readings**:

Davidson, James F. 1961. "Political Science and Political Fiction." *The American Political Science Review* 55 (4): 851–60.

Storey, John. 2009. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture. An Introduction*. Pearson. Longman: 1–16.

van Zoonen, Liesbet. 1998. "A Day at the Zoo: Political Communication, Pigs and Popular Culture." *Media, Culture & Society* 20 (2): 183–200.

**Further readings**:

Conners, Joan L. 2013. "Laughing and Learning: Using Political Cartoons to Teach Politics." In *Teaching Politics Beyond the Book Film, Texts, and New Media in the Classroom*, edited by Robert W. Glover and Daniel Tagliarina, 67–86. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Fiske, John. 1995. *Understanding Popular Culture*. London-New York: Routledge.

Hamilton, Caitlin, and Laura J. Shepherd, eds. 2016. *Understanding Popular Culture and World Politics in the Digital Age*. London & New York: Routledge.

Negash, Girma. 2004. "Art Invoked: A Mode of Understanding and Shaping the Political." *International Political Science Review* 25 (2): 185–201.

Strinati, Dominic. 2000. *An Introduction to Studying Popular Culture*. London: Routledge.

van Zoonen, Liesbet. 2007. "Audience Reactions to Hollywood Politics." *Media, Culture & Society* 29 (4): 531–47.

Woodcock, Pete. 2006. "The Polis of Springfield: the Simpsons and the Teaching of Political Theory." *Politics* 26 (3): 192–99.

## 3. WAR AND WAR ON TERRORISM IN POPULAR CULTURE

**Problems**:
- War as a theme in popular culture.
- War movies – between fiction and reality.
- From propaganda to – war in comic book panels.
- War trauma in Rogers Waters' and Pink Floyd's songs.
- War on terrorism – its moral and practical aspects as portrayed in popular culture.

**Recommended popular culture texts**:

*24*, created by Joel Surnow, Robert Cochran, 2001-2010. Imagine Television, 20th Century Fox Television. TV series.

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*A Bridge Too Far,* directed by Richard Attenborough. 1977. United Artists and Joseph E. Levine Productions. Film.

Millar, Mark (w), and Steve McNiven (a). 2007. *Civil War*. New York: Marvel Publishing.

Ennis, Garth (w), Peter Snejberg (a). "Dear Billy." In *The Complete Battlefields. Volume 2*, Garth Ennis (w), Peter Snejberg (a). Mt. Laurel: Dynamite Entertainment, 2009.

*Saving Private Ryan,* directed by Steven Spielberg, 1998. DreamWorks Pictures, Paramount Pictures. Film.

Spiegelman, Art (w&a). 2011. *The Complete Maus. 25th Anniversary Edition*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Vaughan, Brian K. (w), and Niko Henrichon (a). 2008. *Pride of Baghdad*. New York: DC Comics.

Waters, Roger. *The Dark Side of the Moon* (1973), *The Wall* (1979), *The Final Cut* (1983), *Radio K.A.O.S.* (1987), *Amused to Death* (1992). Albums' lyrics. Online.

**Essential readings**:

O'Mathuna, Donal P. 2008. "The Ethics of Torture in 24: Shockingly Banal." In 2*4 and Philosophy: The World According to Jack*, edited by Jennifer Weed Hart and Ronald Weed, 91–104. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Prince, Michael J. 2015. "'Whose Side Are You on?': Negotiations between Individual Liberty and Collective Responsibility in Millar and McNiven's Marvel Civil War." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 6 (2): 182–92.

Scott, Cord. 2007. "Written in Red, White, and Blue: A Comparison of Comic Book Propaganda from World War II and September 11." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 40 (2): 325-43.

Weinstein, Deena. 2002. "Progressive Rock as Text: The Lyrics of Roger Waters." In *Progressive Rock Reconsidered*, edited by Kevin Holm-Hudson, 91–110. New York & London: Routledge.

**Further readings**:

Hart, Jennifer Weed. 2008. "President Palmer and the Invasion of China: The Beginning of a Just War." In *24 and Philosophy: The World According to Jack*, edited by Jennifer Weed Hart and Ronald Weed, 57–66. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Hurka, Thomas. 2005. "Proportionality in the Morality of War." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 33 (1): 34–66.

Kendrik, James. 2008. "Representing the Unrepresentable: 9/11 on Film and Television." In *Why We Fought: America's Wars in Film and History*, edited by Peter C Rollins and John E. O'Connor, 511–28. Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press.

Rech, Matthew F. 2014. "Be Part of the Story: A Popular Geopolitics of War Comics Aesthetics and Royal Air Force Recruitment." *Political Geography* 39: 36–47.

Rollins, Peter C. 2008. "Using Popular Culture to Study the Vietnam War." In *Why We Fought: America's Wars in Film and History*, edited by Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor, 367–389. Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press.

Strömberg, Fredrik. 2010. *Comic Art Propaganda: A Graphic History*. Lewes: ILEX.

Wright, Bradford W. 2003. *Comic Book Nation. the Transformation of Youth Culture in America*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press: 30–55, 86–108, 287–293.

Young, Richard. 2017. "The 'Real Victims' of the Vietnam War: Soldier Versus State in American Comic Books." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 50 (3): 561–84.

# 4. POLITICS, IDEOLOGY AND COMIC BOOKS: *V FOR VENDETTA*

- Ideology in comic books and graphic novels.
- Between fascism and anarchism: postapocalyptic Britain in Alan Moore's and David Lloyd's graphic novel *V for Vendetta*.
- Individual vs totalitarianism: anatomy of disobedience in *V for Vendetta*.
- Tyrannicide or terrorism vs state terrorism.

**Recommended popular culture texts**:

Moore, Alan (w)., and David Lloyd (a). 2008.*V for Vendetta*. New York: DC Comics.

*V for Vendetta*, directed by James McTeigue. 2006. Warner Bros. Productions. Film

**Essential readings**:

Crick, Bernard. 2006. "Justifications of Violence." *The Political Quarterly* 77 (4): 433–438.

Keller, James R. 2008. *V for Vendetta as Cultural Pastiche. A Critical Study of the Graphic Novel and Film*. Jefferson, NC, London: McFarland & Company, Inc., chap. 1–2.

Stohl, Michael. 2006. "The State as Terrorist: Insights and Implications." *Democracy and Security* 2 (1): 1–25.

**Further readings**:

Dillinger, Johaness. 2015. "Tyrannicide from Ancient Greece and Rome to the Crisis of the Seventeen Century." In *The Routledge History of Terrorism*, edited by Randall D. Law, 15–27. London–New York: Routledge.

Eatwell, Roger. 1994. "Fascism." In *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, edited by Roger Eatwell, and Anthony Wright, 169-191. London: Pinter Publishers.

George, David. 1988. "Distinguishing Classical Tyrannicide from Modern Terrorism." *The Review of Politics* 50 (3): 390–419.

Gray, Maggie. 2010. "'A Fistful of Dead Roses...': Comics as Cultural Resistance: Alan Moore and David Lloyd's 'V for Vendetta'." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 1 (1): 31–49.

Jennings, Jeremy. 1994. "Anarchism." In *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, edited by Roger Eatwell, and Anthony Wright, 127–146. London: Pinter Publishers.

Kohns, Oliver. 2013. "Guy Fawkes in the 21st Century. A Contribution to the Political Iconography of Revolt." *Image [&] Narrative* 14 (1): 89–104.

Kowalski, Dean A. 2008. "R for Revolution. Hobbes and Locke on Social Contracts and Scarlett Carsons." In *Homer Simpson Goes to Washington. American Politics through Popular Culture*, edited by Joseph J. Foy, 19–40. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2016. "Political Monologue vs. Political Dialogue in Graphic Novels." *Przegląd Europejski* 4 (42):76–87.

Lukin, Joshua. 1997. "I'm not Your Boss: The Paradox of the Anarchist Superhero." *Anarchist Studies* 5 (2): 131–155.

Testa, M. 2017. "'A Good Deal of Disorder' or the Anarchists & Anti-Fascism in the UK." *Anarchist Studies* 25 (2): 9–25.

Tinwell, Angela. 2013. "The Impact of Thatcherism in Popular Culture." *Journal of European Popular Culture* 4 (2): 123–37.


# 5. ENHANCING NATIONAL IDENTITY. NATIONALISM IN POPULAR CULTURE

**Problems**:

- Concepts of nation, nationalism, and national identity.

- Cultural roots of national identity.
- Popular culture as a source of national identity.
- Nationalistic superheroes as a way of expressing national unity.
- National myths and stereotypes in popular culture.

**Recommended popular culture texts:**

Brubaker, Ed (w), and Steve Epting (a). 2007. *Captain America Omnibus*. Vol. 1. New York: Marvel Publishing.

Ferguson, John (w), Gary Welsh (a), and Tone Juskjaer (a). 2013. *Saltire. Invasion*. Dundee: Diamondsteel Comics.

**Essential Readings**:

Dittmer, Jason. 2011. "Captain Britain and the Narration of Nation." *The Geographical Review* 101: 71–87.

Hoyer, Anne. 2009. "National Identity in a Popular Scottish Comic." *Journal of Linguistic and Intercultural Education* 2 (2): 115–124.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2016. "SuperScots. Superheroes and Scottish Identity." In *Scottish Culture: Dialogue and Self-Expression*, edited by Aniela Korzeniowska and Izabela Szymańska, 380–88. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper.

**Further readings**:

Dittmer, Jason. 2005. "Captain America's Empire: Reflections on Identity, Popular Culture, and Post 9/11 Geopolitics." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95: 626–643.

Hoyer, Anne. 2010. "Cultural Specifics of a Scottish Comic: *Oor Wullie*." In *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures: Essays on the Interplay of Media, Disciplines and International Perspectives*, edited by Mark Berninger, Jochen Ecke, and Gideon Harberkorn, 108–115. Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2013. "Scotsmen Versus Englishmen: Ancient Antagonisms as Depicted in a Belgian Comic Book." In *Facets of Scottish Identity*, edited by Aniela Korzeniowska and Izabela Szymańska, 145–52. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper.

Lindsay Isobel. 1997. "The Uses and Abuses of National Stereotypes." *Scottish Affairs* 20 (1) (First Series): 133–148.

Reynolds, Richard. 1994. *Super Heroes. A Modern Mythology*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Scott, Cord. 2007. "Written in Red, White, and Blue: A Comparison of Comic Book Propaganda From World War II and September 11." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 40 (2): 325–43.

Strömberg, Fredrik. 2010. *Comic Art Propaganda: A Graphic History*. Lewes: ILEX.


## 6. HIDDEN REALITY: CONSPIRACY THEORIES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES AND POPULAR CULTURE

**Problems**:

1. Conspiracy theories – its nature and history.
2. Conspiracy theories and their popularity in contemporary popular culture.
3. Blood stained monarchy – a secret identity of Jack the Ripper.
4. Governmental X-Files: The case of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

**Recommended popular culture texts:**

Azzarello, Brian (w)., and J.G. Jones (a). "Comedian." in B*efore Watchmen: Comedian, Rorschach*, Brian Azzarello (w), J.G. Jones, Lee Bermejo (a), DC Comics: New York, 2013.

Brown, Dan. 2009. *The Da Vinci Code*, New York: Anchor Books.

Moore, Alan (w)., and Eddie Campbell (a). 2004. *From Hell: Being a Melodrama in Sixteen Part*. Marietta: Top Shelf Productions.

Newman, Paul (w)., and John Tartaglione (a). August-October, 1964. *John F. Kennedy: 1917-1963*. New York: Dell Publishing

Straczynski, J. Michael (w)., and Adam Hughes (a). "Dr. Manhattan." in *Before Watchmen: Night Owl, Dr. Manhattan*, J. Michael Straczynski (w), Andy Kubert, Adam Hughes, Eduardo Risso (a), DC Comics: New York, 2013.

*The X-Files*. Created by Chris Carter. Performed by David Duchovny, Gillian Anderson, Robert Patrick. Ten Thirteen Productions, 20th Television, 20th Century Fox Television. 1993-2002. TV series.

Wein, Len (w)., and Jae Lee (a). "Ozymandias." in *Before Watchmen: Ozymandias*, Crimson Corsair, Len Wein, John Higgins (w), Jae Lee, John Higgins, Steve Rude (a), DC Comics: New York, 2013.

**Essential readings**:

Bratich, Jack Z. 2008. *Conspiracy Panics. Political Rationality and Popular Culture*. Albany: State University of New York Press: 1–14.

Dawe, Ian. 2013. "JFK: Comic Book Hero." Sequart Organization. November 22. http://sequart.org/magazine/35074/jfk-comic-book-hero/.

Dawe, Ian. 2013. "Lee Harvey Oswald: a Comics Villain?." Sequart Organization. November 20. http://sequart.org/magazine/34564/lee-harvey-oswald-a-comics-villain/.

Parmet, Henry S. 1990. "The Kennedy Myth and American Politics." *The History Teacher* 24 (1): 31–39.

**Further readings**:

Lewis, John E. 2012. *The Mammoth Book of Conspiracies*. London: Constable & Robinson.

Rudmin, Floyd. 2003. "Conspiracy Theory as Naive Deconstructive History." New Democracy World. April. newdemocracyworld.org/old/conspiracy.htm.

Sturken, Marita. 1997. "Reenactment, Fantasy, and the Paranoia of History: Oliver Stone's Docudramas." *History and Theory* 36 (4): 64–79.

# 7. BREXIT: PERSPECTIVES OF CONTEMPORARY BRITISH POLITICS

**Problems**:
- British membership in the European Union.
- Social, political and cultural backgrounds of Brexit.
- Brexit or Exit?
- Consequences of Brexit for the future of European project.
- Brexit in popular culture.

**Recommended popular culture texts:**

*Bodyguard*, created by Jed Mercurio. 2018. World Productions, BBC. TV series.

*Brexit: The Movie*, directed by Martin Durkin. 2016. Wag TV. Film. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTMxfAkxfQ0.

*Brexit: The Uncivil War*, directed by Toby Haynes. 2019. House Productions, Chanel 4. Film.

*Collateral*, directed by S. J. Clarkson. 2018. BBC Two, Netflix. TV series.

*Years and Years*, created by Russell T. Davies. 2019. Red Production Company, BBC One. TV series.

**Essential readings**:

Ashcroft, Richard, and Mark Bevir. 2016. "Pluralism, National Identity and Citizenship: Britain After Brexit." *The Political Quarterly* 87 (3): 355–59.

Henderson, Alice, Charlie Jeffrey, Robert Liñera, Roger Scully, Daniel Wincott, and Richard Wyn Jones. 2016. "England, Englishness and Brexit." *The Political Quarterly* 87 (2): 187–99.

Ryan, John. 2017. "If You Didn't Laugh, You'd Cry... Brexit and the Renaissance of British Humour." *LSE Brexit*. October 4. http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2017/10/04/if-you-didnt-laugh-youd-cry-brexit-and-the-renaissance-of-british-humour/.

**Further readings**:

Hogarth, Raphael, and Hanna White. 2018. "Voting on Brexit: Parliament's Consideration of the Withdrawal Deal and Future Framework." Institute for Government. April. https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/voting-on-brexit-report-final.pdf.

Goodwin, Matthew J., and Oliver Heath. 2016. "The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind: An Aggregate-level Analysis of the Result." *The Political Quarterly* 87 (3): 323–332.

Outhwaite, William, ed. 2017. *Brexit: Sociological Responses*. London, New York: Anthem Press.

Petley, Julian. 2019. "We are still Perilously Close to Hailsham's 'Elective Dictatorship'." *LSE Brexit*. September 30. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2019/09/30/we-are-closer-than-ever-to-hailshams-elective-dictatorship/.

Turner, Oliver. 2019. "Global Britain and the Narrative of Empire." *The Political Quarterly* 90 (4): 727–734.

Weale, Albert. 2016. "Nostalgic Democracy Triumphs Over Democratic Internationalism." *The Political Quarterly* 87 (3): 352–54.

# LECTURER

Wojciech Lewandowski, PhD, DSc – political scientist. Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Theory and Political Thought, Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw. Co-founder and coordinator of British Socio-Political Studies Research Group BRITANNIA. Guest Lecturer at American Studies Center. „Przegląd Europejski" deputy editor-in-chief. Runs a blog Imaginaria (imaginaria.pl) devoted to popular culture with focus on comics and rock music.

## Scientific interests

- Politics and popular culture (socio-political issues and political ideologies in texts of popular culture, especially: comic books, progressive rock, 1960s counterculture, and horror movies and literature;
- Political thought and the axiological dimension of politics (British and American traditions, fascism, anarchism and political ideas of the counterculture of the 1960s);
- British politics (devolution and cultural and socio-political conditions and consequences of Brexit).

## Selected publications

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2019. *Od faszystowskiej dystopii do anarchistycznej utopii. Idee polityczne w powieści graficznej «V jak Vendetta» Alana Moore'a i Davida Lloyda* [From Fascist Dystopia to Anarchistic Utopia. Political Ideas in Alan Moore's and David Lloyd's «V jak Vendetta» Graphic Novel]. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2018. "Siedem małych słów. Obraz wojny wietnamskiej w powieści graficznej «Kaznodzieja» Gartha Ennisa i Steve'a Dillona." [Seven Little Words. The Image of Vietnam War in «Preacher» Comic Book by Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon] In *50 twarzy popkultury*, edited by Ksenia Olkusz, Kraków: Ośrodek Badawczy Facta Ficta: 623–640.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2017. "Heavy History – Difficult History. Scottish National Myths and History Interpreted by a German Heavy Metal Band." In I*maging Scottishness: European and Domestic Representations*, edited by Aniela Korzeniowska, Izabela Szymańska, 217-231. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2016. "Political Monologue vs Political Dialogue in Graphic Novels." *Przegląd Europejski* 4 (42): 7687.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2016. "SuperScots. Superheroes and Scottish Identity." In *Scottish Culture: Dialogue and Self-Expression*, edited by Aniela Korzeniowska and Izabela Szymańska, 380–88. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2015. "Nowy człowiek, zamaskowany niszczyciel. Wizja zagłady dystopijnego państwa w powieści graficznej «V jak Vendetta» Alana Moore'a i Davida Lloyda." [New Man, Masked Murderer: Vision of Annihilation of a Dystopian State in Alan Moore's and David Lloyd's Graphic Novel *V for Vendetta*] *Creatio Fantastica* 3 (50): 26–41.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2013. *Kto ma się bać? Władza polityczna i sprzeciw wobec niej w filmie «V jak Vendetta»* [Who Should be Afraid? Political Power and Resistance in 'V for Vendetta' movie]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Wydziału Dziennikarstwa i Nauk Politycznych.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2013. "Scotsmen versus Englishmen: Ancient Antagonisms as Depicted in a Comic Book." In *Facets of Scottish Identity*, edited by Aniela Korzeniowska, Izabela Szymańska, 145–152. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2013. "Brytyjski komiks polityczny. Zarys problematyki." [British Political Comic Books. Basic Problems] *Przegląd Europejski 4*(30): 108–119.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2012. "Kultura brytyjska." [British Culture] In *System polityczny Zjednoczonego Królestwa* [Political System of the United Kingdom], edited by Przemysław Biskup, Małgorzata Kaczorowska, 109–129. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2011. *Wolność i samotność. Myśl społeczno-polityczna amerykańskiego transcendentalizmu*. [Freedom and Loneliness. Social and Political Thought of American Transcendentalism] Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Wydziału Dziennikarstwa i Nauk Politycznych UW.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2010. "Pudel, mąż agentki i niedoszły zbawca Brytanii. Obraz Tony'ego Blaira w wybranych tekstach kultury popularnej." [Poodle, Agent's Husband and Would-Be Saviour of Britain: Tony Blair's Depiction in Selected Texts of Popular Culture] In *Era Blaira i Browna. Wybrane problemy polityczne rządów Partii Pracy w Zjednoczonym Królestwie 1997-2010* [Blair's and Brown's Era. Select Political Problems of Labour Government in the United Kingdom 1997–2010], edited by Franciszek Gołembski, Przemysław Biskup, Małgorzata Kaczorowska, 67–79. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR.

Lewandowski, Wojciech. 2007/2008. "The Dark Side of Walden." *The Americanist. Warsaw Journal for the Study of United States* 24(American Popular Culture as Import and Export): 117–132.