Modules: PT-MA-8, PT-MA-2, PT-MA-5a; PW-BA-SP; PW09-MA3, PW09-MA-7; PW-MA-2a, 3a, 4a; IS-MA-1

Theorizing Crisis

Mondays 14:00-16:00, Seminarhaus 1.101

instructor: Brian Milstein, Ph.D.

email: brian.m.milstein@gmail.com

office: Forschungskolleg Humanwissenschaften

Am Wingertsberg 4, Raum N2·09 61348 Bad Homburg vor der Höhe

office hours: by appointment

The Main Idea

The concept of "crisis" has long held a central place in the modern worldview. As far back as the time of Hobbes, ideas and experiences of crisis have played a key role in shaping how we think about politics, economics, society, history, progress, and law. But what exactly is a crisis? How does the way we think about crisis inform the way we think about politics and society? More to the point, how does the way we think about crisis inform the way we understand the tasks of political and social thought? Our aim in this course will be to unpack these questions by exploring the ways people have thought about crisis from the early modern period to today. For example, many associate crisis with the imminent breakdown of social order, for which extraordinary emergency measures are needed to protect and preserve society. Others read crises as turning points, as crucial moments of decision that allow society to advance from one stage of historical progress to the next. And still others identify crises with symptoms of historical decline, or with deep-seated dysfunctions that gradually wear away at the very fabric of society.

As a participant in this seminar, you will join me and your classmates in discerning among the ways various conceptions of crisis are articulated and grappled with in modern political thought. We will begin by looking at the "Hobbesian" paradigm of crisis thinking—the idea that crises threaten a general collapse of order, and that it is the task of the state to use its power to prevent that collapse and return society to "normal." Much of the literature surrounding this paradigm revolves around the ideas of sovereignty, law, and emergency politics, as we will find in Hobbes, Locke, Schmitt, Clinton Rossiter, Oren Gross, and Bonnie Honig. We will then turn to "Marxist" readings of crisis—the identification of contradictions and internal conflicts in the general structure of society—and their iterations in Marx himself, Gramsci, Habermas, and Hauke Brunkhorst. In the last part of the course, we will focus on various

interpretations of what Wolfgang Streeck has dubbed "the crisis of democratic capitalism," which came to the forefront of Western consciousness after the 2008 economic crash. We will look at literature inspired by both the "Hobbesian" (Bill Scheuerman, Jonathan White) and "Marxist" (John Thompson, Streeck, Nancy Fraser) ways of thinking, as well as other perspectives (such as Janet Roitman's).

The Strategy

We will be meeting once per week on Mondays from 16:00 to 18:00. In most cases we will begin with a lecture to stimulate the discussion, but our aim will be to generate as lively an exchange of ideas as possible. Of course, this will only work if everyone completes the weekly readings prior to class and arrives with some questions or reactions to the texts in mind. Do your best to read the weekly texts closely, with as lively an imagination as possible.

Each session will center on a set of primary readings, with a selection of supplementary readings you are encouraged to explore, both for enriching our discussion and to stimulate your own research. All of the primary readings and many of the supplementary readings will be made available electronically on OLAT.

This seminar is organized in a somewhat experimental fashion. The theme of crisis is very large: it permeates all corners of Western political and social thought and it links up with numerous other key concepts, from war and emergency to progress and revolution to pathology and decay. It follows that there are numerous ways to organize a semester-long course on crisis; it also follows that, however such a course is organized, certain authors and topics will be left out. As our conversations take shape over the semester, we may find it necessary to adjust the syllabus to align with our interests and goals.

Progress and Assessment

Everyone is responsible for attending all classes, keeping up with the weekly readings, and participating actively in our discussions.

In addition, there will be several written assignments during the semester, which will give you the opportunity to develop and flesh out your own ideas, positions, and arguments:

- **Reflection papers:** Four times during the semester, you will write a brief reflection paper of 550-650 words (about 2 pages). For each of these I will ask you to reflect on some aspect of our ongoing discussions and readings from the previous weeks. You are free in these short writings (encouraged even!) to let loose, explore, and experiment—the only requirement is that you structure your reflections around the primary and supplementary readings. *Do not just give a summary of the readings*. These reflection papers will be evaluated rather informally, as "✓+," "✓," or "✓-."
- **Final paper:** At the conclusion of the semester, you will write a research paper of about 4500-5000 words (about 15 pages), which will be due **no later than 31 March, 2016**. You are free to write the paper on any topic you wish, so long as your topic is based on the central themes of the course. *You are strongly encouraged to*

meet with me at least once to discuss your paper. When writing, you should approach your final paper as a serious piece of scholarly research, complete with citations and bibliography: you should develop a clear central thesis; you should demonstrate knowledge of your topic; you should engage the material in a critical and thoughtful manner; you should be able to back up your arguments with reasons, evidence, and examples; and you should strive to show readers what conclusions they can draw from your efforts.

Students taking this course for full credit are expected to complete *all* of the written assignments. Students taking the course for a "participation" grade only will be required to write the four reflection papers but are not required to do a final paper. All papers must also be double-spaced, in 12-point type, with one-inch margins, using a normal-sized font.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to accept assignments not written in English.

For all papers, you will be expected to adhere to proper conventions of scholarly attribution. Any work quoted or otherwise referenced must be appropriately and fully cited. Any idea, argument, information, or quotation that you might employ from an external source must likewise be accompanied by full citation. You are free to use any bibliographic citation style you wish, but you should apply it consistently. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

Week I (12 October) / Introduction

No required reading

Week II (19 October) / The Modern Concept of Crisis

Primary reading:

- Reinhart Koselleck (2006) "Crisis," trans. Michaela W. Richter, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67(2): 357-400
- Reinhart Koselleck (2002) "Some Questions Regarding the Conceptual History of 'Crisis," trans. Todd Presner, in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press): 236-47

- On crisis and social criticism:
 - o Janet Roitman (2014) *Anti-Crisis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press): 15-39 (ch. 1)
 - o Brian Milstein (2015) "Thinking Politically about Crisis: A Pragmatist Perspective," *European Journal of Political Theory* 14(2): 141-60
 - Axel Honneth (2007) "Pathologies of the Social: The Past and Present of Social Philosophy" in *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polity): 3-48

 Jürgen Habermas (1973) "Between Philosophy and Science: Marxism as Critique" in *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press): 195-252 (esp. 212-22)

On modernity:

- Max Weber (1946) "The Social Psychology of World Religions," in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (trans and ed), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press): 267-301 (esp. 295ff)
- Karl Löwith (1949) *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press): notably 1-33 (Introduction and chapter on Bruckhardt)
- O Jürgen Habermas (1987) "Modernity's Consciousness of Time and Its Need for Self-Reassurance" in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press): 1-22
- o S.N. Eisenstadt (2000) "Multiple Modernities," *Daedelus* 129(1): 1-29
- Stephen Toulmin (1990) Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press): 45-87

Week III (26 October) / Sovereignty and the Exception

Primary reading:

- Thomas Hobbes (1994 [1651]) *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company): 3-5, 74-8, 106-10 (Intro., ch. XIII, ch. XVII)
- Reinhart Koselleck (1988) Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press): 23-40 (skim 15-22)
- Carl Schmitt (1985 [1934]) Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press): 5-15, 36-52 (chs. 1 and 3)

- Further reading by Schmitt and Koselleck:
 - Carl Schmitt (1985 [1934]) Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press): remainder
 - Carl Schmitt (2007 [1927]) The Concept of the Political, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)
 - o Reinhart Koselleck (1988) *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press): remainder
- Secondary literature and interpretations:
 - Sheldon S. Wolin (2004) "Hobbes: Political Society as a System of Rules" in *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*, expanded edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press): 214-56
 - o Niklas Olsen (2012) *History in the Plural: An Introduction to the Work of Reinhart Koselleck* (New York: Berghahn Books): 41-99
 - William E. Scheuerman (1999) Carl Schmitt: The End of Law (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield)
 - Gopal Balakrishnan (2002) The Enemy: An Intellectual Portrait of Carl Schmitt (London: Verso)

- Contemporary reflections:
 - o Giorgio Agamben (2004) *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)
 - Janet Roitman (2014) Anti-Crisis (Durham, NC: Duke University Press): 1-39 (Intro. and ch. 1)

••• First reflection paper due Friday, 30 October, at 12 noon ••• Theme is open for this first reflection paper

Week IV (2 November) / Constitutional Dictatorship

Primary reading:

- Niccoló Machiavelli (1997 [1551]) Discourses on Livy, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press): 91-96 (Bk. I, ch. 33-34)
- Clinton Rossiter (2002 [1948]) Constitutional Dictatorship: Crisis Government in Modern Democracies (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers): 3-28, 288-314

Supplementary reading:

- Clinton Rossiter (2002 [1948]) Constitutional Dictatorship: Crisis Government in Modern Democracies (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers): remainder
 - NOTE: middle chapters consist of case studies of crisis governance in Germany, France, the UK, and the US up through World War II
- Carl Schmitt (2014 [1921]) Dictatorship, trans. Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward (Cambridge, UK: Polity)
- Oren Gross, "The Concept of 'Crisis': What Can We Learn from the Two Dictatorships of L. Quinctius Cincinnatus?," 1-23
- Oren Gross and Fionnuala Ní Aoláin (2006) Law in Times of Crisis: Emergency Powers in Theory and Practice (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press): 17-85
- Eric A. Posner and Adrian Vermeule (2009) "Crisis Governance in the Administrative State: 9/11 and the Financial Meltdown of 2008," *University of Chicago Law Review* 76(4): 1613-82
 - NOTE: There also exists a book-length version of Posner and Vermeule's argument, which advocates a "Schmittian" approach to emergency powers
- Sheldon S. Wolin (2004) "Machiavelli: Politics and the Economy of Violence" in Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought, expanded edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press): 175-213

Week V (9 November) / Extra-Legalism

Primary reading:

 John Locke (1980 [1690]) Second Treatise of Government, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company): 83-8 (ch. XIV)

 Oren Gross (2003) "Chaos and Rules: Should Responses to Violent Crises Always be Constitutional?," Yale Law Review 112: 1069-1134 (§§ IV-VI)

Supplementary reading:

- Oren Gross and Fionnuala Ní Aoláin (2006) "Models of Extra Legality" and "Five Degrees of Separation" in *Law in Times of Crisis: Emergency Powers in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press): 110-243
 - NOTE: these chapters provide a more expansive account of the arguments Gross makes in the "Chaos and Rules" article
- Bruce Ackerman (2004) "The Emergency Constitution," Yale Law Journal 113: 1029-91
- William E. Scheuerman (2006) "Survey Article: Emergency Powers and the Rule of Law After 9/11," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 14(1): 61-84
- Ian Zuckerman (2006) "One Law for War and Peace? Judicial Review and Emergency Powers between the Norm and the Exception," Constellations 13(4): 522-45
- Leonard Feldman (2008) "Judging Necessity: Democracy and Extra-Legalism," Political Theory 36(4): 550-77

Week VI (16 November) / Beyond the Exception

Primary reading:

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1987 [1762]) On the Social Contract in Donald A. Cress (trans and ed), Basic Political Writings (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company): 162-5 (Bk. II, ch. VII)
- Bonnie Honig (2009) Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy (Princeton: Princeton University Press): 12-39, 87-111 (chs. 1 and 4)

Supplementary reading:

- Further reading by Honig:
 - o Bonnie Honig (2009) *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press): remainder
- Jürgen Habermas (2001) "Constitutional Democracy: A Paradoxical Union of Contradictory Principles?," Political Theory 29(6): 766-81
- Andreas Kalyvas (2008) Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt (London: Cambridge University Press): especially sections on Schmitt and Arendt

Week VII (23 November) / Marxism and Crisis I

Primary reading:

- Karl Marx (1978 [1844]) "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction" in Robert C. Tucker (ed), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company): 53-65
- Karl Marx (1978 [1844]) "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" in Robert C. Tucker (ed), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company): 70-105

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1978 [1849]) "Wage Labour and Capital" in Robert C. Tucker (ed), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company): 203-217

Supplementary reading:

- Anthony Giddens (1971) Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim, and Max Weber (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press): 1-64
- Sheldon S. Wolin (2004) Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought, expanded edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press): 406-453
- William Connolly (1993) "Hegel, Marx, and the State" in *Political Theory and Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press): 116-36
- additional readings TBA

••• Second reflection paper due Friday, 26 November, at 12 noon ••• Theme is "Sovereignty, Law, Constitution"

Week VIII (30 November) / Marxism and Crisis II

Primary reading:

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1978 [1888]) "Manifesto of the Communist Party" in Robert C. Tucker (ed), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company): 473-500
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1978) "Crisis Theory" in Robert C. Tucker (ed), The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company): 443-65

Supplementary reading:

- Jürgen Habermas (1971) "Between Philosophy and Science: Marxism as Critique" in *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press): 195-252
- Seyla Benhabib (1986) "Critique as Crisis Theory: Autonomy and Capitalism" in *Critique, Norm, and Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press): 102-143

Week IX (7 December) / Organic Crisis and Crises of Authority

Primary reading:

 Antonio Gramsci (1971) "State and Civil Society" in Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (trans and eds), Selections from the Prison Notebooks (New York: International Publishers): 210-76

Supplementary reading:

additional readings TBA

Week X (14 December) / Legitimation Crisis

Primary reading:

 Jürgen Habermas (1976) Legitimation Crisis, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press): 33-94 (Part II)

Supplementary reading:

- Related writings by Habermas:
 - Jürgen Habermas (1973) "What Does a Crisis Mean Today?: Legitimation Problems in Late Capitalism," Social Research 40(4): 643-67
 - Jürgen Habermas (1979) "Legitimation Problems in the Modern State" in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press): 178-205
 - Jürgen Habermas (1987 [1981]) The Theory of Communicative Action,
 Volume 2: Lifeworld and System—A Critique of Functionalist Reason, trans.
 Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press): 301-403 (ch. VIII)
 - O Jürgen Habermas (1989) "The New Obscurity: The Crisis of the Welfare State and the Exhaustion of Utopian Energies" in *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen: 48-70
- Secondary Literature on Habermas:
 - Thomas McCarthy (1978) "Legitimation Problems in Advanced Capitalism" in *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press): 358-86
 - Seyla Benhabib (1986) "Communicative Action and the Paradoxes of Rationalization" in *Critique, Norm, & Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press): 228-53
 - O Joseph Heath (n.d.) "Legitimation Crisis' in the Later Work of Jürgen Habermas," unpublished ms.
 - Wolfgang Streeck (2014) "From Legitimation Crisis to Fiscal Crisis" in Buying Time: The Delayed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso): 1-46

Week XI (11 January) / The Evolutions of Revolutions

Primary reading:

 Hauke Brunkhorst (2014) Critical Theory of Legal Revolutions (New York: Bloomsbury): 9-20, 33-81 (skim 20-32)

- Hauke Brunkhorst (2015) "The European Crisis: The Paradoxes of Constitutionalizing Democratic Capitalism" in Robin Celikates, Regina Kreide, and Tilo Wesche (eds), Transformations of Democracy: Crisis, Protest, and Legitimation (London: Rowman & Littlefield International): 15-35
- Stephen K. White and Evan Robert Farr (2012) "'No-Saying' in Habermas," Political Theory 40(1): 32-57
- Thomas S. Kuhn (1970 [1962]) The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)

••• Third reflection paper due Friday, 15 January, at 12 noon •••

Theme is "Marx, Modernity, and History"

Week XII (18 January) / The Crises of Democratic Capitalism I

Primary reading:

- William E. Scheuerman (2000) "The Economic State of Emergency," *Cardozo Law Review* 21(5-6): 1869-94
- Jonathan White (2015) "Emergency Europe," *Political Studies* 63: 300-318.
- John B. Thompson (2012) "The Metamorphosis of a Crisis" in Manuel Castells, João Caraça, and Gustavo Cardoso (eds), Aftermath: The Cultures of the Economic Crisis, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 59-81

Supplementary reading:

- Jürgen Habermas (2012) The Crisis of the European Union, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge, UK: Polity)
- Costas Douzinas (2013) *Philosophy and Resistance in the Crisis: Greece and the Future of Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Polity)
- Costas Douzinas (2015) "Radical Philosophy Encounters the Uprisings: Lessons from Greece" in Robin Celikates, Regina Kreide, and Tilo Wesche (eds), Transformations of Democracy: Crisis, Protest, and Legitimation (London: Rowman & Littlefield International): 65-82
- Regina Kreide (2015) "Democracy in Crisis: Why Political Philosophy Needs Social Theory" in Robin Celikates, Regina Kreide, and Tilo Wesche (eds), Transformations of Democracy: Crisis, Protest, and Legitimation (London: Rowman & Littlefield International): 37-63

Week XIII (25 January) / The Crises of Democratic Capitalism II

Primary reading:

- Wolfgang Streeck (2011) "The Crises of Democratic Capitalism," New Left Review 71: 5-29
- Wolfgang Streeck (2014) "How Will Capitalism End?," New Left Review 87: 35-64

- Additional readings by Streeck:
 - Wolfgang Streeck (2012) "Markets and Peoples: Democratic Capitalism and European Integration," New Left Review 73: 63-71
 - Wolfgang Streeck (2012) "Citizens as Customers: Considerations on the New Politics of Consumption," New Left Review 76: 27-47
 - Wolfgang Streeck (2014) "Small-State Nostalgia? The Currency Union, Germany, and Europe: A Reply to Jürgen Habermas," *Constellations* 21(2): 213-21
 - Wolfgang Streeck (2014) Buying Time: The Delayed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso)

- Habermas's response to Streeck:
 - Jürgen Habermas (2015) "Democracy or Capitalism? On the Abject Spectacle of a Capitalistic World Society Fragmented along National Lines" in *The Lure of Technocracy*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press: 85-102
- Albena Azmanova (2014) "Crisis? Capitalism Is Doing Very Well. How Is Critical Theory?," Constellations 12(3): 351-65
- Claus Offe (2013) "Europe Entrapped: Does the EU Have the Political Capacity to Overcome Its Current Crisis?," European Law Journal 19(5): 595-611
- Colin Crouch (2004) Post-Democracy (Cambridge, UK: Polity)
- Colin Crouch (2009) "Privatised Keynesianism: An Unacknowledged Policy Regime," British Journal of Politics and International Relations 11(3): 382-99
- Wendy Brown (2015) Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution (New York: Zone Books)

Week XII (1 February) / The Crises of Democratic Capitalism III

Primary reading:

- Nancy Fraser (2014) "Behind Marx's Hidden Abode: For an Expanded Conception of Capitalism," New Left Review 86: 55-72
- Nancy Fraser (forthcoming) "Legitimation Crisis? On the Political Contradictions of Financialized Capitalism"

- Further reading by Fraser:
 - Nancy Fraser (2013) "A Triple Movement? Parsing the Politics of Crisis after Polanyi," New Left Review 81: 119-32
 - Nancy Fraser (2014) "Can Society Be Commodities All the Way Down? Post Polanyian Reflections on Capitalist Crisis," *Economy and Society* 43(4): 541-58
- Shirin M. Rai, Catherine Hoskyns, and Dania Thomas (2013) "Depletion: The Cost of Social Reproduction," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 16(1): 86-105
- Isabella Bakker (2007) "Social Reproduction and the Constitution of a Gendered Political Economy," New Political Economy 12(4): 541-56
- Jenny Cameron and J.K. Gibson-Graham (2003) "Feminising the Economy,"
 Gender, Place, & Culture 10(2): 145-57
- John Bellamy Forster (1999) "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology," American Journal of Sociology 105(2): 366-405
- Jason W. Moore (2000) "Environmental Crises and the Metabolic Rift in World-Historical Perspective," Organization & Environment 13(2): 123-57
- James Fairhead, Melissa Leach, and Ian Scoones (2012) "Green Grabbing: A New Appropriation of Nature?," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 39(2): 237-61
- Karl Polanyi (2001 [1944]) *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press)

Week XV (8 February) / Anti-Crisis

Primary reading:

Janet Roitman (2014) Anti-Crisis (Durham, NC: Duke University Press): 41-96

••• Fourth reflection paper due Friday, 5 February, at 12 noon •••

Theme is "Democracy and Capitalism"

••• Final paper due Thursday, 31 March, at 12 noon •••