

Political Science 87

Professor Kaare W. Strøm

Social Science Bldg 107

Office Hours: Monday 1-3 and by appointment

Phone: (858) 534-0793

Fall Quarter 2014

Wed 9:00 - 10:50

October 8 – November 19

Office: Social Science Bldg

384

E-mail: kstrom@ucsd.edu

POWER IN FICTION

Objectives

Power is a crucial aspect of politics. Indeed, many political scientists define their discipline as the study of power. Many individuals and groups seek power, and power can be pursued, used, and abused in various ways. This course will explore four prominent works of fiction, set in different societies and times. The objective of the course is through reading and discussion of these books to develop a better understanding of the pursuit, uses, and abuses of power.

Approach

This is a freshman seminar, with no prerequisites. There will be five weekly seminar meetings, but note that **we will not meet on October 22 or November 12**. Class attendance is required, and except for the first day you should come to class prepared to discuss the literature assigned for that day. During our initial meeting we shall explore the nature of power and its uses and abuses. The remaining seminar meetings will explore four works of fiction. **In order to get credit for this seminar, you will have to attend at least four seminar meetings and write a brief discussion paper (800 words or more) on one of these readings.** The generic paper topic is: "How this book/play helps me understand the pursuit, use, and abuse of power." A hard copy of your paper is due no later than noon the day before we discuss the book in class (Tuesday), or preferably earlier. It can be left in an envelope outside my office (SSB 384). You may wish to revise your paper after the seminar discussion, and **final papers are due by noon on Monday, November 24**. All dates and class schedules are subject to change.

Books and Materials

The following books have been ordered by the bookstore:

Chinua Achebe, *A Man of the People*

Henrik Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People*

C. P. Snow, *The Masters*

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

Paperback editions will be available through the bookstore, but you should feel free to use any edition you can find. All readings will also be placed on library reserve. The seminar will be supported by a Ted (Blackboard) account, which you can access at ted.ucsd.edu.

Calendar

October 8: INTRODUCTION: POWER, POLITICS, AND FICTION

Readings:

Robert A. Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*. Prentice-Hall 1963, ch. 5 ("Power and Influence").

John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*. Univ. of Illinois Press 1982, ch.1 ("Power and Participation").

October 15: SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Reading: Ibsen

October 29: CHALLENGING POWER

Reading: Achebe

November 5: ABUSE AND POWERLESSNESS

Reading: Solzhenitsyn

November 19: POWER THROUGH BARGAINING AND PERSUASION

Reading: Snow