Proseminar in Political Theory: Anarchism in Theory and Practice
Political Science 801
CRT 203 \hspace{1cm} W 4:30 – 7:10

Kennan Ferguson \hspace{1cm} NWQ-B 5569 \hspace{1cm} 229.4254
kennan@uwm.edu \hspace{1cm} Office hours: M 1:00-2:00, W 3:30-4:30

For a fundamentally negative concept – that is, one defined against structure, architecture, and organization – anarchism has a considerable number of adherents, as well as a distinguished and philosophically complex history. And for a term which has more often than not been used as a pejorative, calling up images of destruction and war (not to mention messiness and dirtiness), many have been proud to call themselves anarchists, even those who question many of the political practices or goals of other anarchists.

How, this course asks, has such a concept developed? What does it mean to support anarchy – does one merely oppose the state, or also conceptual structures such as religion and capitalism? What alternative ideas of community, connection, even order emerge from the its theories? Does anarchism bring a new kind of political person into being, or does it uncover previously existing abilities and forms which have been smothered by traditional forms of power? What does anarchistic theory ignore – though it clearly addresses many political questions, such as the role of the state, does it disregard others such as gender, family, and “positive” liberty? Finally, where is anarchism already practiced – where does it emerge and reemerge in our contemporary world?

As a course, however, we will also be negotiating aspects of anarchist thought within and against the forms of power we are given. The classroom is a state-sponsored site, one of particular and specific authority which is also putatively open to the unconstricted flow of ideas. How as a collectivity of scholars do we practice anarchic work in our own individual and collective practices?

Paper

Alongside the below readings, you will also be responsible for developing a research paper (at an approximate length of 20 pages) that concerns anarchist themes and theories of power as it applies to a topic of interest to you. This paper can be analytical or normative in nature, addressing both the variety of issues brought up in class and the variety of issues the topic itself raises.

During the final two weeks of class, students will each present the results of their research to the class as a whole, in a series of approximately 25 minute presentations.
A rough deadline to keep in mind follows:

Decide on topic: End of September
Outline subjects and issues: Mid-October
Create overall research project: Early November
Discuss with professor: Mid-November
Start writing: By Thanksgiving
Present ideas to class: December 4 or 11
Turn in final paper: December 17 (Monday)

REQUIRED TEXTS:

These books are available at People’s Books, located at 2122 Locust (near the corner of Locust and Maryland). All other readings are available on D2L.

Mikhail Bakunin – God and the State (978-0486224831)
Kathy Ferguson – Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Street (978-0742523012)
Emma Goldman – Anarchism and Other Essays (any collection, any publisher)
James Klausen and James Martel – How Not to be Governed (978-0739150351)
Peter Kropotkin – Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings (978-0486419558)
James Scott – The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia (978-0300169171)

DATELINE

September 4: Introduction

Part I: Power

September 11: James Scott, The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia

September 18: Emma Goldman, Anarchism and Other Essays (any source)

October 2: Rebecca Solnit, A Paradise Built in Hell (selections)
George Bernard Shaw, “The Impossibilities of Anarchism”
Part II: Philosophy

October 9:  Proudhon, essays
           Bakunin, *God and the State*

October 16: Peter Kropotkin, *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*

Part III: Past to Present

October 22: Pierre Clastres, *Society against the State, chapters 1, 3, 10, 11*

October 30: Kathy Ferguson, *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Street*

Part IV: Practice

November 6: Paul Goodman, essays
            Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”


November 20: James Klausen and James Martel, *How Not to be Governed*

November 27: Thanksgiving Eve, no class

December 4: Student Presentations, Part 1

December 11: Student Presentations, Part 2

Monday, December 16: Final Project Due