A MARTIAL THEORY OF GLOBAL POLITICS

Those that study gender, colonialism, the eradication of indigenous people, racism, the industrialization of animal slaughter, security studies, global labor movements, and urbanization know that political theory, in particular liberal theory, all too often presumes that social relations, human or otherwise, are primarily defined by political relations. However as is exemplified in Locke’s Second Treatise on Government the majority of the planet finds themselves exempted from the social contract of politics and as such are excommunicated to a permanent state of war. That is, relations defined by conquest, occupation, or slavery. Therefore, it is necessary that martial or war theory give particular attention to these relations that are otherwise presumed to lack sufficient reason or power to require political recognition. Queer, disabled, raced, gendered, sexualized, and otherwise minoritized bodies across the planet are often only included as an afterthought or humanitarian consolation prize in the realm of the political. Subsequently international and domestic law more commonly treats these bodies as objects of politics.

Rather than continue to engage in the process of expansion, assimilation, and inclusion sought by traditional political theory this class seeks to begin from the position that conflict and war primarily structure social relations. Despite triumphant claims that war is diminishing based on quantitative measures of ‘war deaths,’ we will explore the violence, misery, and death that is increasingly generated on the outskirts of recognizable war. Taking relations of war rather than events such as great power wars that are often the center of gravity in security studies. To accomplish this we will confront the increasing automation of war, neoliberal/necropolitical humanitarian management, the institutionalization and secrecy of extra-judicial torture and assassination, more subtle forms of militarized enjoyment, the intensifying resonance of fear and revenge in foreign and domestic policy, hyper-policing of spatialized minorities, and on and on. All of these techniques of war will be explored through out the diverse geographies in which they take place. Readings will investigate NYC, Rio, Sierra Leone, Ciudad Jaurez, Detroit, Israel, Cairo, and Ancient Rome.
Requirements and Assignment:
Full participation is expected and all participants will be expected to give a critical presentation on one of the texts during the course. There are two ways to satisfy the final project for the course.
Option 1: Write a 5,000 word review of one or more of the texts for submission to a journal for publication. The review will be turned in week 6. It will be given back to you week 7 with substantial suggestions for revision. The second reworked draft will be turned in at the end of the semester. The subsequent draft will then be submitted to a journal after consultation over the appropriate venue.

Martial Theories of Global Politics: Killing, Death, Sovereignty, and Science.
Week 1
McNeill, The Human Condition
Ernst Junger, On Pain

Week 2
Grégoire Chamayou, Manhunts: A Philosophical History

Week 3
Georges Bataille, The Accursed Share: The History of Eroticism and Sovereignty

Week 4

Week 5
Eyal Weizman, The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt Gaza

Week 6

Week 7
Antoine Bousquet, The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity

The Grounds of War: Cases, Places, and Spaces
Week 8
Didier Fassin, Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing

Week 9
Sergio Gonzalez Rodriguez, The Femicide Machine

Week 10
Neil Whitehead and Sverker Finnstrom, Virtual War and Magical Death: Technologies and Imaginaries for Terror and Killing

Week 11

Week 12
Joshua Bloom, Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panthers

Reflections on Global War: Ethics and Politics
Week 13
Judith Butler, Frames of War: When is Life Grievable

Week 14
Antonio Negri, The Porcelain Workshop: For a New Grammar of Politics

Suggested Reading
Carl von Clausewitz, On War
McNeill, The Pursuit of Power
J.F.C. Fuller, Armament and History
M. Foucault, Society Must Be Defended
M. Foucault, Security, Territory, and Population
Carl Schmitt, The Concept of the Political
Carl Schmitt, Theory of the Partisan
Pierre Clastres, Society Against the State: Essays in Political Anthropology