

# Sigmund Freud and Max Weber as Political Philosophers

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9:00am-4:30pm

The purpose of this workshop is to pick up one of the many threads to be found in Ronald Beiner's 2014 book, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters* (Cambridge University Press). A leading purpose of Beiner's book is to rethink the meaning of the theory enterprise, understood as broad reflection on the human condition in its normative dimensions. Viewed as such, one might also have to reconsider who belongs in the established canon of political philosophers.

What is political philosophy? Beiner's book proposes an answer to this question – theory in the most ambitious sense is reflection on the ends of life in dialogue with competing views of the highest human ends – and it seeks to defend that answer by considering how leading thinkers of the 20th century live up to his conception of the true vocation of theory. Sigmund Freud and Max Weber (respectively: one of the 20th century's greatest and most influential psychologists, and one of the 20th century's greatest and most influential social scientists) certainly did not think of themselves as "political philosophers," nor have they generally been treated as such. But Beiner, both in his book (pp. xxix-iv) and in this workshop, tries to draw both Freud and Weber into the political philosophy canon, alongside leading exemplars of political philosophy such as Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Jürgen Habermas, Michel Foucault, and John Rawls. The hope is both to shed new light on Freud and Weber as crucial thinkers of the 20th century by reading them within the context of the tradition of normative theory, and also to expand one's view of that tradition by seeing it as properly encompassing these two towering thinkers who are rarely situated within the political philosophy canon.

There are three required readings for this workshop.

Required Readings (items available\* at: <https://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/> and on 3 hour loan)

Ronald Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), "Second Prologue". <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?1451BD38>

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (W.W. Norton). <http://clues.concordia.ca/record=b3037778> (3 hour loan – Webster Library, SGW campus)

Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong (Hackett).

<http://clues.concordia.ca/record=b3088806> (3 hour loan – Webster Library, SGW campus)

\*If you are registered for non-credit and are unable to locate the readings, please contact us at [wssr@concordia.ca](mailto:wssr@concordia.ca)