CALL FOR PROPOSALS
Taking on the Political, EUP

We’re making an open call for manuscript proposals for our series ‘Taking on the Political’, published by Edinburgh University Press. EUP has a worldwide sales and distribution network, including an excellent distribution arrangement in North America with Columbia University Press. Depending on the likely market for individual titles in the US, EUP does also look for co-publishing partners where appropriate.

The main characteristics of books in the ‘Taking on the Political’ series are that:

- they are relatively short, ranging between 60,000 and 75,000 words;
- they draw primarily from Continental thought;
- they are not about the way a given thinker conceives the political (i.e., not ‘So and So on the Political’) but what can be done when using a particular approach or theorist(s) to think the political;
- they ‘take on’ a theorist, debate or theme: polemicization is the distinguishing trait of the series. We welcome manuscripts that are willing to run risks by venturing beyond the mainstream and interrogating commonplace truths.

The series has published the following volumes:

* Polemicization: The Contingency of the commonplace* by Benjamin Arditi and Jeremy Valentine
* Untimely Politics* by Samuel A. Chambers
* Cinematic Political Thought* by Michael Shapiro
* Speaking Against Number* by Stuart Elden

Forthcoming titles in 2006/2007 include:

* Post-Marxism versus Cultural Studies* by Paul Bowman
* Post-Foundational Political Thought* by Oliver Marchart
* Politics and Aesthetics* by Jon Simons

Further details about these titles can be found on EUP’s website: [http://www.eup.ed.ac.uk/series_titles.aspx](http://www.eup.ed.ac.uk/series_titles.aspx) - follow the link for ‘Taking on the Political’.

We are particularly interested in manuscripts dealing with some of the broad themes outlined here, but not necessarily exhausted by them. We list them in no particular order:
The interface between political theory and international political thought with regard to war and security

People from Clausewitz to Morgenthau and from Schmitt to Derrida, Foucault and Virilio have written about it. Foucault’s Society must be Defended, for example, develops the theme of politics as the continuation of war. What is the relation between war and politics? Is the Hobbesian theme of security the new overriding concern for politics? If this is the case, is security limited to the fear of violent death alone or does it also include a minimal threshold of welfare, migratory flows or open access to energy resources too? How can war be conceptualised in an age of ‘bruised sovereignty’, when the hitherto untouchable aura of Westphalian sovereignty fades and the belligerent parties are not only nation-states but also nations without states and sub-statal political and religious movements? There seems to be a consensus that the defence of human rights trumps sovereignty and undermines the principle of non-intervention advocated by newly independent states in the second post-war. Does this legitimise imperial enterprises in the name of democracy and human rights? Is the idea of a ‘war on terrorism’ an oxymoron? Can one ever win such wars and does waging them make people more secure? Do theories of war and international relations —as well as international law— change in the face of unilateral initiatives such as the 2002 National Security Strategy of the US, which claims that offensive war is a legitimate form of self-defence when the adversaries are not nation-states? Does war and peace, politics and governance change in the light of Agamben’s claim that the state of exception —as theorised by Benjamin and Schmitt— has become a normal mode of politics in contemporary democracy?

Global Politics

We are also interested in this area, particularly in critical engagements with the Deleuzian and neo-Spinozist theorisations of progressive politics. This would include, for example, monographs addressing the themes of multitude versus people, exodus, general intellect, and radical civil disobedience that emerged with the Italian autonomista movement of the 1970s (Lazzarato, Bifo, Virno, Negri) and was later popularised outside Italy with the publication of Empire and A Grammar of the Multitude. Is there a politics of the multitude or are we simply witnessing ingenious conceptual coreographies? This broad Deleuzian genealogy also includes the theorisation of post-1960s politics by the Critical Art Ensemble (primarily by invoking rhizome and proposing a tactic of electronic civil disobedience), the encounter between hackers and political activists in the figure of the hacktivist, the guerrilla theatre of a myriad of groups battling neo-liberal globalisation (like the Electrohippies) and pro-Zapatista groups like the Electronic Disturbance Theatre, and so on. Are the immanentist theories derived from Deleuze and Spinoza useful for thinking current politics and opening windows of opportunity for political interventions?

Political Economy

A third area has to do with the much-forgotten question of political economy after years of post-Marxist criticisms of economic determinism and the metaphysics of the last instance. What, if anything, has taken the place of political economy and its critique? Does the economy still have any significant relation to politics and the ordering of social formations which is thinkable without relying on redundant axioms to do so? There are two sides to this issue and it would be interesting to see if they converge. Firstly, the empirical hegemony of finance capital and the technologies and forms of calculation which have been invented to
develop it, including the re-configuration of state, law and political imaginaries. In the light of these does it any longer make sense to refer to the economy, capitalist or otherwise, as a unified object and if so what are the political consequences? Secondly, what has happened to the various attempts, generally from a critical materialist perspective, to conceptualise the morphologies of economy, which began after the Althusserian interventions of the 1960s? Can these approaches be synthesised or have they been displaced by the ethnographic turn in political economy as the only alternative to the algebra of equilibrium models? If not, then what conceptual and theoretical inventions are required to develop critical materialist perspectives?

**Technology and objects**

A fourth theme points toward technology and objects. Has the turn to these themes of in political thought contributed to a real expansion of the terrain of the political or merely of its dominant ordering metaphors derived from the modern episteme of the machine? In which case do the modern political values of liberalism, representation and consensus go with it or does the turn to technology and objects result in genuine gains in the advancement of political thought and practice? Or do they amount to losses, for example by the displacement of subjectivity? These questions are posed by the successes of Actor Network Theory in particular, but are also raised by the more general fascination with post-humanism and the corrosion of the 'useful illusion' of thought and agency originating in consciousness and the unconscious stimulated by the 'neuro' and 'nano' sciences, and by the recognition of the political agency of phenomena which cannot easily be reduced to the self-image of the human such as genomes, geological and ecological shifts. Are the political implications of these perspectives self-evident or do they need to be supplemented by a more critical conceptualisation of the political?

**Culture and Politics**

Last, but by no means least, we are interested in critical engagements with the interface of culture and politics, with what happened to the radical promise of culture and politics. Is it still credible to argue for the validity of the cultural dimensions of political formations, or have the conditions in which doing so made sense evaporated into status competition for resources? Does Bourdieu-style reductionism explain the value of counter-intuitive ‘readings’ of cultural artefacts? Are notions connected to the idea of culture as transformation and transgression simply elite liberal-modernist imaginaries which have no place in the global political sphere, and which may even be hostile to the values of those who seek to resist and oppose the injustices of globalisation? How is culture doing in its long-established opposition to nature, or has the distinction broken down under the hegemony of evolutionary biology and the like? In short, we would be interested in a manuscript that looks into what is being done with culture politically and what can be done with it.

Please contact us (v1bardit@staffmail.ed.ac.uk and JValentine@QMUC.ac.uk) if you have a proposal that fits these broad themes or even if you wish to surprise us with something else that might be considered for the series ‘Taking on the Political’.

A final word on the way we deal with manuscripts. We follow a very straightforward procedure:
1. If you have a proposal, the first thing to do is to send us an initial e-mail with a broad description of the project and its present stage of development (approximately 400-500 words).

2. If we believe the project fits the aims of the series we will invite you to submit a formal proposal following the guidelines for authors of EUP (download at www.eup.ed.ac.uk – see ‘Contact Us’ section), together with two sample chapters.

3. The formal proposal and sample chapters are then reviewed by the editors and sent to two external readers, one in the US and one in the UK. The decision on whether we will submit the project to the Press and Editorial Committees of EUP depends largely on the reports of the external readers and on your willingness to take on board their comments and those of the series editors.

4. Once we approve a proposal the project then goes to EUP’s Press and Editorial Committees and, if approved, EUP will send you a contract which will specify the date of submission.

All best wishes,

Benjamin Arditi and Jeremy Valentine

Series Editors, ‘Taking on the Political’
Edinburgh University Press