

**Political Science 376: American Political Thought from 1865: Legacies of the Civil War
Spring 2020**

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Office Hours: Wednesday 11-1 PM or by appointment

Location: College Ave Starbucks

Course Description: This course looks at the development of American Political Thought from the Civil War to the present day. In particular, this course focuses on the way the post-civil war landscape reworks and reinvigorates the theoretical ideas that informed the creation and development of the American political system. This course examines the way the ideals of freedom and empowerment inform analysis and critiques of American politics and the political reality that emerged in the wake of the Civil War and Reconstruction. This course looks to specific thinkers to formulate our analyses and critiques of this reality. In addition, this course tracks some contemporary challenges to the system. This course will look at issues that have particular salience in the politics of our time, focusing on the relationship between ideas and institutions, and the challenges of putting certain ideas into practice. We will consider the way in which certain challenges present at the founding of America continue to inform, challenge, and disrupt the cohesive narrative of the American experiment. We will look at the way the Civil War and its aftermath shapes discussions about citizenship that functions to include some and exclude others, in both de facto and de jure forms. We will examine the political thought of thinkers like DuBois, Wells, and Baldwin as responses to this predicament, and use their scholarship to inform our understanding and critiques. We will work to deepen our understanding of the movements and events that punctuate the broader conversation about inclusion and exclusion that narrates the broad arc of American history.

Learning Objectives: Over the course of this class, you will:

- Learn fundamental principles and theories that are related to American political thought. This means you should become familiar with the texts we will read and the kinds of arguments we will encounter. You should know the key theories and debates with which each thinker is associated.
- Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas. You will be able to engage in political theory on your own, by reading similar texts and analyzing their arguments. You will be able to compare these arguments, and evaluate them. You will also be able to analyze contemporary events using insights gleaned from the course texts and discussions.
- Develop skills in expressing yourself both orally and in writing. You will work on sharpening your own critical writing and analysis skills, and be able to present your arguments to your peers clearly and concisely. Our course focuses on writing and discussion to help hone these skills.

Course Texts: Assigned articles and chapters marked with an (*) on the syllabus are available electronically via the course's SAKAI site. They will be made available to all students in the course. The following books are required and available for purchase on Amazon or any other bookseller (I encourage you to find the best price!):

Allen, *Cuz*

WEB Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

Assignments and Grading: Your grade for the course will be based on a variety of assignments and your class participation. This is a seminar class, which means that attendance and participation in class are crucial to the course. The grade breakdown is as follows:

Class citizenship (attendance and participation): 20%
Leading Discussion: 15%
Blog responses: 10%
Text Analyses: 15%
Short Paper: 20%
Book Review Project: 20%

Assignments are due when listed on the syllabus, unless otherwise specified by the instructor. In order to receive a grade in this course, students must complete all assignments in a timely fashion. This means turning in written assignments on the dates specified and agreed upon, and completing oral assignments as well. Extensions will be considered and students are encouraged to discuss extensions and potential conflicts with the instructor as soon as possible.

There are multiple assignments for this course, of varying types and lengths:

Class Citizenship: Attendance and participation are crucial to a seminar course. Both attendance and contributions to the classroom discussions and activities are crucial dimensions of class citizenship. Everyone is granted two (2) grace absences, which do not affect your grade. If you need to miss more than 2 classes, it is your responsibility to speak to the instructor and make up any work missed. Students are encouraged to do all of the readings before class in order to contribute to these discussions. In addition, students are expected to participate in the workshop days, giving comments about drafts of their fellow students' papers. Students who are worried about participation are encouraged to speak with the instructor. (20%)

Leading Discussion: Each student will take a turn leading the day's discussion. Students will write a blog post to summarize their analyses of the day's readings, and give a brief presentation on an issue introduced in the assigned reading. Blog posts should be 300-400 words, and presentations should be 5-7 minutes. The instructor will provide guiding questions to help guide presentations, and students will introduce two discussion questions to help their peers engage with critical aspects of the text. Students should submit their discussion questions to the instructor by 11 am the morning of the class. (15%)
[Check/Check Plus Grading Scale]

Blog Responses: Each student will respond to 5 of their classmates' blog posts over the course of the semester. This will help students become part of the conversation that undergirds political theory. Responses should be at least 50-100 words, and should address the central issue that their classmate has identified. Students should respond to at least 2 posts prior to Spring Break, and 3 after break. (10%) [Check/Check Plus Grading Scale]

Text Analyses: Reading and analyzing texts is at the core of political theory. Over the course of the semester, students will complete 3 Text Analyses to help develop their text-reading

and analysis skills. We will begin these activities in class, and students will submit them through the Sakai site on the dates listed on the syllabus. (15%, 5% each) [Check/Check Plus Grading Scale]

Short Paper: Each student will submit 1 short papers (5-7 pages) over the course of the semester. The due date is listed on the syllabus. Prior to the due date, the instructor will distribute a set of questions to guide the paper-writing process. Students will also be given an opportunity to workshop paper ideas in-class during peer review sessions, and revise papers before final submission. (20%) [Letter Grade Grading Scale]

Book Review Project: The semester will conclude with Danielle Allen's *Cruz*, which tells the story of her cousin, and brings many of the course themes together in one text. For the final project for the course, students will compose a book review in which they engage Allen's text, and connect this text to the course readings. Students will be able to choose the form of assignment they wish to complete: an essay, an un-essay, a podcast, or another form that they can propose to the professor. We will discuss this assignment in more detail after Spring Break, and it will be due at the end of the course. (20%)

University and Course Policies:

- Please note the University's policy on disability accommodations. I will gladly make accommodations for any student who needs them, though students must work with the Office of Disability Services (dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu). Their website is at

<http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>

- Rutgers faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. Rutgers has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The University strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the University. Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to [Policy 10.3.12](#)) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the University's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of resources in Appendix A to University Policy 10.3.12. For more information about your options at Rutgers, please visit endsexualviolence.rutgers.edu

- Please note the University's policy on academic integrity and plagiarism:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

I especially recommend the resources under "For Students" in the upper right corner of the page. I encourage you to discuss the course readings and the issues that they raise with your classmates. But all work turned in with your name on it must be entirely your own. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with, and abiding by, the University's academic integrity policy. (See also <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-tutorial/>.) Violations of academic integrity

will be handled personally by the professor and prosecuted through the Office of Student Conduct.

- Please note the University's religious observance policy:
<https://scheduling.rutgers.edu/scheduling/religious-holiday-policy>

You should consider yourself excused when class falls on a religious holiday that you observe. You should inform your TA in advance, and you must make up any class readings or assignments that you miss.

• Laptops in the classroom. **Permission to use laptops during class is a privilege, not a right, and it can be taken away.** Laptops are wonderful things. I use mine every day. Unfortunately, many students (and, sadly, faculty) use them to engage in activities that detract from their own educational experience or that of other students. **If you wish to use a laptop to take notes during lecture I ask that you not browse the Internet or engage in other non-class-related online activities during class time.**

- Announcements and course information will be posted to the course sakai site and at times sent via email, through Sakai, to the class email list. The system automatically sends email to your official Rutgers address. If you don't know this email address, please find out and be sure to check it regularly.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Introduction to the Course

January 22: What is American Political Thought? What is American Political Thought after 1865?
No reading, go over Syllabus

January 27: America, Great or Otherwise
Donald J. Trump, "Inaugural Address" (2017)*
Langston Hughes, "Let America Be America Again" (1938)*

January 29: Theoretical Foundations of 'We the People'
Rogers Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Hartz: Multiple Traditions in America"*
*The Declaration of Independence**

Text Analysis 1 Due at 11:59 PM to Sakai Assignment

February 3: Who is part of the 'We'?
Frederick Douglas, "What to a Slave is the 4th of July?"*

Part I: Legacies of the Civil War

February 5: Expanding the 'We'
Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address"*
Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address"*

February 10: Applying the Principles of Abolitionism

Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments*
Plessy v. Ferguson (1892)*

February 12: Legacies of the Civil War and Reconstruction
W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

February 17: Legacies of the Civil War and Reconstruction II
W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

Text Analysis 2 due at 11:59 PM to Sakai Assignment

February 19: Legacies of the Civil War and Reconstruction III
W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

February 24: Theorizing Legacies I
Robert Gooding-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois* (excerpts)*

February 26: Theorizing Legacies II
Lawrie Balfour, *Democracy's Reconstruction: Thinking Politically with Du Bois* (excerpts)*
Joel Olsen, *The Abolition of White Democracy* (excerpts)*

Part II: Lynching and American Political Thought

March 2: Lynching and Reconstruction
Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors and Other Writings*: "Southern Horror: Lynch Law in all its Phases"*

March 4: Lynching and Reconstruction II
Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors and Other Writings*: "A Red Record" (excerpts)*

March 9: Theorizing Violence in American Political Thought
Lawrie Balfour, "Ida B. Wells and 'Color Line Justice: Rethinking Reparations in Feminist Terms'"*
Heather Pool, "Mourning Emmett Till"*

March 11: Peer Review Workshop: Bring Draft of Paper to Class

Final Draft of Paper due 3/14 at 11:59 PM to Sakai Assignment

March 16 and March 18: Spring Break

Part III: Politics of Oppression

March 23: Reflections
James Baldwin, *Notes on a Native Son* (excerpts)*

March 25: A Moderate Response
Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"*
Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream"*

March 30: Radical Responses I
Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”*

April 1: Radical Responses II
James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

April 6: Radical Responses III
James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

April 8: No Class, Professor at Conference
Text Analysis 3 Due at 11:59 PM to Sakai Assignment

April 13: Political Action from Political Theory
The Black Panther Party, “What We Want, What We Believe”*
Angela Y. Davis, “Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation”*

April 15: Theorizing Futures
Lisa Beard, “James Baldwin on Violence and Disavowal”*

April 20: Theorizing Futures II
Lawrie Balfour, “A Most Disagreeable Mirror: Race Consciousness as Double Consciousness”*

Reflecting America Today

April 22: Claudia Rankine, *Citizen* (excerpts)*

April 27: Danielle Allen, *Cruz* (Part I)

April 29: Danielle Allen, *Cruz* (Part II)

May 4: Danielle Allen, *Cruz* (Part III)

May 6: Course Conclusion and Brainstorming Session

May 11: Book Review Assignment FINAL DRAFT due to SAKAI