AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Neos, Isms, & Pronouns
M 2:15-4:15 - Room 4419
Prof. O’Brien Office Hours, TBA
Aug 26 version

Course Description: “Neos, Isms, & Pronouns” This seminar examines American political thought in historical and analytical perspective or as Neos, Isms, & Pronouns. It juxtaposes chronological periods or the past to current policy problems professed by contemporary political thought/thinkers. The policy issues are undergirded by American supremacies. These supremacies produce intolerances, inequities, and inequalities that affect intersecting identities or full-bodies most by forming a confluence of factors or what I call a “power-pile-on”. To make this juxtaposition, the seminar roughly breaks along historical lines or these trajectories in time: a colony, a revolt, a founding, a war, and a new nation (new news or neos) all around the 20th century fin de siècle. The power-pile-on is unpacked by weighing impact on bodies that are raced, sexed, gendered, beaten, cleansed (read and/or for measuring full impact) within different capitalisms (i.e. industrial, monopoly, etc . . . )

Original texts will be used written by public intellectuals/political thinkers/or political thought leaders such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, James Madison, William Du Bois, John Dewey, Malcolm X, Gloria E. Anzaldua, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. In addition to becoming familiar with the political science standardized and sanitized SLAM (Straight Liberal
American Male) and SCAM (Straight Conservative American Male) interpretations, alternative interpretations will be emphasized used, such as anti-essentialism (not “not essentialism.”)

Objectives, Goals & Requirements:

1. Complete assigned readings before class. Before each seminar meets, students distribute an approximately 1 page written summary or abbreviated outline of the reading. Turn in a portfolio of notes for seminars attended.

2. Midterm: Turn in a mid-term of approximately 5 pages derived from question of your choice

3. Final is 10-15 page essay (including notes and bibliography)

Weight: Participation = 25 percent; Midterm = 25 percent; and Final = 50%

Privacy: No taping, recording of any kind with any medium permitted without written permission by instructor and all participants each session. Printed-hard-copy notes sharing between and among students for peer-help purposes of peer-help. Student privacy protected.

Books to Consider Purchasing:


Most articles mentioned (and not posted on Blackboard) can be found in the Mina Reese database source of Project MUSE, and if this does not work try JSTOR. Law articles found on Lexis-Nexis.

FALL 2016 GC Calendar for Seminars

1M Aug 29 (No class M Sept 5)
2M Sept 12

3M Sept 19 (moved to Tues Sept 20 by AP, attendance encouraged)

4M Sept 26 (No class M Oct 3)

5 TH Oct 6 class (TH follow M schedule)

6M Oct 17

7M Oct 24

8M Oct 31

9M Nov 7

10M Nov 14

11 M Nov 21

12 M Nov 28

13M Dec 5

14 M Dec 12

15 M Dec 19 (Final - materials due that day unless incomplete warranted).

**SUBJECT OVERVIEW**

1. **Introduction: What is American Political Thought?**

2. **A Colony**

Reading:!John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity,”
http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html; Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

3. A Revolt


4. A Confounding Foundation


5. Frontiers

Reading: Alexis De Tocqueville, Democracy in America (Signet classic, Richard Heffner ed. 1956), Book I, part I, 10-14; Book I Part II, 16-18; Book II, Part I, 26-30. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," delivered to the
American Historical Association in 1893 at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago
http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/frontierthesis.html


6. Another War


Theor and the Project Demise of Slavery, Civil War
E. Pease, Reconstituting the American Renaissance:
Emerson, Whitman and the Politics of Representation
Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories. Madison, WI:
University of Wisconsin Press, 2003. Project MUSE.
Hall, Stephen G. Faithful Account of the Race: African
American Historical Writing in Nineteenth-Century
<http://muse.jhu.edu/>.

7. Neo Pops

Reading: !Horatio Alger, Jr. Ragged Dick (1868)
http://www.albany.edu/history/history316/RaggedDick
-1.html;!William Graham Sumner What Social Classes
Owe to Each Other (Bibliobazar, 2007); Francis Galton,
http://books.google.com/

Recommended Reading on Capitalism: !Martin Sklar,
The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism
(Cambridge University Press, 1988). Richard
Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (Vintage, 1960). Regina
Gagnier, “The Law of Progress and the Ironies of
Individualism in the 19th Century,” New Literary

8. In Class Midterm (see above)

9. Neo-Nation

Reading: !Walter Lippmann, The Phantom Public
(Transaction Publishers, 1993), chps TBA. John Dewey,
1, 3, 4, 5


10. Capitalism(s)


11. Supremacies - Bodies Raced


12. Supremacies – Bodies Sexed, Sold, and/or Gendered

Reading: Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique (W.W. Norton, 2001), chps 1-3; Judith Butler, Gender Trouble, chps TBA; Herbert Marcuse One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society (Beacon Press, 1991), chps 1, 6-8, 10; Martha Fineman, The Neutered Mother, The Sexual Family and Other Twentieth Century Tragedies (Routledge Press, 1995), chapters 1,2, and 9; and Gloria Steinem, My Life on the Road (Penguin/Random House, 2015) TBA.

Adams, “At the Table with Arendt: Toward a Self-Interested Practice of Coalition Discourse,” 17 Hypatia (2002), 27.

13. Supremacies - Bodies Cleansed, Tolerated, and/or Better Behaved?


14. Spreading Supremacies – Bombs, Villages & Viruses

Reading: Benjamin Peters, editor, Digital Keywords: A Vocabulary of Information Society and Culture (Princeton University Press, 2016), chapters TBA; Barack Obama’s Speeches, TBA; and Hillary Rodham Clinton, It Takes a Village (any edition), chapters TBA.
