Gender, Race, and American Political Development: American Dream or American Dread?

Tuesdays 11:45 AM-1:45 PM
David Waldstreicher 5411.09 Office Hour Tues 2:00-3:00
Ruth O’Brien 5200.01 Office Hour Tues. 2:00-3:00

Course Overview:
This course examines to what extent, in what ways, are exceptionalist understandings of U.S. political traditions a problem or a solution? Do accounts that stress race, or gender, or the confluence of the two, provide a necessary or sufficient theory or counter-narrative of political development? Do frameworks developed in European politics, in critical theory, postcolonial thought or in domestic vernaculars comprehend the roles of race and gender, or their relationship to each other, in the political past and political time now? What kinds of analytical scholarship and storytelling have been adequate to the task? Finally, given the recent resurgence of angry and martial rhetoric at the center of national politics, how might we understand the relationship between the revolutionary or Enlightenment dreams of justice, peace, freedom and progress on the one hand, and the recurrent dread or nightmare of decline and oppression, as shaping facts of specifically political traditions?

Written Assignments:
(1) Weekly brief (1-2pp.) reflections on the readings.
(2) A term paper of 12-15 pages, due May 8, that may take one of the following forms:
   a. A historiography or “literature review” that takes as its subject one of the week’s readings and incorporates the recommend readings and possibly others as well.
   b. A research paper according to the expectations of one’s discipline or the course one is registered for (political science, history, women’s studies etc.)
   c. A proposal for a more substantial research project. Consult with one of the instructors about expectations according to disciplinary specificities.

A 2-3 page PROPOSAL for term final paper is due on March 31.

Schedule and Readings

1 Jan. 28 Introduction: a discipline counts: histories (social, intellectual, political, economic, material, cultural); APD meets APT; theories of living and dead thinkers, significant social theory.

2 Feb. 4 Defining Interdisciplinary and Intersectional Concepts: Definition of APD methods (historical institutionalism, regimes, epistemic communities); APD meets APT; APT themes, including settler political theory, West/Imperialism, Migration/Immigration

+Reading:
   Stephen Skowronek & Karen Orren, The Search for American Political Development (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004) chps. 1-2; Rogers M. Smith, “Ideas and the Spirals of Politics: The Place of

++Recommended:


3.Feb. 11 Settler Political Thought: Land, Dispossession, Revolution, and Empire
+Reading:


++Recommended:


4 Feb. 18 Constituting the Republic
+Reading:


++Recommended:

5. Feb. 25 Settlers: Labor(ing)

+Reading:


6. March 3 Democracy in Theory and Practice

+Reading:

++Recommended:

7. March 10 Settlers: Migrating and Warring
+Reading:

++Recommended:

8. March 17 Racial Orders, Mobility, and (Second) Civil War/Revolution/Reconstruction
+Reading:

9. March 24 Manifest Domesticity & Imperialism
+Reading:

++Recommended:

10. March 31 Regressive Progressives
+Reading:

++Recommended:

11. April 7 New Deal
+Reading:
++Recommended


→Spring Recess Wed. April 8-Thurs. 16

12. April 21 Civil Rights
Readings:


++Recommended


13. April 28 Rise of the Right
Reading:


++Recommended


14. +May 5 Trump: A Departure?
Reading: Students brainstorm readings