

Syllabus – Linfield College

Political Science 380 – Topics: African American Political Thought – Spring 2016



Instructor: Nick Buccola - **Class Meeting Time/Place:** Tues./Thurs. 10:05 to 11:45am - Walker 201

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Office Hours: Monday, Noon to 3pm and By Appointment

Course Description

In this course we will explore African American Political Thought. This is not a “survey” course. Instead, we will read a “selection” of African American thinkers from the era of American slavery to the era of #BlackLivesMatter. Our focus will be on thought from the late nineteenth century to the present, but we will begin with a brief look at the political thought of Frederick Douglass. My hope is that the individuals we have the opportunity to read this semester will inspire you to read more broadly and deeply in this subject in the future. We will approach our subject with attention to both “the particular” and “the universal.” What is it about the *particular* reflections of African Americans that can help us make sense of the *universal* questions that are at the heart of political theory? In other words, what can the lives and writings of the authors we confront in this class teach us about human nature, the nature of oppression, the possibilities for liberation, and so on. Through a careful reading of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Ida B. Wells, W.E.B. DuBois, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, several members of the Black Panther Party, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Teju Cole, Glenn Loury, Claudia Rankine, and Eddie Glaude my hope is that we will achieve greater wisdom about ultimate questions in politics.

Course Objectives (LC Designation: UQ. If you would like to petition for a US designation, let me know)

In this course, students will:

- develop an understanding of the central problems of African American political thought.
- develop the ability to appreciate the commonalities and tensions between competing conceptions of essentially contested ideas (such as liberty, equality, community, democracy, and virtue) in African American political thought.
- develop the ability to think critically about the history of inequality in the United States, the ideas that have been used to perpetuate it, and the ideas that have been used to combat it.
- develop the ability to think, discuss, and write with clarity and coherence about the central problems of African American political thought.

NOTE: In order to earn a UQ for this course, you must submit relevant exemplars of your work to Taskstream by the last day of finals week, as discussed in the Linfield College Course Catalog.

Required Texts

W.E.B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk (Norton Critical Editions Series) / ISBN: 9780393973938 (please get this particular edition of the book because it has material that is not included in others)

Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950's & 60's: a Brief History with Documents (Bedford/St. Martin's) / ISBN: 9780312395056

Philip S. Foner (Editor), Black Panthers Speak, (Haymarket Books) ISBN: 9781608463282

James Baldwin, Collected Essays (Library of America), ISBN: 9781883011529

Audre Lorde, Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches (Penguin / Random House), ISBN: 9781580911863

Glenn Loury, One By One, From the Inside Out: Essays & Reviews on Race & Responsibility (Simon & Schuster) / ISBN: 9780029194416

Claudia Rankine, Citizen (Graywolf) / ISBN: 9781555976903

Eddie Glaude, Democracy in Black (Crown) / ISBN: 9780804137416

Additional Readings will be made available on our Blackboard website.

Additional Required Reading: ALL emails from the instructor

Course Evaluation

PARTICIPATION: 10%

Attendance & In-Class Participation: Most class sessions will be have the following format:

- We will begin most class session with a “quick write” that will provide you with the opportunity to reflect on a central question from the reading of the day. At the conclusion of the quick write, you will have the opportunity to discuss what you wrote with your neighbor. These quick write essays will be handed in at the conclusion of class and used as a way to keep attendance and gauge how well you are keeping up with and comprehending the reading. These essays will not be handed back, but if you'd like to discuss them with me we can take a look during office hours.
- Introductory comments by me (about the author we are reading and/or historical context, if necessary)
- Small Group Discussion (3 to 4 students per group) of Discussion Questions (DQs) prepared by the Discussion Leader for that date (see below) & any questions prepared by me.
- Large Group Discussion of General Themes of the Reading and/or Active Learning Exercise related to reading.
- If there is time, we will sometimes conclude with a quick write as well.

Instructions for Discussion Leaders: each of you will be responsible for preparing discussion questions for two class sessions during the semester (one date prior to April 14th and one date after April 14th). When you are the discussion leader for a particular class session, here is what you need to do:

- **PREPARE:** Prepare 4 discussion questions that are excellent, provocative, and appropriate. Your questions will demonstrate excellence if they are rooted in a careful reading of the assigned texts and if they invite all of us to think more deeply about the material and to engage the material (and one another) in a meaningful way. If we are reading multiple essays / speeches for the session, try to formulate questions that will get us talking about multiple readings (in some cases, it won't be possible to address all of the readings because we will read several short pieces, but you might formulate questions that invite us to think about unifying themes and/or ideas in tension across several readings.) Your questions might be deeply rooted in the text in the sense that you invite us to revisit a particular passage and think about its meaning and/or relationship to other things we have read (if you cite a particular passage, be sure to note the page number.) Your questions might also be deeply rooted in the text by drawing on the reading as a whole to get us thinking/talking about key themes or tensions. Your questions should be provocative in the sense that they should challenge us / inspire us to think critically about the material and to engage one another in thoughtful, respectful dialogue about the material. When I say your questions should be appropriate, I mean that they should fit well with the themes of this class (see course description and objectives above). This is a class in political theory / political philosophy. As such, we are primarily concerned with the sorts of questions that tend to concern political theorists / political philosophers. These questions tend to be normative (ought or should) questions and/or questions that get us thinking about the meaning of essentially contested concepts (e.g., liberty, equality, diversity, etc.). One last note: try to frame questions that we can answer / think about in connection to the reading (as opposed to extraneous matters about historical context, public opinion at the time, etc.)
- **PRESENT:** on the days that you are discussion leader, you are responsible for presenting your questions to the class at the appropriate time (see regular class format above). If you are going to share your questions using a computer, please arrive to class early to get the questions ready to show on the projector in class. If you are going to share your questions in hard copy, please be sure to bring an adequate number of copies. The number of students enrolled is available on the Registrar website and on webadvisor. If you want to say anything to the class to preface your questions and/or show a related video clip (e.g., a clip of a Malcolm X speech on a day we are discussing Malcolm), try to limit your comments or the clip to about 5 minutes (if you think it's appropriate to play a longer clip, please let me know at least 24 hours in advance and I will let you know if I think there is adequate time).

Debates: each of you will participate in one formal debate during the semester. Details about this assignment will be distributed soon.

Your participation grade will be calculated based on your performance in all of the above. It is, therefore, vital that you read the assigned materials before class, think about the reading before class, show up at class, and participate in our discussions. Many of our readings are long and difficult. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to do the reading and to think about it before arriving at class.

Outside of Class Activities: in addition to the participation components listed above, there are four outside events during the semester that you are required to attend (see details below). Failure to attend these required events will adversely impact your participation grade. In addition, there will be several other opportunities to attend events outside of class (Pizza & Politics events, lectures by visiting scholars,

etc.) that can boost your participation grade in the class. If you attend these “extra credit events,” please post a 1-page response to the event on the Blackboard “Discussions” thread labeled “Extra Credit” events.

ESSAYS: Three 6-8 page essays @ 30% Each = 90%

You will write three 6-8 page argumentative essays (roughly one per month during the semester). Details about these assignments will be distributed soon.

NOTE: if you are enrolled in the “Proseminar” for this class (POLS 498), please contact me by the end of Week 2 to arrange a meeting about the requirements.

Notes Regarding Evaluation

Paging Emily Post – A Few Words on Manners: I wouldn’t say it, but past experience tells me I must. Please behave. Arrive to class on time, pay attention, and be respectful of one another. “Facebooking,” “texting” and other such things are best done in the comfort of one’s dorm room. **Leave your laptops, iPads, etc. at home.** Research indicates that the presence of electronics in the classroom detracts from your learning and the focus of those around you. I will try to give you a short break half way through class so we can minimize the disruptions of people getting up, leaving and coming back in the middle of class. Inappropriate behavior in class will result in a low participation grade.

Linfield Policy on Student Behavior: Every faculty member and student has the right to conditions favorable to teaching and learning both in and out of the classroom. To foster and maintain such conditions, students have the responsibility to conduct themselves individually and in groups in a manner that promotes an atmosphere conducive to teaching, studying, and learning. Students are expected to uphold academic and personal integrity, to respect the rights of others, to refrain from disruptive, threatening, intimidating, or harassing behavior, or behavior that is harmful to themselves, other persons, or property. Every faculty member has the right and responsibility to foster an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

A Culture of Mutual Respect: in this class, we will strive to live up to Linfield College’s mission of honoring human rights and academic freedom, celebrating diverse cultures, fostering a climate of mutual respect, and promoting an inclusive environment that affirms the value of all persons. Over the course of the semester, you may read ideas that you find to be objectionable and you may find yourself to be in disagreement with others in our classroom. As we navigate these readings and engage with one another, let us always keep this mission in mind.

Course Policy on Cell Phones: due to an outbreak of in-class texting, I am instilling a draconian policy on cell phones in class. If I see you using your cell phone in class (please note I see everything & you won’t get away with texting under the desk – why in the world would you spend so much time staring at your shoes?) you will receive an e-mail from me with the subject “Your Penance for Violating Universal Standards of Taste & Decency.” In the body of the e-mail, you will receive an assignment to write a 5 page essay on why using your cell phone in class is an affront to universal standards of taste & decency. Your failure to turn in this essay by the next class meeting will result in an automatic deduction of 5% from your participation grade. A second offense will result in an automatic deduction of 5% from your participation grade. If you have a special reason for staring at your cell phone during class time (e.g., you are waiting to hear news about the success

of an operation on a close relative), please alert me before the start of class so we can discuss the merits of your case.

A Word on Grading: grades in the “A range” are earned for work that demonstrates a mastery of course material, grades in the “B range” are earned for work that demonstrates a good understanding of course material, grades in the “C range” are earned for work that demonstrates a basic understanding of course material, and grades in the “D & F range” for work that demonstrates you have an inadequate understanding of course material. My hope is that each of you will achieve excellence in this class. Also, please be patient when waiting for assignments to be returned. I put a lot of time and energy into grading in order to be sure everyone is treated fairly.

Late Papers will be marked down 1/3 of a grade per day late (One day = B to B -). Extensions will only be granted in extraordinary circumstances.

No Cheating: You are expected to live up to the standards of **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY** that govern Linfield College. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Cheaters will be reported to the Dean.

Help Me Help You: Please feel free to seek **assistance** and feedback on the course materials from me, your classmates, and other college resources (the Writing Center).

Note Regarding Disabilities: Students with disabilities are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you are a student with a disability and feel you may require academic accommodations please contact Learning Support Services (LSS), as early as possible to request accommodation for your disability. The timeliness of your request will allow LSS to promptly arrange the details of your support. LSS is located in Melrose Hall 020 ([503-883-2562](tel:503-883-2562)). We also encourage students to communicate with faculty about their accommodations.

Semester Schedule

How to Read the Semester Schedule: the reading listed should be completed *prior to* your arrival in class. You should read the Douglass material, for example, prior to arrival in class on Thursday, February 11. Please note the occasional “special screening requirements” (films to watch) & special events.

Week 1: Introduction / The Political Thought of Frederick Douglass

Tuesday, Feb. 9: Introduction to the class / Analysis of FD’s Fourth of July Speech

In-Class Reading / Screening: Frederick Douglass, What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?

Thursday, Feb. 11: Autobiography as Political Theory – the Case of Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass, Selections from *My Bondage and My Freedom*, on BLACKBOARD

Frederick Douglass, “Letter to My Master,” on BLACKBOARD

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 2: The Washington-Wells-DuBois Debate

Tuesday, February 16: The Political Thought of Booker T. Washington

Booker T. Washington, "The Atlanta Exposition Address," in *Souls of Black Folk*

Booker T. Washington, "Plan to Achieve Negro Citizenship," on BLACKBOARD

Booker T. Washington, "The Mistakes & the Future of Negro Education," on BLACKBOARD

Discussion Leader: _____

Thursday, February 18: Ida B. Wells & W.E.B. DuBois

Ida B. Wells, "Booker T. Washington & His Critics," on BLACKBOARD

W.E.B. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk*, Chapters 1, 2, 3

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 3: From DuBois to the Civil Rights Movement

Special Viewing Requirement: sometime this week before our February 25 meeting, you are required to view Volume 2 of *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Movement* (on reserve for our class at the Library. You may also be able to find it online through Amazon, Netflix, etc.) You are encouraged to plan "group" screenings with one another.

Tuesday, February 23: The Souls of Black Folk (Continued) / Debate #1

W.E.B. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk*, Chapters 4, 5, 6, 8

Discussion Leader: _____

Debate #1 (imagine the debate was occurring in 1905): Resolved: Booker T. Washington apologizes for injustice, does not rightly value the privilege and duty of voting, belittles the emasculating effects of caste distinctions, and opposes the higher training and ambition of our brighter minds. (Debate Teams: to be announced very soon!)

Thursday, February 25: Martin & Malcolm

Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, & the Struggle for Civil Rights, Chapters, 1, 2, & 3 (pg. 31-101)

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 4: Martin & Malcolm / The Black Panthers

Special Viewing Requirement: before our March 3 meeting, you are required to view Volume 4 of *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Movement* (on reserve for our class at the Library. You

may also be able to find it online through Amazon, Netflix, etc.) You are encouraged to plan “group” screenings with one another.

Tuesday, March 1: *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, & the Struggle for Civil Rights*, Chapters, 4, 5, & 6 (pg. 102-179)

Discussion Leader: _____

Thursday, March 3: SPECIAL SCHEDULE – CLAYBORNE CARSON VISIT!

READING: Excerpt from Clayborne Carson, *Martin’s Dream* on BLACKBOARD

Instead of meeting at our usual time, we will have a slightly different schedule today. See below.

11:45am – 12:45pm: Riley 201 – Pizza & Politics with Clayborne Carson (Stanford University) – ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

7:30pm in the Nicholson Library: Lecture by Clayborne Carson - ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

PAPER #1 is Due via email to nbuccol@linfield.edu by 11:59pm on Friday, March 4th. Please send it as a Word attachment AND with the text pasted within the body of the email.

Week 5: The Black Panther Party

Special Viewing Requirement: sometime this week before our March 10 meeting, you are required to view Volume 5 of *Eyes on the Prize: America’s Civil Rights Movement* (on reserve for our class at the Library. You may also be able to find it online through Amazon, Netflix, etc.) You are encouraged to plan “group” screenings with one another.

Tuesday, March 8: The Black Panthers Speak

The Black Panthers Speak, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Discussion Leader: _____

Thursday, March 10: SPECIAL SCHEDULE – Waldo Martin VISIT!

Reading: Chapters 8, 9 and 11

Instead of meeting at our usual time, we will have a slightly different schedule today. See below.

11:45am – 12:45pm: Riley 201 – Pizza & Politics with Waldo Martin (U.C. Berkeley) – ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

7:30pm in the Nicholson Library: Lecture by Waldo Martin - ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

Week 6: The Political Thought of James Baldwin

Tuesday, March 15: Debate #2 / Autobiography as Political Theory

James Baldwin, "Autobiographical Notes," page 5-10 in *Collected Essays*

James Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son," page 63-84 in *Collected Essays*

Debate #2 – Debate #2 (imagine the debate was occurring in 1967) - Resolved: Martin Luther King is not sufficiently radical. (Debate Teams: to be announced very soon!)

Discussion Leader: _____

Thursday, March 17: James Baldwin

James Baldwin, "Fifth Avenue, Uptown: A Letter from Harlem," page 170-179 in *Collected Essays*

James Baldwin, "Faulkner and Desegregation," page 209-214 in *Collected Essays*

James Baldwin, "In Search of a Majority," page 215-221 in *Collected Essays*

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 6- Spring Break: March 21st – March 25th

Week 7: The Political Thought of James Baldwin

Tuesday, March 29: James Baldwin

James Baldwin, "My Dungeon Shook" & "Down at the Cross," page 291-347 in *Collected Essays*

Discussion Leader: _____

Thursday, March 31: The Political Thought of James Baldwin

James Baldwin, "The Creative Process," page 669-672 in *Collected Essays*

James Baldwin, "A Talk to Teachers," page 678-686 in *Collected Essays*

James Baldwin, "Nothing Personal," page 692-706 in *Collected Essays*

James Baldwin, "The White Man's Guilt," page 722-727 in *Collected Essays*

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 9: Writing Week

Tuesday, April 5: Paper #2 Workshop

Please bring 4 copies of an outline for Paper #2. Your outline should include your thesis, your supporting arguments (with appropriate textual references), your counter-arguments (with appropriate textual references), and some indication of how the paper will be structured.

Thursday, April 7: Paper #2 Presentations

Each of you will give a 5-minute oral presentation of your Paper #2.

PAPER #2 is Due via email to nbuccol@linfield.edu by 11:59pm on Saturday, April 9th. Please send it as a Word attachment AND with the text pasted within the body of the email.

Week 10: The Political Thought of Teju Cole

Tuesday, April 12: Teju Cole

James Baldwin, "Stranger in the Village," page 117-129 in *Collected Essays*

Teju Cole, "Black Body: Rereading James Baldwin's Stranger in the Village," on Blackboard

Discussion Leader: _____

DISCUSSION LEADING – ROUND 1 Above this Line

DISCUSSION LEADING – ROUND 2 Below this Line

Thursday, April 14: Teju Cole

Teju Cole, "White Savior Industrial Complex," on Blackboard

Teju Cole, "Unmournable Bodies," on Blackboard

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 11: Teju Cole Event / The Political Thought of Audre Lorde

SPECIAL EVENT - MONDAY, April 18: TEJU COLE: the author Teju Cole will be on campus to deliver a lecture at 7:00pm in ICE Auditorium. Your attendance is REQUIRED.

Tuesday, April 19: The Political Thought of Audre Lorde

Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, Page 13-80

Discussion Leader: _____

Thursday, April 21: The Political Thought of Audre Lorde

Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, Page 81-175

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 12: The Political Thought of Glenn Loury

Tuesday, April 26: The Political Thought of Glenn Loury

Glenn Loury, *One By One, From the Inside Out*, Selections listed below

“Prologue: Free at Last? A Personal Perspective on Race and Identity in America,” page 1-10

“Black Dignity and the Common Good,” page 13-31

“The Moral Quandary of the Black Community,” page 33-49

“A New American Dilemma,” page 51-61

“Two Paths to Black Progress,” page 63-82

Discussion Leaders: _____(1st 2 Essays) _____(Last 3 Essays)

Wednesday, April 27th: Faculty Lecture by Me: on Wednesday, April 27th, I will be presenting a faculty lecture on my James Baldwin book. It’s at 7:00pm in the Austin Reading Room of the Nicholson Library. Since it’s related to our class and it’s awkward to speak to an empty room, your attendance is REQUIRED.

Thursday, April 28: The Political Thought of Glenn Loury

Glenn Loury, *One By One, From the Inside Out*, Selections listed below

“Economic Discrimination: Getting to the Core of the Problem,” page 93-132

“Senate Testimony on the Civil Rights Act of 1990,” page 123-131

“Self-Censorship in Public Discourse,” page 145-182

“Second Thoughts and First Principles,” page 192-203

“Demanding More of Blacks Than Whites: The Content of Our Character,” page 245-251

Discussion Leaders: _____(1st 2 Essays) _____(Last 3 Essays)

Week 13: The Political Thought of Claudia Rankine

Tuesday, May 3: Claudia Rankine, Citizen

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*, page 1-79

Discussion Leader: _____

Thursday, May 5: Claudia Rankine’s Citizen

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*, page 81-161

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 14: The Political Thought of Eddie Glaude

Tuesday, May 10: Eddie Glaude, Democracy in Black

Eddie Glaude, Democracy in Black, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Discussion Leaders: _____(Ch.1, 2, 3) _____(Ch. 4, 5)

Thursday, May 12: Eddie Glaude, Democracy in Black, Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, Conclusion

Debate #3 - Resolved: race still enslaves the American soul (debate teams are encouraged to draw on the ideas explored since spring break). (Debate Teams: to be announced very soon!)

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 15: Paper Presentations

Tuesday, May 17: Paper #3 Presentations (you will present your papers & field questions from the class)

Thursday, May 19: Paper #3 Presentations (you will present your papers & field questions)

PAPER #3 is Due via email to nbuccol@linfield.edu by 11:59pm on Monday, May 23rd. Please send it as a Word attachment AND with the text pasted within the body of the email.

Debate #1

Affirmative Team: _____

Negative Team: _____

Debate #2

Affirmative Team: _____

Negative Team: _____

Debate #3

Affirmative Team: _____

Negative Team: _____