Syllabus – Linfield College Political Science 380 – Topics in Political Theory: Douglass & Baldwin Spring 2018



Instructor: Nick Buccola - Class Meetings: Monday & Wednesday, 11:00am to 12:40pm, HHPA 213

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:45-11:45am; 1:00-3:00pm and By Appointment (Office Hours Start Week of 2/12)

Course Description: In this course, we will engage in sustained reflection on the ideas of Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) and James Baldwin (1924-1987). Douglass was born into slavery in 1818. Soon after he escaped in 1838, he emerged as one of the country's leading abolitionist writers and orators. For the next six decades, Douglass was one of the most prominent figures in American political and intellectual life. In addition to his work fighting slavery, Douglass was an advocate for the rights of women, immigrants, and working people. James Baldwin was born in Harlem in 1924. In his early twenties, he left the United States for Paris and began several decades of what he called "Transatlantic commuting." It did not take long for Baldwin to make his mark on the international literary scene as a critic, essayist, novelist, and playwright. By the mid-1960s, he was – along with Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X – one of the most well-known figures associated with the Civil Rights Movement and he had become one of the most famous writers in the world. Malcolm aptly called Baldwin "the poet," or leading literary voice, of the "civil rights revolution."

Rather than engaging this material chronologically (Douglass for first half of the semester, then Baldwin for the second half of the semester), we will go back and forth between reading Douglass and Baldwin. The goal of this approach is to bring about opportunities for the fruitful juxtaposition of each man's ideas. I have tried to arrange the readings in a way that will allow us to consider common themes as we work through the voluminous writings of Douglass and Baldwin. As you will see below, the semester is broken into three major parts: Autobiography as Political Theory; Douglass and Baldwin as Radical Reformers; and Douglass and Baldwin on Love, Justice, and Virtue. Each part of the class will culminate in a major writing project based on the material covered.

Over the course of the semester, we will be reading in many genres – autobiography, fiction, essay, oratory, etc. – from our many disciplinary backgrounds. Broadly speaking, this is a class in "political philosophy" or "political theory," which basically means we are interested in "thinking in slow motion" (as one scholar defines philosophy) about matters that are "political" (matters, that is, about how we live together, how exercise power over each other, etc.) or intimately related to matters that are "political." As you will see, I conceive of both "philosophy" and "political" quite broadly.

Even though we are devoting the entire semester to these two figures, I feel like we do not have enough time to read so much that is worth reading. The assigned texts contain many other worthwhile pieces that I hope you will have the opportunity to read during and after the semester.

A Note on the Format of the Class: this class will be run as an anti-authoritarian, participatory seminar. Besides providing occasional thoughts to help put the readings into historical context, I do not plan to "talk at" you very much. Instead, almost all of our sessions will be run using the "Goodrich Method." Discussion leaders will throw out a few questions for us to consider at various junctures in the class and we will engage in a free-wheeling discussion of those questions, other questions raised, statements made about the reading, etc. My major role will be to keep two queues (one for short comments on the topic being discussed; the other for longer comments and/or new questions or statements someone wants to put on the table). I have used the Goodrich Method with

undergraduates many times before and it has always been a great success. It only works well, though, if everyone shows up prepared to engage in a serious exchange of ideas about the reading. When everyone shows up prepared and contributes, it is absolutely magical!

Course Objectives (Linfield Curriculum Designation: UQ)

In this course, students will:

- be introduced to the ultimate questions posed by great political thinkers.
- ask questions about the fundamental beliefs and competing truth claims in the works of great political thinkers.
- write and speak with clarity and coherence about ultimate questions in politics.
- learn to engage in meaningful dialogue about ultimate questions in politics.

Required Texts for the Class

The Portable Frederick Douglass (PD)

The Essential Douglass (ED)

Collected Essays of James Baldwin (CE)

Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings of James Baldwin (COR)

Early Novels of James Baldwin (EN)

Additional Readings / Videos: on occasion, I will ask you to watch a film or clip online or via DVD made available on reserve at the Circulation Desk of the Nicholson Library. In addition, I may occasionally share pieces for you to read via email or blackboard.

Course Evaluation

PARTICIPATION: 10%

It is essential that you <u>attend class</u> and that you are <u>prepared</u> to discuss the readings. This is a reading intensive class. Many of the readings are long and difficult. Give yourself plenty of time to complete, think about, and prepare to discuss the readings prior to class. <u>Participation</u> is often a deciding factor for borderline grades.

Your participation grade will be calculated based on the following components:

- <u>Discussion Leading</u>: each of you will be responsible for leading discussion on a reading (or set of readings) during <u>four different class sessions</u>. You will sign up for your responsibilities on the first day of class. When you are a discussion leader for a particular reading (or set of readings), you should prepare <u>three or four</u> interesting, thoughtful, and provocative questions that you think will spark discussion in class. The Goodrich Method works as follows: you will "put your questions on the table" at the start of the time allotted to your reading and the seminar participants will take up your questions and/or ask other questions. As Discussion Leader, you will be able to ask follow-ups and/or intervene to clarify what you have been asked. I will play the role of facilitator (keeping the queues and intervening with questions of clarification, comments).
- Reading Quizzes / Quick Writes: there may be occasional reading quizzes / quick writes to promote reading accountability. Your performance on these in-class writing assignments will be factored into your grade for the course.
- Active and thoughtful participation in class activities and discussions. As noted above, the Goodrich Method is deeply anti-authoritarian and highly participatory. Its success depends on each of you showing up at class prepared to contribute. Read carefully, make good notes in the margins of the readings and/or in your notebook, and share your wisdom with rest of us.
- Outside of Class Activities: there will be several opportunities to attend events outside of class (Pizza & Politics events, lectures by visiting scholars, etc.) that can boost your participation grade in the class. A couple of these activities are required, but some will be voluntary. For voluntary extra credit events, please hand in a 1-page response essay (reflecting on the event and, if possible, linking its themes to our class) within one week of the event. In order to get credit, your email should be sent with a subject that reads: Extra Credit POLS 380.

- A Guide to Participation Grades: Here is a breakdown, in general terms, of likely participation grades:
 - o <u>10 out of 10:</u> rarely if ever misses class; always exceptionally well-prepared for class; one of the top contributor to class discussion in thoughtful and helpful ways; contributes to the seminar in a way that seems vital to its energy and success.
 - o <u>9 out of 10</u>: rarely if ever misses class; almost always prepared for class; regular contributor to class discussion in thoughtful and helpful ways; contributes to the seminar on a regular basis a fly on the wall would notice this student's presence and participation.
 - o <u>8 out of 10</u>: rarely if ever misses class; usually well-prepared for class; contributes occasionally to class discussion, though a bit unevenly (in terms of quantity and quality)
 - o <u>7 out of 10 and Lower</u>: any student that falls short of what is described in 8 out of 10 can expect to receive 7 or fewer participation points out of 10 when final grades are due.

ESSAYS: Three 6-8 page essays @ 30% Each = 90%: You will write three 6-8 page essays. Each of these essays will be written in a multi-stage process during which you will: generate your topic, generate your thesis, "workshop" your essay with a small group of your classmates and your instructor, and present your paper to your classmates. (PROSEMINAR STUDENTS SHOULD MEET WITH ME DURING WEEK 2 TO DISCUSS THEIR REQUIREMENTS.)

Notes Regarding Evaluation

<u>Paging Emily Post – A Few Words on Manners</u>: 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.

<u>Linfield Policy on Student Behavior</u>: 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.

<u>A Culture of Mutual Respect</u>: 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.

<u>A Word on Grading</u>: grades in the "A range" are earned for work that demonstrates a <u>mastery</u> of course material, grades in the "B range" are earned for work that demonstrates a <u>good understanding</u> of course material, grades in the "C range" are earned for work that demonstrates a <u>basic understanding</u> of course material, and grades in the "D & F range" for work that demonstrates you have an <u>inadequate understanding</u> of course material. My hope is that each of you will achieve excellence in this class. Also, please be <u>patient</u> 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.

<u>Late Papers</u> will be marked down 1/3 of a grade per day late (One day = B to B -).

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.

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). We also encourage students to communicate with faculty about their accommodations.

Course Schedule

<u>Key to Abbreviations</u>: PD = Portable Douglass / ED = Essential Douglass / CE = Collected Essays of James Baldwin / COR= Cross of Redemption (Uncollected Essays of Baldwin) / EN = Early Novels of James Baldwin

Key to Discussion Leading Responsibilities: discussion leader is responsible for preparing discussion questions for the reading or readings above the sign-up line. I provided an example below under February 5th. If those sign-ups were real, Frederick would be responsible for discussion questions for Douglass's *Narrative*, p. 15-19 and Jimmy would be responsible for discussion questions for Baldwin's "Autobiographical Notes."

Part I. Autobiography as Political Theory

Monday, February 5th: Introduction to the Course / Getting to Know Douglass & Baldwin

In-Class Readings: Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Chapter 1, PD, p. 15-19

Discussion Leader: Frederick

James Baldwin, "Autobiographical Notes," CE, p. 5-9

Discussion Leader: Jimmy

<u>Wednesday, Fe</u>	ebruary 7 ^m : '	"From This	<u>Little Bit of</u>	Slave Experience	" – Getting to	Know Douglass
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Monday, February 12th: Douglass's Autobiography as Political Philosophy

Please Wa	atch: <i>Free</i>	derick L)ouglass:	When the	Lion I	V rote	History,	available	e on re	eserve a	at Nicl	holson	Library	Circ.	Desk
Frederick	Douglas	ss, My	Bondage i	and My F	reedom	, page	: 101-13	39, PD							
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Frederick Douglass, "Letter to Henry C. Wright," p. 21-26, ED
Frederick Douglass, "Letter to My Old Master," p. 27-35, ED
Discussion Leader:
Wednesday, February 14th: James Baldwin's Autobiography as Political Philosophy
Please Watch: James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket, available on reserve for this class at Library
James Baldwin, "Down at the Cross," CE, p. 296-312
Discussion Leader:
James Baldwin, "Autobiographical Notes," CE, p. 5-9
James Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son," CE, p. 63-84
Discussion Leader:
James Baldwin, "The Price of the Ticket," CE, p. 830-842
Discussion Leader:
Monday, February 19th: James Baldwin's Semi-Autobiography as Political Philosophy
James Baldwin, Go Tell It On the Mountain, Part I, EN, p. 7-58
Discussion Leader:
James Baldwin, Go Tell It On the Mountain, Part II, EN, p. 61-107
Discussion Leader:
Wednesday, February 21st: James Baldwin's Semi-Autobiography as Political Philosophy
James Baldwin, Go Tell It On the Mountain, Part II (continued), EN, p. 107-183
Discussion Leader:
James Baldwin, Go Tell It On the Mountain, Part III, EN, p. 187-215
Discussion Leader:
Thursday, February 22 nd : Jane Elliott Event
You are required to attend the Jane Elliott event tonight. Details to be announced. Please clear this evening on your
calendar.
Waiting Wools for Port Lof Class
Writing Week for Part I of Class
Monday, February 26th: Peer Review Workshop
Instructions to be distributed
Wednesday, February 28th: Essay #1 Presentations
Instructions to be distributed
Part II. Douglass & Baldwin as Witnesses & Radical Reformers
Monday, March 5th: Fundamentals of Douglass's Political Morality
Frederick Douglass, "Prejudice against Color," PD, p. 421-425
Frederick Douglass, "The Word 'White'," PD, p. 427-429
Discussion Leader:
Discussion Leader: Frederick Douglass, "Is Civil Government Right?" ED, p. 45-49
Discussion Leader:
Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" p. 50-71
Discussion Leader:
Discussion Leader.

Wednesday, March 7th: Douglass on the Law & Politics of Slavery & Abolition Frederick Douglass, "The Constitution and Slavery," ED, p. 37-42 Frederick Douglass, "Change of Opinion Announced," ED, p. 43-44

Frederick Douglass, "The Kansas-Nebraska Bill," ED, p. 93-107
Discussion Leader:
Frederick Douglass, "The Dred Scott Decision," ED, p. 119-132
Frederick Douglass, "The Significance of Emancipation in the West Indies," PD, p. 269-291
Discussion Leader:
Monday, March 12th: Fundamentals of Baldwin's Political Morality
James Baldwin, "Stranger in the Village," CE, p. 117-129
James Baldwin, "Faulkner and Desegregation," CE, p. 209-214
Discussion Leader:
James Baldwin, "The Discovery of What it Means to be an American," CE, p. 137-142
James Baldwin, "In Search of a Majority," CE, p. 215-221
Discussion Leader:
Wednesday, March 14th: Baldwin's Letters from Harlem & the South
James Baldwin, "The Harlem Ghetto," CE, p. 42-51
James Baldwin, "Fifth Avenue, Uptown: A Letter from Harlem," CE, p. 170-179
James Baldwin, "East River, Downtown: Postscript to a Letter from Harlem," CE, p. 180-186
Discussion Leader:
James Baldwin, "A Fly in Buttermilk," CE, p. 187-196
James Baldwin, "Nobody Knows My Name: A Letter from the South," CE, p. 197-208
Discussion Leader:
Monday, March 19th: Frederick Douglass on Righteous Violence
The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, online
Frederick Douglass, "The Fugitive Slave Law," ED, p. 72-75
Frederick Douglass, "Is It Right and Wise to Kill a Kidnapper?" ED, p. 76-79
Discussion Leader:
Frederick Douglass, "Capt. John Brown Not Insane," PD, p. 445-447
Frederick Douglass, "John Brown," ED, p. 258-275
Discussion Leader:
Frederick Douglass, "Letter to James Redpath," ED, p. 133-134
Frederick Douglass, "The Prospect in the Future," ED, p. 135-140
Discussion Leader:
Wednesday, March 21st: Frederick Douglass on Politics, Politicians, & Statesmanship
Frederick Douglass, "What is My Duty as an Anti-Slavery Voter?" ED, p. 108-112
Frederick Douglass, "Fremont and Dayton," ED, p. 113-118
Discussion Leader: Frederick Douglass, "The Chicago Nominations," PD, p. 452-455
Frederick Douglass, "The New President," ED, p. 146-147
Frederick Douglass, "The Inaugural Address," ED, 148-156
Discussion Leader: Frederick Douglass, "Oration of Frederick Douglassin Memory of Abraham Lincoln," ED, p. 239-248
Discussion Leader:
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March 26th – March 30th: Spring Break!

Writing Week for Part II of the Class

Monday, April 2nd: Peer Review Workshop Instructions to be distributed

Wednesday, April 4th: Essay #2 Presentations

Instructions to be distributed

Part III. Douglass & Baldwin on Love, Justice, & Virtue

Friday, April 27th: Why Douglass Matters - A Bicentennial Symposium

Today, Linfield will be hosting one of the nation's most impressive events marking the bicentennial of Frederick Douglass's birth. We will be joined by five major Douglass scholars and <u>all of you</u> will have roles to play in the events of the day. The event might be covered by C-SPAN. In addition to your official role in one of the lectures, you are expected to attend <u>at least two of the other lectures</u> as a member of the audience (I hope you attend all

will let you know details ASAP. Here is the tentative schedule for the event. Each of you will be playing a role (Chair / Q&A Moderator) 9-10:15am: Leigh Fought Lecture & Q&A (Student Chair: ______ / Student Moderator:_____) 10:30-11:45am: Ibram Kendi Lecture & Q&A (Student Chair: / Student Moderator:) 12:00pm-1:30pm: David Blight Lecture & Q&A (Lunch avail.) (Chair: ______ / Moderator: 1:45-3:00pm: Melvin Rogers Lecture & Q&A (Student Chair: ______ / Student Moderator:_____) 3:15-4:30pm: Diana Schaub Lecture & Q&A (Student Chair: / Student Moderator:) Monday, April 30th: James Baldwin Speaks In-Class Screening of I Am Not Your Negro (academy award-nominated film about Baldwin) – thanks to the hard work and time you dedicated to this class last week, we will take a little break from reading for today!) Wednesday, May 2nd: The Baldwin-Buckley Debate Watch the Baldwin-Buckley Cambridge Debate on YouTube James Baldwin, "The American Dream and the American Negro," in CE, p. 714-719 Discussion Leader: James Baldwin, "The White Man's Guilt," in $\overline{\text{CE}}$, p. 722-727 Discussion Leader: Monday, May 7th: James Baldwin on a Life Well-Lived James Baldwin, "Mass Culture and the Creative Artist," COR, p. 3-7 James Baldwin, "The Creative Process," CE, p. 669-672 James Baldwin, "The Artist's Struggle for Integrity," COR, p. 50-58 Discussion Leader: James Baldwin, "The New Lost Generation," CE, p. 659-668 James Baldwin, "A Talk to Teachers," CE, p. 678-686 Discussion Leader: Wednesday, May 9th: Douglass & Baldwin on the Nation's Problems & Possible Solutions Frederick Douglass, "Extract from a Speech on West India Emancipation," ED, p. 249-257 Discussion Leader: Frederick Douglass, "The Nation's Problem," ED, p. 314-331 Discussion Leader: James Baldwin, "The White Problem," in COR, p. 88-97 James Baldwin, "White Racism or World Community," in CE, p. 749-756 James Baldwin, "To Crush a Serpent," COR, p. 195-204 Discussion Leader: Writing Week for Part III of the Class

day!!!). If you need me to write a note to other instructors to ask for an excused absence please let me know. Below is the tentative schedule of events. In addition, there may be a reception for the scholars on Thursday, April 26th. I

Monday, May 14th: Peer Review Workshop

Instructions to be distributed

Wednesday, May 16th: Essay #3 Presentations

Instructions to be distributed