

Black Political Thought



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POLSCI 489/POLSCI 688/PHIL 441

Days/Times

Undergraduate and Graduate section: Tuesday, 2-5pm; Location: 2407 MH
Graduate section: Tuesday, 9-10am; Location: 1164 AH

Office Hours

Profes will hold joint office hours Tuesday, 10-12; Location: 2303 MH

Course Overview

Persons at the bottom of the well, at the other end of the lash/barrel of the gun, who have been subject to diverse forms of domination, exploitation, and human rights abuses have much to teach us about dignity and democracy, peace and conflict, struggle and solidarity. They also have insights to share about the gap between the Enlightenment ideals of freedom, equality, and fraternity and the lived experiences of the colonized, enslaved, and segregated, and on how to pursue radical social and political transformation where injustice, discrimination, and despair remain features of everyday life.

This course will expose students to thinkers such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Claudia Jones, Martin Luther King, Jr., Imari Obadele, and Angela Davis, who provide distinct, contested, and complex diagnoses about the problems of blacks in American and throughout the African Diaspora, as well as prognoses for how they can be overcome.

The student of this course will develop a deep historical understanding of what has been articulated before but also will cultivate what constitutes “the new black agenda” for the current period.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: 10%

Undergraduates: are expected to attend sessions from 2-5

Graduates: are expected to attend sessions from 9-10 as well as 2-5

Students are required to attend and participate actively in class.

Attendance will be taken at the start of class so arrive on time.

Midterm: 30%

Topic: TBA in prompt circulated in advance.

Format: take home essay exam, **5-7** pages (double-spaced, 12 pt font, not including cover page, footnotes, references, tables or figures)

Due date: Tuesday 10/22 at 2pm. Paper must be sent by email in Word to both professors by the deadline.

Final Project: 60%

Topic: “The New Black Agenda” Prompt to be circulated in advance.

Format: essay, **10-14** pages (double-spaced, 12 pt font, not including cover page, footnotes, references, tables or figures)

Due date: Tuesday 12/10 at 2pm. Paper must be sent by email in Word to both professors by the deadline.

Course Readings

- 1) W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices From Within the Veil* (Mineola: Dover, 1999)
- 2) Marcus Garvey, *Message to the People: The Course of African Philosophy* (Dover: Majority Press, 1919).
- 3) Claudia Jones, *Beyond Containment*, ed. Carole Boyce Davies (Oxford: Ayebia Clarke Publishing Limited, 2011)
- 4) Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010)
- 5) Imari Obadele, [made available by Professors]

War in America: The Malcolm X Doctrine (Detroit: Malcolm X Society, 1968)

Foundations of the Black Nation (Detroit: House of Songhay, 1975)
- 6) Angela Davis, *The Meaning of Freedom and Other Difficult Dialogues* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2012)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at least two weeks prior to the time when the accommodation will be needed. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; <http://www.umich.edu/sswd>) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Course Schedule

First meeting/Introduction/Overview

9/3

Du Bois

9/10: Chapters I-V (pp. 1-77)

9/17: Chapters VI-X (pp. 78-162)

Garvey

9/24: Chapters 1-12 (pp. 1-107)

10/1: Chapters 13-22 (pp. 108-204)

Jones

10/8: Chapters I-IIa (pp. 1-103)

10/15 No class – Fall Break

10/22: Chapters IIb-III (pp. 104-203)

Midterm Due

King

TBA: Chapters I-III (pp. 1-108)

11/5: Chapter IV-VI (pp. 109-202)

Obadele

11/12: 1-68

11/19: 1-148

Davis

11/26: 1-104

12/3: 105-198

Final meeting

12/10

Project Due