

SYLLABUS
POL/LGST 105C Modern Political Thought

Politics

Instructor: Sandra Harvey
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Summer 2016
Session 2: T/Th 1:00-4:30

Office hours: Tuesday, 11:00-12:30 pm and by appointment

Course objectives:

This course provides an introduction to important themes in Western modern political theory. Much of this genre of knowledge is organized around the question of difference. Theorists have asked: Are we different from each other? If so, how? And how do we manage this difference? These suppositions, questions, arguments emerge and are shaped by major historical events including colonialism and the industrial revolution, the history of capitalism and slavery in the Americas, anti-colonial revolutions and post-colonial nationalism, and war and migration. In this class, students will engage in close readings of key political texts and begin to trace the way that the question of difference (religious, racial, gendered, sexual, class) is formulated and managed. We ask, “What sorts of political imaginaries, possibilities, and projects are opened up and/or foreclosed within these bodies of knowledge?”

A note on methodology: Students will be asked to engage in close readings of texts, including literature, art, manifesto, and more orthodox “political theory texts.” We will pay close attention to the ways in which the genres of speech/writing shape the possibilities of political critique.

Assignments:

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| (25%) Response Papers – | 3 Response Papers of 500-600 words each, due the day the reading is to be discussed, by 10am on eCommons. |
| (15%) Participation – | Including attendance & capacity to be engaged in discussions about the readings. |
| (25%) Midterm Paper— | Due 8/12 by 11:30pm on eCommons. |
| (35%) Final Paper— | Due 8/29 by 10:00am on eCommons. |

Class Policies:

- You must bring readings for the class to class. Failure to do so will affect your participation grade.
- You must attend every class. If you have more than one unexcused absence, you will be in danger of failing the course. Excused absences are ones for which the

- instructor gives written consent (via email). The instructor reserves the right to request a note from a health professional for medical related absences.
- Response papers, midterms, and finals more than two days late will not be accepted. No exceptions. I will not give individual extensions. For each calendar day that your assignment is late, your grade will go down by a full letter grade.
 - All written work must include proper citation and works cited page, page numbers, and your name. 12-point font. Times New Roman. Double-spaced. Top & bottom margins should be 1 inch. Side margins should be 1.25 inches. Turn in your paper as a .pdf file. No exceptions.
 - To attend office hours, please sign up in advance.

Administrative Deadlines

- Drop deadline - August 1
- Withdraw deadline – August 12

Schedule

Difference and Political Theory

This week we will begin to discuss what we mean by difference? We ask after the material and discursive formations of difference. What are the consequences of inhabiting these worlds of difference? What are the themes of *Beloved*? How does chattel slavery give form to gendered and racialized ways of being in the world? How does Morrison theorize freedom, kinship, and death? What is important for Hegel when encountering difference? How do we become subjects for Hegel and how does “the other” matter for this? What does he mean by “negation”? How does Hegel think about the relationship between the master and the slave?

- 7/26 Reading: *Beloved* (Chapters 1-9), Toni Morrison
- 7/28 Reading: *Beloved* (Finish), Toni Morrison
- 8/2 Reading: *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Excerpt on eCommons), Hegel
- 8/4 Reading: Continue Hegel

Representing Difference, Representing Ourselves

What are different politics of representation? How can we know the other for Hegel? What happens if we approach the question “how can we know the other” from a historical perspective rather than a metaphysical perspective? How do these approaches differ? What does Spivak mean by “Can the subaltern speak”? How might poetry such as *Zong!* perform the trouble with representation? For NourbeSe how does history affect our ability to know the other? For Anzaldúa, how does culture, history, politics, and geography inform our

ability to know things about ourselves and others? How might certain subjects' speaking fall on deaf ears for Anzaldúa?

- 8/9 Reading: *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak
Zong! NourbeSe
- 8/11 Reading: *Borderlands* (Chapters 3-5) Anzaldúa

Discipline and Surveillance

How did Foucault theorize “power”? How did the change between torture and disciplinary power matter? What is Foucault’s theory of the body? How might Foucault’s understanding of power and its political possibilities been different had he taken into account the torture and lynching of Angélique? In what ways does surveillance shape different ways of being in the world? How does Ellison think about surveillance, visibility, and invisibility in his novel?

- 8/16 Reading: *Discipline & Punish*, Michel Foucault (Part 1, Torture, Part III Panopticism)
- 8/18 Reading: *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Chapter 1)
Invisible Man (Prologue), Ralph Ellison

Capitalism, Socialism, Difference & Solidarity

What is Marx & Engel’s argument about the working of capital? What sort of political economic differences emerge in this argument? What does exploitation mean for Marx? How does Miller-Young theorize exploitation and work? What does desire have to do with it? Are there differences that Marx & Engels do not tend to? How do they affect the ways subjects experience capital?

- 8/23 Reading: “Economic & Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844”
-“Estranged Labor”
-“Private Property and Communism”
-“Wage Labor and Capital”
- 8/25: Reading: “Globalizing Sex Worker’s Rights” Kamala Kempadoo