

PS 4896 Honors Seminar: Political Theory and Identity
Ritter Hall, Room 107
TR 2:00-3:20
Fall 2009

Instructor: Prof. H. Fogg Davis
Office: Gladfelter 455
Phone: 215-204-6929
Email: hfd@temple.edu (preferred mode of contact)
Office Hours: W 2-4, and by appointment

The Instructor

Dr. Fogg-Davis is a political theorist whose work includes a book on transracial adoption politics (*The Ethics of Transracial Adoption*, Cornell University Press), and articles on racial discrimination in the marketing of genetic material, the feminist politics of street harassment, and the role of race in contemporary political theory. He also directs the Political Science Honors Program.

Course Objectives and Overview

What does identity have to do with politics? In this capstone seminar, we take up this question from the perspective of the scholarly debates that have shaped the discipline of political theory since the 1970s. Which theories (or models) best capture the relationship between personal and public conceptions of familiar modern identities such as race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender expression, age, and ability? How might we best portray the intersections that exist between and among such identities? As we grapple with these questions, we will also consider identities not usually discussed under the rubric of “identity politics,” such as criminality, medical status, family membership, and rebellion. Our ideas about “the political” will also come under scrutiny as we study formal political venues such as political representation, social movements, and law and public policymaking, as well as informal and emergent political realms such as film/video and Internet social networking.

This writing intensive course is divided into two halves. The first eight weeks provide a brief overview of the development and current state of identity studies within political theory discourse. In addition to textual analysis we will discuss a range of real-world examples or “case studies” that are meant to bridge the theory/practice divide. The sources of these case studies include newspaper and magazine articles, personal memoir, film, and the experiences you bring to the classroom.

The second half of the semester is dedicated to laying the groundwork for your seminar research paper. It will be necessary to work on a number of research and writing assignments, to present and explain your research at various stages, to read and critique the work of your peers, and receive feedback and incorporate it into your final draft. All of the assignments in this portion of the semester are designed to help you to further reflect on your ideas, and to continue developing the research and writing skills necessary for the successful completion of a strong research paper. We will work together to help

one another to probe ideas, shape points of interest, and draft and finalize your paper. *The Craft of Research* and *MLA Handbook* will guide us in these efforts, and it is important that you read and follow their directives carefully.

Approach to Teaching: Requirements include one 500-word critical response paper based on a course reading of your choosing, a research paper of 3,750-5,000 words (15-20 pages) on a topic of your choosing related to the course theme, a presentation (+ write-up) based on the course material, a number of quizzes, and active and consistent participation in class discussion. You will build and fine-tune your research project over the course of the semester through a series of conceptualization and writing exercises, with critical feedback from the instructor at each stage. Research beyond the course readings *is* required for the seminar research paper.

Prerequisites

All students must be majors in the Political Science Department, B.A. program. This course satisfies the capstone seminar requirement for completion of the major in Political Science.

Required Books (available at Temple University Bookstore)

Wayne C. Booth, *The Craft of Research* (third edition)

Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (most recent edition)

Course Packet of photocopied readings available for purchase on first day of class or at Replica copy shop in Center City, 35 S. 18th Street (215) 567-7107.

Additionally: further required reading may be distributed in class or posted on our Blackboard site.

General Premise

Twofold. On the one hand, the seminar satisfies the capstone requirement for majors because it brings together and refines skills and knowledge that you've developed throughout college. On the other hand, the seminar is a place for you to engage in serious, rigorous, and advanced scholarship in a way that you may not yet have had the opportunity to do. For those enrolled in the Honors Program, the seminar may also help you form the basis of a senior thesis project, although this is not required.

In this class, the onus is truly on you. I will direct and help you, but this class is about practicing research techniques, reading closely and widely, learning how best to assimilate the work of others into, and alongside, your own insights, and, perhaps most importantly, intensely working with and as a community of scholars. It is vital that you are aware of the audience of peers and get used to producing knowledge for the consumption of others.

All of our work this semester will be trained on three goals: 1) how to find your own and interesting critical questions; 2) how to master the resources that may help you explore these questions; 3) how to develop a sense of critical self-awareness.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Strict. You should neither miss a class nor be late. Each of you has a serious responsibility to the members of this seminar. Therefore, you must arrive to class on time, and be prepared and ready to work. Students are permitted a maximum of one absence during the semester without penalty. In calculating this maximum there is no difference between an “excused” and “unexcused” absence. The allowance of one absence covers any absence, including that caused by illness, job obligations, emergencies, and any other contingencies. You should not use this absence lightly, since you may need it for one or more of the above circumstances. Any additional absence, for any reason, will negatively affect your final grade. After one absence your final grade will drop an entire letter grade for each absence. For example, if your final grade is an A, but you have two absences, your final grade will be a B.

Late arrivals and early departures are disruptive and unacceptable; if you anticipate being late or having to leave early on a regular basis, please make other arrangements. If you are ten minutes late, or leave class early, it will count as an absence. A student who is chronically late to class, leaves early, or is not prepared to participate in the day’s class work will not receive attendance and participation credit. Sleeping in class will count as an absence. In the unlikely event that you arrive late to class, take a seat closest to the door in order to minimize disruption.

Please refrain from leaving and returning as it disrupts the classroom atmosphere.

Class Engagement

Active course engagement and an attentive presence are essential. A seminar is not like a lecture course. You cannot hide. You must come to class prepared to present your response to the reading assignment when asked, to engage course material thoughtfully, and to share your observations and insights with your classmates. *Please note that class engagement has nothing to do with class attendance; attendance is mandatory and cannot be used to improve your grade.*

Class Etiquette

This class is designed to encourage discussion and exchanges of ideas in conjunction with the development of critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. I expect you to treat your fellow students with respect and courtesy, listening when they speak and refraining from personal attacks in your own statements. You may disagree with your fellow students, but listen attentively when they are speaking and respond in a courteous manner. Most of us can remember how unnerving it can be to give a presentation, ask a question, or even speak up in a classroom setting. Extend to your classmates the same cordiality you would like them to extend to you.

Notes

You are advised to take notes during discussions and presentations. I expect you to pay attention in the classroom and you are responsible for remembering discussions about the

texts we encounter. Please keep in mind that the emphasis on note taking is meant to emphasize the importance of attentiveness and of assimilating information, ideas, and concepts in a thoughtful and intelligent manner. You should keep a weekly account of the course and be able to respond to points raised in previous classes.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You will have a total of four assignments. All must be completed in order for you to receive a passing final grade for this course. Here they are:

Class Presentation. One of the goals of this course is to increase your skill and independence in textual analysis, both oral and written, and in research. To accomplish this, you will lead the class discussion (either by yourself or with one or two other people, depending on class size) once during the first half of the semester. Your presentation should last approximately 10 minutes, and should combine an exposition of key points in the reading with your own critical take. After your presentation, there will be a question and answer session, of which you will be in charge. The presentation must be written up as a paper (use 250-500 words as a guide) and submitted at the end of the class meeting for which it was delivered. The point of the class presentation is to develop your ability to lead a discussion and answer criticism in active debate.

Response Paper. You will also hand in one 500-word paper during the first half of the semester. You are free to choose which text you write on, but it must be different from your class presentation text. *Response papers are due at the beginning of the class meeting for which the reading discussed is assigned.* These papers should help you to consider themes and ideas that may stimulate your research interests. You may be called upon to share your response paper with the entire class. These are to be formal analytic essays, meaning that you must state a clear defensible thesis (your critical take) in the first or second paragraph. The body of the essay should consist of evidence drawn from the reading assignment, as well as at least one counterargument. The counterargument may be drawn from the reading or from your own knowledge. The concluding paragraph should restate your thesis in different wording, and summarize your analysis.

Seminar Research Paper. The major assignment for this seminar will be a research paper of 3,750-5000 words. In this paper you will bring together your close reading skills, review of critical essays, research resources, and draft comments and critiques into a significantly revised, and polished seminar paper. In revising and expanding your paper, you should take seriously the comments and suggestions you receive on your work throughout the semester. The final draft should be a focused investigation of an idea, premise, or theory that you have explored through your own critical lens. It must have a focused, central thesis, and well-developed supportive and counter points throughout. It must also include a carefully constructed works cited list, with accurate in-text citations. *Keep a folder of all drafts and responses: you will turn this in along with your final draft on December 9th in class.*

There will also be several quizzes given at the start of class throughout the semester. Each quiz will consist of 3 short questions from the reading assignment due that day.

You are permitted to use your notes to answer these questions, but not our course texts. The purpose of the quizzes is to reward those who complete the reading assignment, and to encourage good note taking. Each quiz will be graded as follows: 3 correct answers=100; 2 correct answers=85; 1 correct answer=70; 0 correct=50; absent=0. I will drop our lowest score when calculating your final grade. Everyone is allowed one absence or bad day.

Course Grade

The breakdown for your final grade is:

Class Participation	15%
Class Presentation + its write-up	10%
Response Paper	20%
Quizzes	15%
Final Research Paper Grade	40% (includes your draft portfolio)

Paper Format

The format for all papers is MLA style. Formatting and documentation style can be found in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th Edition (a required course text). All assignments must be typed. Lines should be double-spaced. The pages should have one-inch margins all the way around. The font should be 12 point Times/Times New Roman. You must provide a cover page with the title of the paper, your name, my name, the course, and date of submission. Each page must be numbered, and numbering must start with 1. Please staple your papers and keep an extra copy of each paper in case any assignments are lost or damaged.

Written assignments improperly formatted and/or marred by extensive grammatical mistakes and typos will be returned for revision before grading.

Deadlines

No late assignments, no excuses. An absence from class does not excuse a late paper. Your syllabus clearly indicates due dates so plan accordingly. *Late assignments will drop a letter grade per day.*

Disability Disclosure Statement

This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Please contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for your coursework and participation.

Statement on Academic Freedom

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The university has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_non=03.70.02

Plagiarism

This instructor and the University take plagiarism extremely seriously. Personal pride should be sufficient deterrent, but there are also severe academic penalties for academic dishonesty. Please consult the University Bulletin concerning Temple's policy on plagiarism. Any kind of plagiarism for this class will result in failure of the course. The infraction will also be reported to university authorities.

Finally

Please remember that I hold everyone accountable to these course policies. They are here to provide a framework for the class – without which we would not get much accomplished. This seminar should be a fun time, as well as a challenging period of intellectual growth, and I look forward to working with you.

Course Schedule

Reading assignments are to be completed for the day listed. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the reading assignment.

Week 1	September 1:	Introduction, no reading assignment
	September 3:	Taylor, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition"
Week 2	September 8:	Film: "We Shall Remain: Wounded Knee"
	September 10:	Phillips, <i>Multiculturalism without Culture</i>
Week 3	September 15:	Young, "Representation and Social Perspective"
	September 17:	Richards, <i>Identity and the Case for Gay Rights</i>
Week 4	September 22:	Film: The Mormons
	September 24:	Song, <i>Justice, Gender, and the Politics of Multiculturalism</i>
Week 5	September 29:	Young, "On Female Body Experience" Sokolove, "The Uneven Playing Field"
	October 1:	Nelson, "The Narrative Construction of Personal Identities"
Week 6	October 6:	Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are they? (What) Do We Want them to Be?"
	October 8:	Dhamoon, "Rethinking Accounts of the Immigrant"

- Week 7 October 13: *Texas v. Hernandez* [see Blackboard]
Film: *A Class Apart*
- October 15: Appiah, “Rooted Cosmopolitanism”
- Week 8 October 20: Appiah, “Rooted Cosmopolitanism” (cont’d)
- October 22: Film: *Growing Up Online*
- Week 9 October 27 and 29: This week, your job is to come to class with a focused topic, tentative research questions, and an assembled research statement. See *The Craft of Research* for details. Please bring a copy of your research statement for the whole class because we will go over everyone’s research statement. *You will be expected to give a general summary report of your particular theoretical approach* (feminist, liberal, conservative, Marxist, post-modern, cosmopolitan, etc.)
- Week 10 November 3 and 5: Review of Research Resources. Annotated bibliography of basic research resources are due today—to be presented to the entire class and a hard copy to be turned in to me. Refer to *The Craft of Research* for what your sources should offer you and how to use them effectively. Research statement, part 2 (if necessary).
- Week 11 November 10 and 12: At this point, your topic should be formulated and some draft pages written. Now you will be expected to do a “lit review”—a survey of what other scholars have written about your topic (again, in the form of an annotated bibliography). We will also go over the elements of a research argument as explained in *The Craft of Research*. Please bring a copy of your lit review for the whole class.
- Week 12 November 17 and 19: Draft due. All of the foregoing assignments are leading up to this draft, which should bring together close reading, review of critical essays, research resources, and theories and methods. This draft should be substantial. Use 10-12 pages as a guide. Please bring a copy of your draft for the whole class.
- Week 13 November 24: Draft Workshop: working with draft comments and

critiques.

November 26:

Thanksgiving Break

Week 14 December 1 and 3:

Draft Workshop, Part 2. Discussion of final stages of seminar papers.

Week 15 December 8:

Final drafts are due.
Conclusion of the course: seminar members will present an abstract of their project and summarize their argument and findings.