

**PS 3540: Research Preparation Seminar: African American Political Theory | TR 11:00 am-12:20 pm | Fall 2014 | Dr. Heath Fogg Davis | GH 447 | [hfd@temple.edu](mailto:hfd@temple.edu) | Office/Hours: T 1:30-4:30 + by appointment**

### **Course Description**

The research preparation seminar is meant to prepare you for the junior and senior capstone seminars. The signature feature of the capstone seminars is the research paper. In the capstone seminars your work will focus on the iterative steps in the writing process. To prepare you for that adventure, this seminar will concentrate on the preliminary steps that will make your writing process more manageable, efficient and dare I say fun! Each research preparation seminar, like each capstone, focuses on a specific political theme, and a particular set of research methods. The theme of this seminar is African American politics, and our research methods are drawn from the political science field of political theory, which is sometimes also referred to as political philosophy.

### **Macro Learning Goals**

In this seminar you will learn:

- **How to identify a *research interest***
- **How to develop that interest into a *research topic***
- **How to further develop a research topic into a *research question***

### **Micro Learning Goals**

You will also learn:

- **The unique features of political theory research methods**
- **How these methods differ from the research methods used in the other 3 fields of political science (American Politics, International Relations, and Comparative Politics)**
- **How to practice using political theory research methods to solve political problems related to African American politics**

### **Prior Knowledge**

- Basic understanding of political theory (i.e., distinctions between and among liberalism, conservatism, and radicalism)

### **Required Reading**

Required readings will be posted to our BB site under the “content” tab.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

#### **Attendance**

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.

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. 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 of course disagree with your fellow students, but listen attentively when they are speaking and respond in a courteous manner. Most of us have experienced 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**

In a seminar format it is tempting to let note-taking fall by the wayside. Resist this temptation! To help you stay on track with note taking I have posted a template on our BB site that is meant to guide your reading and help you determine what sort of information and evaluation should be included in your notes. The template, which you can download and print or fill out on your computer, is designed to make this crucial part of the course easier, so please give it a try, **even if you are skeptical. [3% bonus toward your final grade for completing the template for the first 3 reading assignments. By assignment, I mean all readings for a given day. To receive credit for this you must turn in your completed template by 10:30 am on the day it is due. You must either bring hard copies of your work to class or email them to me by the due date.**

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Participation (10%):** See rubric. *We will develop the rubric together and I will post it to BB.* At the midpoint of the semester you will use this rubric to perform a self-assessment, and I will give you a mid-semester participation grade that takes into account your self-assessment and my own assessment. Mid-semester participation grades are meant to give you a benchmark for improving. They do not directly factor into your final grade. I issue final participation grades at the end of the semester, which I then use to calculate your final grade.

2. **Presentation #1 (10%):** Each student will take a turn in leading our seminar discussion with a short (10 minute) presentation. Instructions: Locate and extract the author's main argument

(thesis) from the day's assigned reading. On one power point slide directly quote this thesis statement along with its page # and/or paragraph #. On a second power point slide paraphrase this thesis statement. Use your remaining time to zoom in on something that **resonated** with you from our assigned reading (it need not be directly related to the thesis), and then search for some artifact from our contemporary world that demonstrates this **resonance**. This might be a brief YouTube video of a movie or television scene, a news article, an artistic image, song lyrics, a poem, a photograph, an object, or anything else that you'd like to share with us. Your presentation should consist in explaining the artifact's resonance. Be sure to tell us the connection you see between our reading assignment and your artifact. My hope is that you will find this format less daunting and more interesting than a traditional class presentation. Have fun, be yourself! Be creative! *We will develop the rubric together and I will post it to BB.*

3. Quizzes (10%): There will be several impromptu 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 readings or the Internet. 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 your lowest score when calculating your final grade.* Everyone is allowed one absence or bad day.

4. Presentation #2: (15%) You are required to give a 10-minute presentation of your research project proposal during the final weeks of the semester (schedule to be determined). Please use the feedback from your peers and me as you put the final touches on this critical stage in the research process. *We will develop the rubric together and I will post it to BB.*

5. Writing Assignment 1: (15%)  
Writing Assignment 2: (20%)  
Revised Final Research Question: (20%)

You will have three writing assignments. See syllabus for due dates. I will post the assignments to BB.

### **Deadlines**

*Late assignments will not be accepted.* An absence from class does not excuse a late paper. Your syllabus clearly indicates due dates so plan accordingly.

### **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](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.* I reserve the right to make adjustments to our reading assignments, but will always give you fair warning at least one week in advance. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the reading assignment.

Let's do this!!

Week 1	8/26:	Introduction, no reading assignment. In-Class work: Knowledge Inventory + Rubric Design
	8/28:	No Class—I am away at the APSA Meetings in DC.
Week 2	9/2:	<u>Craft of Research</u> , ch. 2 + 3 <b>Due: First Homework Assignment (see BB)</b>
	9/4	Banton, "The Idiom of Race" in <i>Theories of Race and Racism</i> . and Wright, "One Drop of Blood." <b><i>In-class census exercise</i></b>
Week 3	9/9:	Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"; Mills, "Who's Fourth of July: Frederick Douglass and 'Original Intent'"
	9/11:	DuBois, excerpts from "The Conservation of Races" and <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i>
Week 4	9/16:	King, excerpts from "Nonviolence and Racial Justice"

and “I Have a Dream”; “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

	9/18:	In-class film screening and critique of <i>Citizen King</i>
Week 5	9/23:	King, excerpts from “To Atone for Our Sins in Vietnam,” “I See the Promised Land.”
	9/25:	Shelby, “Two Conceptions of Black Nationalism.”
	<b>9/26: First Assignment Due</b>	
Week 6	9/30:	Garvey, excerpt from “Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World”
	10/2:	Malcolm X, <u>Oxford Union Address</u> <u>The Craft of Research</u> , ch. 4
Week 7	10/7:	Asante, “Racism, Consciousness, and Afrocentricity”
	10/9:	Lorde, “I am Your Sister”; Harris-Perry, <u>Sister Citizen</u> <u>Craft of Research</u> , ch. 5
Week 8	10/14:	In-Class Film Screening and Critique of <i>Shirley Chisholm: Unbought and Unbossed</i>
	10/16:	Ferguson, “Introduction: Queer of Color Critique, Historical Materialism, and Canonical Sociology.” In <u>Aberrations in Black</u>
Week 9	10/21:	Washington, “Atlanta Compromise” speech
	10/23	Lindsay, “God, Gays, and Progressive Politics: Reconceptualizing Intersectionality as a Normatively Malleable Analytic Framework”

**10/24: Second Assignment Due**

<b>Week 10</b>	<b>10/28</b>	<b>No Class</b>
	10/30	Zack, “Race, Life, Death, Identity, Tragedy, and Good Faith.”

Week 11	11/4	Final In-Class Preparations for Research Question Presentations
	11/6	Research Question Presentations
Week 12	11/11	Research Question Presentations
	11/13	Research Question Presentations
Week 13	11/18	Research Question Presentations
	11/20	Research Question Presentations
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>11/25</b>	<b>Fall Break—No Class</b>
	<b>11/27</b>	<b>Fall Break—No Class</b>
Week 15	12/2	Research Question Presentations
	12/4	Research Question Presentations

**12/12: Final Assignment Due**