

Political Science 203/203w and African-American Studies 223  
Spring 2006  
Tuesdays 2-4:40  
Meliora 209  
University of Rochester

### Twentieth-Century African-American Political Thought

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-4 or by appointment (Morey Hall 302)

This course surveys the political and social thought of African-Americans during the 20th century. It will consider the social, political, and historical context of political ideologies in black communities, from the standpoint of early thinkers and activists such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett to post-World War II thinkers such as Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, bell hooks, Cornel West, among others. The course will critically assess such perspectives as liberalism, nationalism, feminism, conservatism, and Marxism as considered by important black thinkers of the era. The course approaches the study of African Americans political and social thought from theoretical and historical perspectives.

Our point of departure is the late 19th century, which will allow us to foreground debates that emerge and re-emerge throughout the 20th century about what are the best strategies for African-Americans to pursue freedom and equal opportunity in the United States. The central thrust of the course will be 1) identifying the issues considered by thinkers and the positions they take; 2) locating debates within the context of the political situation of blacks; and 3) trying to establish links between debates in the past to contemporary black political discourse.

### **Course Expectations and Requirements**

This is a seminar course. Each seminar participant is considered a full participant-not simply a spectator. Therefore, I expect participants to regularly attend class and actively participate in class discussions. You should bring the readings with you to seminar. I will take attendance weekly. Your class participation will be based on my assessment of how closely you have read the assigned readings. As part of your class participation grade you will be required to participate in a group presentation. You will be randomly assigned to a group for your presentation. Each group will be given a pre-assigned topic.

#### Group Presentations

To fulfill this assignment, your group must: a) confer; b) come up with a fifteen (15) minute dramatization that creatively summarizes and draws upon points of controversy among the authors or text for that topic; and (c) present an interesting set of questions (at least one per group member that is unique and no less than twenty words) to spark class discussion. Each group member should put his/her name next to the questions(s) that she or he contributed. On the day of class, type-out and submit these questions to me in one document by 12 noon. This assignment will require that you do background research on the writer(s) in your section. **Presentations, along with regular class participation, are worth 20% of your grade.**

## Written Assignments

You are required to write 5 summary/critique papers of 3-4 page length. Three (3) of these papers must be turned in by mid-term (**March 7**); the two (2) other papers are due by **April 25**. You have a choice of which seminar readings you will write from, however if you are giving a group presentation you will not be able to submit a writing assignment for that week. You are to identify the main arguments of the writers and, when appropriate, compare and contrast arguments among writers. Be sure to include all of that week's readings in your essay. Be creative in these essays and be sure to demonstrate critical thinking in your assessment of the readings. However, critical perspectives should be written *after* you have presented the main points of the argument. **These short papers are worth 50% of your grade. You will not get any credit for your final grade if you do not complete all five writing assignments.**

## Final Paper

You have to write a research paper which challenges you to re-examine the controversial questions we have examined in class. The paper should be connected to the ideologies covered in the course: liberalism, nationalism, feminism, conservatism, or Marxism. You can either 1) chose a historical period to examine various thinkers (e.g. turn of the twentieth century, period of the "great migration," Cold War era, civil rights movement, black power movement, post-civil rights era) or compare and contrast specific thinkers (e.g. W.E.B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington, A. Phillip Randolph, Angela Davis, Clarence Thomas). A one-page paper proposal is due to me by **March 28**. Your paper proposal should include a question of interest and why this question is of relevance to African-American political thought. **This assignment is worth 30% of the grade.**

## Required Texts:

Manning Marable and Leith Mullings. Ed. 2000. *Let Nobody Turn Us Around: Voices of Resistance, Reform and Renewal*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

James Baldwin. 1993. *The Fire Next Time*. New York: Vintage Press.

Adolph Reed, Jr. 2000. *Class Notes: Posing as Politics and Other Thoughts on the American Scene*. New York: The New Press.

January 24: Introduction

January 31: Historical and Theoretical Context of Black Thought

Kevin Gaines, "Introduction" from *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*, 1-17. (reserve)

Michael Dawson, "The Contours of African-American Thought," from *Black Visions*, 43.(reserve)

Marable and Mullings, "Introduction," pp. vii-xxv (9), and 119-124.

## February 7: The Emergence of Black Thought during the Nadir

### **Group A**

Robert Harlan, "Migration is the Only Remedy for Our Wrongs," 1879  
<reserve>

Booker T. Washington, "The Atlanta Compromise," "The Fruits of Industrial Training," "My View of Segregation Laws," in Marable and Mullings, 181-198.

W.E.B. DuBois, "Excerpts from the Souls of Black Folk," Marable and Mullings, 221-226.

W.E.B. DuBois, "The Talented Tenth," September 1903

[http://douglassarchives.org/dubo\\_b05.htm](http://douglassarchives.org/dubo_b05.htm)

W.E.B. DuBois "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others," 1903

<http://www.bartleby.com/114/3.html>

William Monroe Trotter, "William Monroe Trotter and the Boston Guardian," Marable and Mullings, 198-200.

Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, "Justice or Emigration Should Be Our Watch  
Word 1893.  
<reserve>

T. Thomas Fortune, "It's Time to Call a Halt," 1890  
<reserve>

## February 14: Appealing to the American Promise

### **Group B**

Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?," Marable and Mullings, 87-91.

Frederick Douglass, "What the Black Man Wants," Marable and Mullings, 125-131

Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Speech Delivered at the National Negro Conference, Marable and Mullings, 209-212.

The Niagara Movement, Marable and Mullings, 227-229.

W. E. B. DuBois, "Close Ranks," Hubert Harrison "The Decent of Du Bois," and DuBois, "Returning Soldiers," 242-245.

Langston Hughes, "My America," Marable and Mullings, 280-286,

A. Phillip Randolph, "Negro March on Washington Movement," Marable and Mullings 333-339.

Thurgood Marshall, "The Brown Decision and the Struggle for School Desegregation," Marable and Mullings, 356-364.

Martin Luther King, "Nonviolence and Racial Justice," and "I Have a Dream," Marable and Mullings, 400-406.

Jesse Jackson, "Keep Hope Alive," Marable and Mullings, 567-577

February 21: Feminist Beginnings: Liberal, Nationalist, and Radical

### **Group C**

Maria Steward, "What If I Am a Woman?," Marable and Mullings, 42-47

Sojourner Truth, "A'n't I a Woman?," Marable and Mullings, 67-68,

Anna Julia Cooper, "A Voice from the South," Marable and Mullings, 167-172,

Mary Church Terrell and Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, "The National Association of Colored Women," 173-178.

"A Negro Woman Speaks," Marable and Mullings, 201-207.

Amy Jacques Garvey, "Women as Leaders," Marable and Mullings, 274-275.

Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson, "The Negro Woman and the Ballot," Marable and Mullings 287-290.

Claudia Jones, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!," Marable and Mullings, 340-351.

February 28: The Origins of Black Nationalism

### **Group D**

David Walker, "Appeal," Marable and Mullings, 23-35.

Martin Delany, "A Black Nationalist Manifesto," Marable and Mullings, 69-87

Henry McNeal Turner, "Black Christian Nationalist," Marable and Mullings, 131-134.

Edward Blyden, "On the African Diaspora," Marable and Mullings, 146-157

Marcus Garvey, "Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World," "An Appeal to the Conscience of the Black Race to See Itself," "An Epose of the Caste System Among Negroes," Marable and Mullings, 259-273.

March 7: Black Reds- Race or Class?

**Group E**

Hubert Harrison, "The Negro and the Nation," Marable and Mullings, 230-233.

Cyril Briggs, "What the African Blood Brotherhood Stands For," Marable and Mullings 246-251.

Claude McKay, "Soviet Russia and the Negro," Marable and Mullings, 251-259.

Abram Harris, "The Negro Worker," Marable and Mullings, 295-301

Angelo Herndon, "Speech to Jury," and "You Cannot Kill the Working Class," Marable and Mullings, 303-313

Hosea Hudson, "The Narrative of Hosea Hudson," Marable and Mullings, 314-319.

W.E.B. DuBois, "The Salvation of American Negroes Lies in Socialism," Marable and Mullings, 409-419.

Angela Davis, "I am a Revolutionary Black Woman," Marable and Mullings, 482-486.

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers, "Our Thing Is Drum," Marable and Mullings, 486-489.

Henry Winston, "On Returning to the Struggle" and "A Letter to My Brothers and Sisters," Marable and Mullings, 503-508.

March 14: Spring Break

March 21: King and the Moral Appeals of the Civil Rights Movement

Martin Luther King, "Loving Your Enemies" (reserve)

Martin Luther King, "A Knock at Midnight" (reserve)

Martin Luther King, "The American Dream" (reserve)

Martin Luther King, "The Drum Major Instinct" (reserve)

Martin Luther King, "To Atone for Our Sins in Vietnam," Marable and Mullings, 461-468.

March 28: Public Intellectual-The Political Thought of James Baldwin/**Paper Proposal Due**

Fire Next Time, All

#### April 4: The Political Thought of Malcolm X

##### **Group F**

Malcolm X, At the Harvard Law School Forum (reserve)

Malcolm X, "Message to the Grassroots" (reserve)

Malcolm X, "Twenty Million Black People in a Political, Economic, and Mental Prison (reserve)

Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet" and "Statement of the Organization of AfroAmerican Unity," Marable and Mullings, 427-441.

#### April 11: The Resurgence of Black Nationalism and Its Critics

Louis Farrakhan, Minister Louis Farrakhan Calls for Million Man March,'

<http://www.africawithin.com/mmm/mmmcall.htm>

Louis Farrakhan, Speech at the Million Man March, Marable and Mullings, 615-618

Molefi Asante, "Afrocentricity," Marable and Mullings, 577-588,

Adolph Reed, "The Rise of Louis Farrakhan," 37-60.

Adolph Reed, "Triumph of the Tuskegee Will," 61-63.

Adolph Reed, "The Cruse of Community," 10- 13,

#### April 18: Right Turn-The Emergence of Black Conservative Thought

##### **Group G**

Clarence Thomas, "Victims and Heroes in the 'Benevolent State'" (reserve)

Shelby Steele, "I'm Black, You're White, Who's Innocent?" (reserve)

Shelby Steel, "The Memory of Enemies"(reserve)

Glenn C. Loury, "The Need for Moral Leadership in the Black Community" (reserve)

Adolph Reed, "Steele Trap" (reserve)

Martin Kilson, "Anatomy of Black Conservatism" (reserve)

Cornel West, "Demystifying the New Black Conservatism" (reserve)

April 25: Modern Black Feminist Thought

**Group H**

Michele Wallace, "We Would Have to Fight the World," Marable and Mullings, 519-523.

Combahee River Collective Statement, Marable and Mullings, 524-529

Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex," Marable and Mullings, 538-544.

bell hooks, "Shaping Feminist Theory" Marable and Mullings, 544-550,

African-American Women In Defense of Themselves, Marable and Mullings, 589-590

June Jordan, "Can I Get A Witness?," Marable and Mullings, 590-593

May 2: Multiple Voices in the Veil and Beyond

William Julius William, "The Ghetto Underclass," Marable and Mullings, 557-567,

Cornel West, "Nihilism in Black America," Marable and Mullings, 594-601

Adolph Reed, "What Are the Drums Saying, Booker?" 77-90.

Adolph Reed, "Romancing Jim Crow," 14-24,

Adolph Reed, "Tokens of the White Left," 69-76.

Keith Boykin, "Gay and Black in America" (reserve)