

The Politics of National Memory

Course Information

PSCI 4373

The Politics of National Memory

Spring 2019

Monday/Tuesday 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Professor Contact Information

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Office Hours 4-6 pm Mon/Tues, and any day (including weekends) by appointment.

Other Information Other meetings by appointment



“Every argument about the past is about the future.”

Email and Telephone Guidelines.

I will always return your email or telephone call within 24 hours. If you do not hear from me, please assume your message or email never arrived, and call or write again.

Course Pre-requisites/Other Restrictions

Acceptance into the Archer Fellowship Program

Course Description

This course focuses on the politics of national memory by fostering an ongoing conversation about the meaning of the American Republic and the historical memory found in memorials, monuments, and museums in Washington, D.C. The course will explore political and artistic controversies that have shaped the design and building of many monuments, memorials, and museums that define the architectural landscape of the nation's capital. Along with visiting many of these sites, the course will involve a critical discussion in the classroom of the monuments, museums, and memorials in light of primary texts. Students will engage in critical reflection about their personal experience of Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and many of the structures that do so much to define this city and national memory today.

Readings, experiences and discussions—triggered by seeing originals of our Founding documents—will address three questions:

1. What is “American democracy?”
2. What power does each individual have within this democracy?
3. What democracy mean for each individual's personal dreams?

Student Learning Objectives & Outcomes

After completing the course students will be able to:

1. Describe and explain the development of Washington, D.C., and the National Mall as places of historical memory.
2. Describe the political controversies that have shaped the building of major national memorials, monuments and museums in Washington, D.C.
3. Critically evaluate the goals and objectives of national memorials, monuments and museums in light of different political and historical contexts.
4. Understand through personal participation the process through which complex ideas, historic evidence and personal experience are woven together to formulate a useful and testable overall theory that stimulates discussion and invites improvements.
5. Use Washington DC to construct a working, practical definition of “democracy”; what makes American democracy unique; and how American democracy evolves in response to technological, demographic and other changes in society.

Suggest a book, short story or essay

Each student is encouraged to bring and discuss with me (preferably early in the semester) something from their own reading that they think would benefit the entire class.

Additional Requirement: You must obtain a Reader Card at the Library of Congress and Research Card at the National Archives—bring both cards to class on February 4/5.

Grading Policy and Participation

All classes are mandatory. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.

The core of this class is your journal and class discussions. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material. The model for this class is a graduate seminar. You are expected to participate in class with questions and ideas, and by engaging in debates and discussions. More opportunities to participate will come by volunteering to make presentations; read from your journal; and take the lead during class discussions and activities.

It is assumed you are all honors-level students who will attend all classes and complete your journal and all other assignments satisfactorily and in a timely manner. All excuses for compelling personal or work-related reasons must be granted *beforehand*. Even one unexcused absence or late work *will* result in lower grades. Students will at all times conduct themselves according to their home University's rules.

Half of your grade will come from your journal and half from class discussions—both of which will strictly require that you complete the readings (see below). Students who complete all assigned projects SATISFACTORILY AND in a timely manner will receive a B. Students who display excellence through written work and through class participation will receive an A. Students who fail to SATISFACTORILY complete assigned projects or to attend classes will receive lower than a B. Students are encouraged to discuss with faculty how they might display excellence in the course.

Midterm grades will be discussed with each student 7-8 weeks into the semester.

Final grades will be reported to your home UT System institution by **May 6, 2019**, and posted in accordance with their respective grade submission deadlines.

There will be no scheduled tests, but unannounced quizzes will be conducted to help ensure that students are keeping up-to-date with all assignments.

Archer Plus

Throughout the semester, students will be given an opportunity to read, write and participate in discussions that carry ideas from the class into much deeper levels.

Such "Archer Plus" activities are voluntary and have no impact on your grade.

Electronics in Class

You may take notes on your laptop or mobile device and *with prior permission* use a laptop or phone to explore something related to class discussion (simply raise your hand and ask). A zero-tolerance policy for other uses of electronics will be enforced. You will be *asked to leave immediately* if you break this rule.

Invited Speakers

Experts or other notable people may be invited to speak for a portion of a class if their experiences and accomplishments relate to the class agenda. All speakers will be able to help students to network.

Site Visits

Often, before or after a class at a site, you will be required to visit other sites.

If at any time a government shutdown stops access any sites, we will continue the class at other sites.

Journals

You will submit three journals—due 11:59 pm (EST) on February 1, March 1, and April 1. Journals will be no more than 8 pages (2,000 words) because to write something brief is much more difficult than to write something with no length limits.

Class discussions

Throughout the semester, students will work in teams of 6 people structured by random selection. Important: See details under “Readings” below.

Adjustments Due to Weather

For our visits to outdoor sites, please be prepared for outdoor weather conditions by dressing appropriately (e.g. rain protection and comfortable walking shoes). In cases of extreme weather, classes will be at The Archer Center; you will be notified via text message or email by 3 pm the day of the scheduled site visit. Whether we meet outside, or inside a museum, you must be on time so the entire class does not have to wait. Plan your travel; the subway running late, or that you got lost are *not* valid excuses.

Readings

Copies and/or links will be provided.

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/eighth-annual-message-0>

—James Baldwin, *The First Next Time* (1963) and Ta-Nehisi Coates *Between the World and Me* (2015) [for visits to the Museum of African-American History and Culture; Museum of the American Indian; and Museum of American History]

—Abraham Lincoln, *SOTU* (1861-1865)—[for visits to the Emancipation Statue; Lincoln Memorial; Ford’s Theater; Petersen House; and Arlington National Cemetery]

—*Franklin D. Roosevelt v. Ronald Reagan (with supporting materials): What an Economic Bill of Rights Should Say* [for walk around the Tidal Basin—Thomas Jefferson; George Mason; Franklin D Roosevelt; and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorials]

—Fred Downs, *Aftermath* (1985)—[for visits to the World War I, World War II, Korean War and War in Vietnam memorials; and Arlington National Cemetery]

—Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *The Collapse of Western Civilization: A View from the Future* (a novel, 2014): [for visit to Natural History Museum, Air & Space Museum, Botanical Gardens, and Museum of the Bible]

To read these books—and think about how they relate to our class site visits and discussions—is required.

The readings are deep in content, but brief—to read everything carefully will not be difficult if you budget your time well—but cannot be done if you wait until the last minute.

In class discussions you may be called upon to answer questions about the readings even if you do not raise your hand. You may also be required to submit ideas and questions based on readings before class.

Readings will also be included in journal assignments.

You may, of course, begin and complete reading any of these books whenever you want. But, anyone who does not complete these readings by the date assigned will learn much less—the class will be taught on the assumption that assigned reading has been completed.

Calendar

Before the first class watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3kmVgQHIEY> *Birth of a Nation* (1915)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Elumz9n55XY> *The Victory of Fatih* (1933)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7eOUzjn7pM> *Triumph of the Will* (1935)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2TxQ_TZou4 *Why We Fight* (1945)

Woodrow Wilson called *Birth of a Nation*, “History written in lightning.”

Just like you, audiences for these movies lived at time when new technologies—images and sounds—conveyed facts, stirred emotions, and told stories in new ways. Back then, attention spans were longer, and while these were highly popular and influential movies you may find them difficult (boring) to watch. If so, watch enough to have a good sense of how these movies work and what they say.

Wednesday, January 16

Thursday, January 17

National Archives, National Gallery of Art, and Nearby Sites

We will begin at the National Archives, where we will see, among other things, originals of the Declaration of independence, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights.

The walk will continue to other sites—including the place where “security men” hired by the White House tried to assault and beat antiwar demonstrators. Lunch will be at the National Gallery of Art, where we will focus on art as an avenue to pursue and portray “truth.”

Before class, read:

—Thomas Mann, *The Coming Victory of Democracy* (1938)

Friday, January 18 – 9a-5p

Newseum and Holocaust Memorial Museum

Meet at the Newseum at 10 am.

-Lunch provided at the Newseum

Monday, February 4

Tuesday, February 5

Archer Center

Before class,

read:

—James Baldwin, *The First Next Time* (1963) and Ta-Nehisi Coates *Between the World and Me* (2015)

visit:

- National Museum of American History—analyze portrayal of African-American and Latino history (pay particular attention to the Mexican-American war)
- the Museum of African-American History and Culture
- National Museum of the American Indian

FEBRUARY 1 (MIDNIGHT): FIRST JOURNAL DUE

Assignment:

BASED ON *THE FIRE NEXT TIME*, LIST AND EXPLAIN THREE THINGS THAT JAMES BALDWIN WOULD LIKE AND THREE THINGS HE WOULD DISLIKE ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE. TO WHAT DEGREE WOULD TA-NEHISI COATES AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH YOU?

Tuesday, February 12

Ford's Theater

Before class: Watch *Twelve Angry Men* on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DkI2IOW5i8>

After the play, we will take the journey from Ford's Theater back to the White House that Abraham Lincoln never got to take.

*****EXTRA*****

Wednesday, February 13

Writing Workshop—Part I (voluntary; LIMITED TO TEN PEOPLE)

Archer Center

At least a week before the Writing Workshop, you must submit:

—a public policy memorandum that you have written and about which you are proud (or, if you have not done such a memo, submit public policy-related writing you have done.

—a public policy memorandum from your Internship that you think is well done

Also, before the Workshop:

Visit: Examine the Laffer Napkin at the National Museum of American History

Read: Various public policy memos posted for you

Tuesday, February 19

Archer Center

Lecture and Discussion: Every Generation of Americans Invents the Lincoln it Needs

Before class visit:

- The “Emancipation” statue in Lincoln Park—the only memorial to Abraham Lincoln in Washington, DC built by people who knew him.

Tuesday, February 26

Archer Center

Lecture and discussion: Plato, Fahrenheit 451, and Pizzagate

MARCH 1 (MIDNIGHT): SECOND JOURNAL DUE

Assignment:

HOW HAVE YOUR READINGS AND EXPERIENCES IN THIS CLASS SO FAR THIS SEMESTER AUGMENTED AND CHALLENGED THOMAS MANN’S VIEW OF DEMOCRACY IN THE U.S.? EXPLAIN

*****Extra*****

Wednesday, March 6

Writing Workshop—Part II (voluntary; maximum ten people; only open to those who did not attend Workshop I)

Archer Center

At least a week before the Writing Workshop, you must submit:

—a public policy memorandum that you have written and about which you are proud (or, if you have not done such a memo, submit public policy-related writing you have done.

—a public policy memorandum from your Internship that you think is well done

Also, before the Workshop:

Visit: Examine the Laffer Napkin at the National Museum of American History

Read: Various public policy memos posted for you

Tuesday, March 12 – JOINT CLASS

Archer Center

Lecture and discussion: Iwo Jima, Hiroshima and the Manufacture of Memory

Before class, read:

—Fred Downs, *Aftermath* (1985)

Friday, March 15

Science Walk

We will start at the Natural History Museum and continue to the Air & Space Museum and the Botanical Gardens

Before class

Read: Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *The Collapse of Western Civilization: A View from the Future* —a novel (2014)

Visit: Bible Museum

Tuesday, March 19

Tidal Basin Walk

We start at the Jefferson Memorial, and walk (in order) to the George Mason; FDR; and Martin Luther King, Jr Memorials

Before class

Read: *FDR VS. Ronald Reagan*

Tuesday March 26

Basin Walk, continued

***Meet at the Third Term in the FDR Memorial**

APRIL 1 (MIDNIGHT): THIRD (AND FINAL) JOURNAL DUE

Assignment:

LIST AND EXPLAIN THREE THINGS YOU THINK FRED DOWNS WOULD SAY ABOUT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

Tuesday, April 2

War Walk

We will meet at the World War I memorial, and walk to the WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War memorials.

Before class, visit Arlington National Cemetery; you must go to (and be prepared to discuss):

- Graves of four Kennedy brothers
- Memorial to the Confederate Dead
- Tomb of the Civil War unknowns
- Tomb of the Unknown soldier
- Mrs. Lee's rose garden
- Section 60

Monday, April 8

Lincoln Memorial

***Meet at the bottom steps of the Lincoln Memorial**

Monday, April 15

Archer Center

Lecture and discussion: The Relationship Between National Memory and Democracy

ARCHER PLUS

Tuesday April 23

Day-long bus trip to Monticello and nearby sites

Before class, read:

Thomas Jefferson's 1803 State of the Union Message

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/third-annual-message>

James Madison's 1816 State of the Union Message

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/eighth-annual-message-0>

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

"As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.