

# The Politics of National Memory

## Syllabus – Fall 2022

Updated 08.22.22

### Course Information

PSCI 4373

*The Politics of National Memory*

Fall 2022

Tuesday 6:30-9:30 pm

Class meets at the Archer Center and on-site as noted on the National Mall



### Professor Contact Information

**Professor** *Joel L. Swerdlow, PhD*  
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**Office Hours** Any day (including weekends) by appointment.

### Lecturer Contacts

(All Office Hours By Appointment)

**Lecturer Group A** *Aaron Conrado, PhD*  
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**Lecturer Group B** *Shema Mbyirukira, JD*  
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*Note:* To ensure student privacy, and in accordance with FERPA guidelines, all official communications via email should be conducted using the UTD email addresses. Faculty will return your email or telephone call within 24 hours. If you do not hear back, please assume your message or email never arrived, and call or write again.

## Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

Acceptance into the Archer Fellowship Program

## Course Description

This course uses the National Mall (defined as the area between Arlington National Cemetery and Capitol Hill) as a classroom, textbook and laboratory to enhance and expand the experiences of students who spend a semester in Washington, DC doing an internship and studying public policy. Its deeper goals are that students acquire a lifelong relationship with the nation's capital; feel competent and excited about "reading" statues, memorials and museums no matter where they are; and acquire perceptual and analytic skills that enhance their confidence and effectiveness as citizens in a democracy.

The course focuses on the politics of national memory by fostering an ongoing, critical conversation—in class, in discussion groups, and beyond the academic setting—about the statues, memorials, and museums in Washington, D.C. Included will be the history of how the Mall came to be what it is today.

Along with visiting many of these sites, students will use historical analysis; science reports; a range of art forms—poetry, fiction, theater, sculpture, video and other visual media—as well as primary texts to inform and stimulate their thinking.

As the semester proceeds, students are asked to reflect upon and explore their personal experience of Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and many of the structures that do much to define this city and national memory today.

## Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Through an examination of storytelling, readings, discussions and first-hand experiences students will learn three primary skills:

1. How to "read" components of the National Mall using **Statue Literacy, Memorial Literacy, and Museum Literacy**—rules via which we can see how each of these expressions of national memory came into being and acquired meaning; and how each invites us to participate in the creation of new meaning today.
2. Use this literacy **to define "democracy;" "past;" and "truth."** With these definitions students will:
  - a. better understand democracy, particularly American democracy;
  - b. see how and why democracy must seek the truth about its own past;
  - c. decipher how what is remembered relates—via stories—to what happened;
  - d. analyze the degree to which every argument about the past is about the future; and
  - e. explore (as emphasized on the Mall) art and science as distinct avenues to truth.
3. **"Think in Time" about societal and public policy issues;** have a reliable, systematic, and accurate way to apply practical lessons from the past.

## Required Textbooks and Material

The following will be posted to the PSCI 4373 Teams channel:

- 1963: James Baldwin: *The Fire Next Time*
- 1963: Amiri Baraka [LeRoi Jones], *Blues People* (select chapters)
- 2008 John Stauffer, *The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln* (select chapters)
- 2014: Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *The Collapse of Western Civilization* (a novel)
- 2018: Lonnie Bunch, *A Fool's Errand* (select chapters)
- 2021: Clint Smith, *How the Word is Passed* (select chapters)
- 2021: Annette Gordon-Reed, *On Juneteenth* (copy provided)

In addition: To encourage critical and creative thinking (Walt Whitman tells us that “poetry is the shortest distance between reality and the human heart”), we will begin each class by discussing a poem.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

Sunblock; comfortable walking shoes

### **Assignments & Academic Calendar**

#### **Role of Lecturers**

Each Lecturer will be assigned to work with a group of 24 students. These Discussion Group assignments will be posted on Teams. The Lecturers will review and assess their students’ written assignments — which will be given after most classes (see “Grading Policy” below). They are available for discussions and to answer questions and address concerns. Students who wish to meet with any of the lecturers should schedule a meeting during their office hours.

#### **Graded Assignments**

Each week, your lecturer will assess your participation in the class Discussion Group and on the Discussion Board—and give you feedback.

During class-time, throughout the semester, periodic assessments will be made to verify that you are doing the reading and learning the basic concepts of the course.

**HAVE FUN, AND PLEASE CONTACT ME OR YOUR LECTURER AT ANY TIME IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, IDEAS, OR JUST SOMETHING YOU WISH TO DISCUSS.**

#### **Grading Policy**

Final grades—based on your participation in class and your Lecturer’s assessment of your written assignments and your contributions to your discussion group—will be determined by Dr. Swerdlow. Students who complete all assignments satisfactorily and in a timely manner will receive a B. Students who display excellence through written work and class participation will receive an A. Other students will receive lower than a B.

Final grades will be reported to your home UT System institution by **April 30, 2022** and posted in accordance with their respective grade submission deadlines.

#### **Classroom Conduct Requirements Related to Public Health Measures**

UT Dallas will follow the public health and safety guidelines put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and local DC public health agencies that are in effect at that time during the Fall 2021 semester.

#### **Course Policies**

##### *Class Materials*

The instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course, however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with

those not in class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

#### *Class Attendance*

Regular and punctual class attendance is expected. Students who fail to attend class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty.

#### *Class Participation*

Regular class participation is expected. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty (Dr. Swerdlow and your lecturer). Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

#### *Class Recordings*

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

**Note:** The instructor may record meetings of this course. These recordings will be made available to all students registered for this class if the intent is to supplement the classroom experience. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law.

#### *Classroom Citizenship*

All students and faculty are expected to adhere to the Archer Fellows guiding principles outlined here (also discussed during your pre-departure orientation training):

#### **Guiding Principles for Archer Fellows – See page 8 in the Guidebook (posted to Canvas)**

- Archer Fellows represent not only themselves, but their home institutions, the Archer Center, the UT System, and the State of Texas.
- The Archer Center expects all Archer Fellows to abide by the highest standards of conduct, demonstrating the utmost integrity, character, respect, and professionalism.
- The Archer Center is committed to ensuring a diverse cohort and learning environment by selecting students with varying backgrounds, interests, fields of study, and political perspectives.
- The Archer Center is committed to bringing together students who value constructive and respectful dialogue among individuals and groups with varying ideas.
- Archer Fellows are expected to respect varying political, personal, and religious beliefs within the cohort and throughout the program.

- As an educational program, the Archer Center sees all aspects of the Archer Fellowship experience as an opportunity for learning: from the application and internship search process to the academic, networking, professional and fellowship opportunities provided throughout the semester.
- The Archer Center and Archer Fellows have a shared commitment to open, honest, and timely communication.

### **Archer Guiding Principles**

Appreciation  
 Responsibility  
 Character  
 Humility  
 Enthusiasm  
 Respect

### **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.”

### **Academic Support Resources**

The information contained in the following link lists the University’s academic support resources for all students. Please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources>.

### **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 review the catalog sections regarding the credit/no credit or pass/fail grading option and withdrawal from class.

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.*

**Academic Calendar**  
**Class Schedule**

**Class 1: Monday, August 29, 7- 9 am**

**Sunrise at the Lincoln Memorial**

*Location:* Lincoln Memorial (2 Lincoln Memorial Circle)

7 am - Meet at steps to Lincoln Memorial

\*Bring water bottle and wear comfortable walking shoes/clothes

**Class 2: Tuesday, August 30, 6:30-9:30 pm**

*Location:* Senate Fountain (200 New Jersey Ave NW)

6:30 pm – Meet At Senate Fountain

Box dinner served

**Class 3: on Wednesday, August 31 and Thursday September 2**

*Location:* US Navy Memorial Plaza (701 Pennsylvania Ave NW; Navy Memorial/Archives metro)

9 am – Meet at Navy Memorial Plaza (cross-listed with Policymaking Process class)

10 am – Visit National Archives

Lunch at National Gallery of Art

1-3 pm at National Gallery

\*Bring water bottle and wear comfortable walking shoes/clothes

**Class 4: Tuesday, September 6, 9 am – noon**

*Location:* Washington Monument (2 15<sup>th</sup> St NW)

9 am - Meet at Washington Monument for group entry at 9:30 am. Class around Monument. We have obtained 52 tickets for timed entry at 9:30 a.m.

\*Bring water bottle and wear comfortable walking shoes/clothes

**Class 5: Tuesday, September 6: 12:30-4:30 pm**

*Location:* Museum of African American History and Culture (1400 Constitution Ave NW)

12:30 pm - Meet for lunch and timed entry to African American Museum. Lunch at African American Museum

**\*NO CLASS EVENING OF TUESDAY, SEPT. 6\***

**Class 6: Tuesday September 13, 6:30-9:30**

*Location:* Archer Center

Lecturer: Aaron Conrado, PhD

Topic: Science on the Mall, Part I [of III]

**Class 7: Tuesday, September 20, 6:30-10:30 pm *Hamilton***

*Location:* Kennedy Center (2700 F St NW; Foggy Bottom metro + free KC shuttle)

6:30 pm – Meet at bust of Pres. John F. Kennedy for group photo and snacks

7:30 pm – *Hamilton* (2 hrs 45 min)

Kennedy Center performance. Masks are required. As of May 15, 2022, proof of vaccination is not required; but check <https://www.kennedy-center.org/visit/covid-safety/> for updated protocols.

**CLASSES 8-12 ARE BUILT AROUND The National Museum of African American History and Culture**  
**Lecturer: Shema Mbyrukira, JD**

**Class 8: Tuesday, September 27 6:30-9:30**

Title: "All people are created equal."

Location: Jefferson Memorial (16 E Basin Dr. SW)

Theme: Separate and Unequal: The Black Experience.

Assigned Reading: *A Fool's Errand : Creating the National Museum of African American History and Culture in the Age of Bush, Obama, and Trump* by Lonnie Bunch.

- Assignment: CHAPTER 8 - Exhibiting American History Through An African American Lens: Making a Way out of No Way

\*6:30 pm - Meet at Jefferson Memorial. BRING YOUR DINNER!\*

**Class 9: Tuesday, October 11 6:30-9:30**

Title: "New birth of freedom."

Location: Lincoln Memorial (2 Lincoln Memorial Circle)

Theme: False Freedom and the Politics of Memory.

Assigned Reading: *On Juneteenth* by Annette Gordon-Reed.

- Assignment: (Entire book)
- Assignment: Clint Smith, *How the Word Is Passed* [select chapters]

\*6:30 pm – Meet at Lincoln Memorial. BRING YOUR DINNER!\*

**Class 10: Tuesday, October 18 6:30-9:30**

Title: "Frederick Douglass and James Baldwin as Founders."

Location: Emancipation Memorial/Freedmans Memorial (Lincoln Park Dr. NE)

Theme: Love of Country. Frederick Douglas and James Baldwin.

Assigned Reading: *Giants: The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln* by John Stauffer & *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin

- Assignment: *Giants* - CHAPTER 4: Radical Abolitionist and War President
- Assignment: *The Fire Next Time* - Entire book

\*Meet at Emancipation Memorial/Freedman's Memorial (Lincoln Park Dr. NE). BRING YOUR OWN DINNER!\*

**Class 11: Tuesday, October 25 6:30-9:30**

Title: "Emmitt Till & the rule of law:"

Location: U.S. Supreme Court Building (1 First St. NE)

Theme: The NAACP Legal Strategy: How We Fight Back.

Assigned Reading: None

\*Meet at US Supreme Court (1 First St. NE). BRING YOUR OWN DINNER!\*

**Class 12: Tuesday, November 1, 6:30-9:30 pm**

*Location: TBD*

Assigned Reading: *Black Music* (reissue of the sequel to Amiri Baraka's *Blues People*) by LeRoi Jones.

- Assignment: CHAPTER 1: Jazz and the White Critic

**NO CLASS - Tuesday, November 8, 6:30-9:30 pm (Election Day)**

**Class 13: Tuesday, November 15, 6:30-9:30 pm**

*Location: Archer Center*

Guest Lecturer: Olivia Garcia, PhD

*Topic:* The Upcoming Smithsonian Latino Museum and Women's Museum on the Mall

**Class 14: Tuesday, November 22 6:30-9:30 pm**

*Location: Archer Center*

Lecturer: Aaron Conrado, PhD

Science on the Mall, Part II [of III]

Assigned Reading: Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *The Collapse of Western Civilization* (a novel)

- think about: Is Preventative Fiction like this useful?

**Class 15: Tuesday, November 29 6:30-9:30 PM**

*Location: Archer Center*

Lecturer: Aaron Conrado, PhD

Science on the Mall, Part III [of III]

**Tuesday, December 6, 7 pm. NOTE THE TIME!**

**Sunset on the Mall**

Meet at steps to National Archives (Constitution Avenue side) at 7 p.m. for sunset class and candle lighting tradition.