

The Politics of National Memory
Syllabus – Spring 2022

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Course Information

PSCI 4373

The Politics of National Memory

Spring 2022

Tuesday 6:30-9:30 pm

Class meets at the Archer Center and on Microsoft Teams (PSCI 4373 Teams)



Professor Contact Information

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Lecturer Contacts

(All Office Hours By Appointment)

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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:

1776: Edward Gibbon. *How the Roman Senate Helped Kill the Republic*
1938: Thomas Mann, *The Coming Victory of Democracy*
1966: Robert F. Kennedy. "Courage and Daring"
1968: Martin Luther, Jr., "The Arc of History"
1968: Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have Been to the Mountaintop"
1985: Joel L. Swerdlow, *To Heal a Nation*
2014: Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *The Collapse of Western Civilization* (a novel)
2019: Jill Lepore, *This America*
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 by one of the Youth Poet Laureates at the Library of Congress.

Suggested Course Materials

Sunblock; comfortable walking shoes

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Role of Lecturers

Each Lecturer will be assigned to work with a group of 12 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.

During each class session in the Archer Center, the Lecturers will conduct an hour-long discussion with their Group after each lecture.

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.

Academic Calendar **Class Schedule**

In general, the weekly class meetings will follow this format:

6:30-7:30 pm General Meeting with Dr. Swerdlow
7:30-8:45 pm Discussion Groups with your Lecturers
9-9:30 pm Wrap-up with Dr. Swerdlow

Class 1a: Monday, January 10, 7- 9 am

Sunrise at the Lincoln Memorial

7 am - Meet at steps to Lincoln Memorial on the Constitution Avenue side of the Memorial. BE ON-TIME!
Breakfast bars provided. Dress warmly and wear comfortable shoes for walking. Bring your own water bottle.
9-9:45 am Walk to Archer Center

Class 1b: Tuesday, January 11, 7-9 pm

Review of syllabus; explanation of assigned readings; discussion of the skills you will have the opportunity to acquire (each in your own way); introduction of Lecturers; and preparation for our first walks together.

Meet on Teams

Classes 2 and 3: Friday, January 14

Museum Day

ALL - Meet at the Museum of the Bible (outside the entrance at 10 am)

Lunch provided.

Museum of the Bible

While in the Museum, we will break into teams that each addresses:

- Is Museum Literacy an adequate way to understand this museum?
- What would Jill Lepore think about the Museum?
- What truths does this museum teach—how and why?

Air & Space Museum

While in the Museum, we will break into teams that each addresses: What does Museum Literacy tell you about this museum? Find something in the Museum and use it to Think in Time.

Before class

- *Read: This America*, pp.11-52; think about: What are Lepore's definitions of "democracy," "past," and "truth"? How and why do they differ from yours? Do you trust her—why? What is her main argument?
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Class 4: 9 am-Noon (Jan 19, 20)

Museum Walk

- **Groups A & B meet Wednesday, January 19**
- **Groups C & D meet Thursday, January 20**

A short walk during which we put into action each of the three primary skills listed in the class learning objectives.

Meet at 9 am in front of the Renwick Gallery

We will visit the following sites and engage in activities and discussions focused on topics listed below:

Renwick Gallery:

- Museum Literacy
- Art (and, in particular, use of new technologies) as an avenue to truth
- Given its location, what does this museum say about democracy?

LaFayette Park

- Statue Literacy: Reading the Andrew Jackson statue
- Truth about the Past: New marker noting that people held in slavery built the White House

Black Lives Matter Plaza

Thinking in Time—Has anything like this happened before?

Before class

- *Read: This America*, rest of book; think about: Is Lepore's concept of New Americanism valid and useful?
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Class 5: Thursday, January 27, 6:30-9:30 pm

Ford's Theatre

We will attend a performance of "The Mountaintop" at Ford's Theatre. Please see <https://www.fords.org/performances/current-and-upcoming/covid-health-and-safety-performances/> for COVID safety requirements. If you're unable to attend, please complete the alternative assignment listed below.

Before class:

- *Read: Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have Been to the Mountaintop"*

A copy of the script is available here: <https://www.augustaplayers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/The-Mountaintop-Katori-Hall-.pdf>

Alternative to attending the live performance

Ford's Theatre requires all patrons to show proof of vaccination in order to enter the facility. To accommodate persons who do not wish to reveal this information, we are also offering a virtual option. If you do not wish to attend the event in person, please let Keenan know by COB on Wednesday, January 19, 2022.

You must also complete this **alternate assignment on January 27:**

Watch the play (https://youtu.be/5xjS_HB5THU) and then participate in a discussion hosted by Prof. Greg Burnett on Teams that begins at 8 p.m. ET.

Class 6: Tuesday, February 1, 6:30-9:30 pm

The Politics of National Memory in Countries other than the U.S.

Meet at Archer Center or on Teams

*Groups C & D – Archer Center

*Groups A & B - Teams

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION GROUP TOPIC: What Basic Truths Guide the Politics of National Memory?

Class 7: Tuesday, February 8, 6:30-9:30 pm

Democracy and Science

Meet at Archer Center or on Teams

*Groups A & B – Archer Center

*Groups C & D - Teams

Before Class:

- *Read: The Collapse of Western Civilization* (a novel); think about: Is Preventative Fiction like this useful?
- *Visit: Museum of Natural History*; think about: Does Thinking in Time about the natural world differ from thinking in Time about Human History?

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION GROUP TOPIC: What Do the Museums on the Mall Teach About the Relationship Between Democracy and Science?

Class 8: Tuesday, February 15, 6:30-9:30 pm

The Death of Democracy

Meet at Archer Center or on Teams

*Groups C & D – Archer Center

*Groups A & B - Teams

Before class:

- *Read:* Thomas Mann, *The Coming Victory of Democracy*; think about: How does Mann define “democracy:” Why?
- *Visit:* Holocaust Memorial Museum; think about: What stories does this museum tell about how democracies stay vibrant and how they die?

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION GROUP TOPIC: What Can Thinking In Time teach about the death of democracy?

Class 9: Tuesday, March 1, 6:30-9:30 pm

The Latino American Museum

Meet at Archer Center or on Teams

*Groups A & B – Archer Center

*Groups C & D - Teams

Before class

- *Visit:* Museum of the American Indian; think about: In its presentation of the past of the U.S., what lessons does this Museum offer the future Latino and Women’s museums?

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION GROUP TOPIC: What could this new museum accomplish?

Class 10: Tuesday, March 8, 6:30-9:30 pm

The American Women’s History Museum

Meet at Archer Center or on Teams

*Groups C & D – Archer Center

*Groups A & B - Teams

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION GROUP TOPIC: What could this new museum accomplish?

Class 11 Tuesday, March 15, 6:30-9:30 pm

“New Americanism”

Meet at Archer Center or on Teams

*Groups A & B – Archer Center

*Groups C & D - Teams

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION GROUP TOPIC: Is Lepore’s concept of New Americanism valid and useful?

Class 12: Tuesday March 29, 6:30-9:30 pm

The “Arc of History”

Meet at Archer Center or on Teams

*Groups A & B – Archer Center

*Groups C & D - Teams

Before class

- *Read:*
 - Robert F. Kennedy, “*Courage and Daring*”
 - Martin Luther, Jr., “*The Arc of History*”
 - To Heal a Nation*; think about: What does this story teach about how America thinks about its Constitution?
- *Visit:* Constitution Gardens
- *Visit:* the National Archives; note how the Founding Documents are displayed, and think about:
 - 1/ Is the National Archives a museum, and readable via Museum Literacy? and
 - 2/ What story does the Rotunda of the Archives tell about U.S. history?

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION GROUP TOPIC: What can the National Mall teach us about the Arc of History?

CLASS 13: Tuesday, April 5, 6:30-9:30 pm

The National Museum of African American History and Culture

Meet at Archer Center or on Teams

*Groups C & D – Archer Center

*Groups A & B - Teams

Before class

- *Read:* *On Juneteenth* (entire book); *How the Word is Passed* (select chapters).
 - Think about: What lessons do these books teach that are useful today? Are these lessons in the Museum of African-American History and Culture?
- *Visit:* American History Museum and the Museum of African-American History and Culture
 - Find a story in each and use it to make an argument via Thinking in Time.

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION GROUP TOPIC: How can this museum help the U.S. seek truth?

Class 14, Tuesday, April 12, 6:30-9:30 pm

The National Museum of African American History and Culture (*continued*)

Meet at Archer Center or on Teams

*Groups A & B – Archer Center

*Groups C & D - Teams

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION GROUP TOPIC: What can American democracy learn from African American music?

Class 15: Tuesday, April 19, 7 pm. NOTE THE TIME!

Sunset on the Mall

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

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.