

## POLI 613: SPECIAL TOPICS IN POLITICAL THEORY: RACIAL DOMINATION AND WHITE SUPREMACY

Mondays, 11h35-14h25, in Leacock 541

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M 3:30-4:30	T 10:00-12:00
TH 2:00-3:00	
Sign up <a href="http://bit.ly/winterschedule">http://bit.ly/winterschedule</a>	Sign up <a href="https://goo.gl/6BHHL">https://goo.gl/6BHHL</a>

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is a reading-intensive course focusing on the history, operations, and effects of the European conquest of North America and the establishment of a slave society thereupon. Its primary objective is to familiarize students with classic and contemporary attempts to grasp, in theoretical terms, the social and political ramifications of this history of racial domination and white supremacy.

### COURSE TEXTS:

We recommend purchasing the following texts. They are available at The Word Bookstore, at 469 Milton St. (cash/cheque only). They are also available on course reserve in the Humanities & Social Sciences Library.

Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008).

Coulthard, Glen Sean, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

Du Bois, W. E. B., *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007).

James, C.L.R., *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012).

Douglass, Frederick, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Penguin, 2003).

Turner, Dale, *This is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

Hartman, Saidiya V., *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997).

All other readings are either directly linked to in this document or will be available on myCourses.

Students are encouraged to read texts in the original languages. Contact us for bibliographic information.

## **SCHEDULE:**

**\*\*Note:** Because of the American Political Science Association Annual Conference and Rosh Hashanah, our first two meetings will be at irregular times, to be established. These will be substantive seminars, and students will have to complete all the readings and attend these meetings.

### **Sep 9 Introduction**

**5:30–8:00 pm 429 Leacock**

#### **Please note unusual time and location**

*Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (film), directed by Alanis Obomsawin,  
[https://www.nfb.ca/film/kanehsatake\\_270\\_years\\_of\\_resistance](https://www.nfb.ca/film/kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance) (watch at least first hour).

Mackey, Frank, *Done With Slavery: The Black Fact in Montreal, 1760-1840* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2010), Introduction, chs. 1 & 4.

Weaver, Vesla M., "The Missing Lesson of Ferguson," *Balkinization* (blog), August 11, 2015, <http://balkin.blogspot.ca/2015/08/the-missing-lesson-of-ferguson-conduct.html>

### **Sep 17 Racialized Justice**

**2:30-5:30 pm 422 Ferrier**

#### **Please note unusual time and location**

Gooding-Williams, Robert, *Look, a Negro! Philosophical Essays on Race, Culture and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2006), ch. 6.

Matsuda, Mari J., "Looking to the Bottom: Critical Legal Studies and Reparations," in Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, eds., *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: Norton, 1995), 63-79.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic* (June 2014),  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

Crenshaw, Kimberlé, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," in Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas (eds.) *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, (New York: Norton, 1995), 357-383.

Razack, Sherene, *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), ch. 5.

Guenther, Lisa, *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and Its Afterlives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), ch. 3.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé, "Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Anti-Discrimination Law," in Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas (eds.) *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: Norton, 1995), pp. 103-126.

### **Sep 21 White Lordship and Black Bondage**

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, "Self-Sufficiency and Non-Self-Sufficiency of Self-Consciousness; Mastery and Servitude" (aka "Lordship and Bondage"), in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Terry Pinkard (Unpublished Draft, 2010), 161-173.

Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008).  
Gooding-Williams, Robert, *Look, a Negro! Philosophical Essays on Race, Culture and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2006), ch. 1.

**Sep 28            Slavery**

Douglass, Frederick, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Penguin, 2003).  
McKittrick, Katherine, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), ch. 4.

**Oct 5             Slavery**

Hartman, Saidiya V., *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997).

**Oct 12            No class (Thanksgiving)**

**Oct 19            The Black Radical Tradition (I)**

Du Bois, W. E. B., *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), chs. 1, 2, 4-7.  
Du Bois, W. E. B., *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), chs. 1, 6, 9.  
Du Bois, W. E. B., "The Conservation of Races," in *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), 179-188.

**Oct 26            The Black Radical Tradition (II)**

James, C.L.R., *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012).  
Robinson, Cedric J., *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 175-318

**Nov 2             From Social Death to Afro-Pessimism**

Patterson, Orlando, "On Slavery and Slave Formations," *New Left Review*, 1/117 Sep.-Oct. (1979): 31-67.  
Brown, Vincent, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," *The American Historical Review*, 114/5 (2009): 1231-1249.  
Spillers, Hortense, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics*, 17/2 (1987): 64-81.

Wilderson, Frank B. III, "Gramsci's Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society?" *Social Identities*, 9:2 (2003): 225-240

Moten, Fred, Review of Saidyia Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, *The Drama Review*, 43/4 (1999): 169-175.

Moten, Fred, "The Case of Blackness," *Criticism*, 50/2 (2008): 177-218.

Sexton, Jared, "The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism," *InTensions*, 5 (2011).

**Nov 9**            **No class**

**Nov 16**            **Settler Colonialism (I)**

Marx, Karl, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy. Volume One*, trans. Ben Fowkes, (London: Penguin, 1976), chs. 31-33.

Deloria Jr., Vine, "Circling the Same Same Old Rock," in Ward Churchill (ed.), *Marxism and Native Americans* (Boston: South End Press, 1983).

Smith, Andrea, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Boston: South End Press, 2005), ch. 3.

Nichols, Robert. "Indigeneity and the Settler Contract Today," *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 39/2 (2013): 165-86

Tully, James, *Public Philosophy in a New Key: Volume 1, Democracy and Civic Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008), chs. 7-8.

**Nov 23**            **Settler Colonialism (II)**

Turner, Dale, *This is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

Simpson, Audra, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), ch. 5.

Byrd, Jodi A., *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), ch. 4.

**Nov 30**            **Settler Colonialism (III)**

Coulthard, Glen Sean, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

**Dec 7**            **Whiteness**

Du Bois, W. E. B., "Jefferson Davis as a Representative of Civilization," in *Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1986).

Roediger, David R., *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Verso, 2007), chs. 5, 6, 8.

Harris, Cheryl I., "Whiteness as Property," in Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: Norton, 1995): 276-291.

Ahmed, Sara, "A Phenomenology of Whiteness," *Feminist Theory*, 8/2 (2007): 149-168.

Vallières, Pierre, *White Niggers of America; the Precocious Autobiography of a Quebec "Terrorist"*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), ch. 1.

Austin, David, *Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex and Security in Sixties Montreal* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2012), ch. 4.

### **COURSEWORK AND GRADES:**

Written assignments for this course will consist of (i) weekly short reflection papers; (ii) a seminar paper proposal; and (iii) a 15-30 page seminar paper due at the end of the semester.

Reflection papers should be 1-2 pages long (single-spaced) and discuss the assigned reading for the week (or part thereof). They due in hard copy at the beginning of every class. Students are required to turn in a total of ten weekly reflection papers. As the reflection papers constitute a key part of your preparation for class, no extensions will be granted.

Paper proposals are due the week of November 30. They should be 1-2 pages long and outline the research questions and arguments of your paper as well as include brief bibliographies. All students should meet with at least one of the instructors to discuss their proposals.

Seminar papers are due on December 18. They should be 15-30 pages in length and can take various forms, which we will discuss during the course of the term.

Please note that all assignments are due on the dates indicated in the syllabus.

Your written work will be graded on originality, reasoning and argument, organization, clarity of exposition, and style.

Final grades are determined by the seminar paper and proposal (60%) and by your intellectual contributions to the class—participation, preparedness, reflection papers— (40%). You must receive a passing grade for each component of the course to pass the class as a whole.

**Attendance and Participation:** Come to class having read the day's assignment and prepared to discuss the material. You are responsible for all of the assigned material, including the parts we do not discuss in class. **NB:** As per McGill's courtesy policy ([http://www.mcgill.ca/files/conted/Code\\_of\\_Professional\\_Conduct\\_Classroom\\_CCE.Final.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/files/conted/Code_of_Professional_Conduct_Classroom_CCE.Final.pdf)), cell phone use, texting, emailing, and surfing the web are prohibited during class. Additionally, we will regularly impose special "focus-intervals" during which the use of laptops and other electronic devices will not be permitted. Please prepare by having the material and your notes available in hard copy and prepare to take notes by hand during these intervals.

## **RULES, POLICIES, AND PEDANTRIES:**

Because it is in everyone's interest that the coursework end when the course ends, we will not consider a request for K in the absence of documented extenuating circumstances. (Having too many papers to write is not enough – we all have too many papers to write.)

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant-e a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. Please note that I take plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty seriously, and your work will be reviewed for potential plagiarism issues by means of text-matching software.

As the instructors of this course we endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with us and the Office for Students with Disabilities/MyAccess (514)398-6009.