

W.P. Holbrook, Ph.D.

BLACK POLITICAL THOUGHT

Fall Term 2018

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Office: 303 Conklin Hall

Hours: Tues 1:30-2:30

“Black Political Thought” is presented this term as a reading course focused on the historical development of political perspectives and strategies among African Americans (and more broadly, the African diaspora) from the 17th century to the present. Lectures, readings, classroom discussions, and examination essays will compare and assess political tendencies within a broad thematic framework. Themes will range from nationalist resistance to socialism, feminism/womanism, conservatism, progressive liberalism, and pan-Africanism. Leadership, organizations, the reparations debate, and grassroots activism are also examined. Much attention will be given to intersectionality, and to the links and associations that can be made when considering politics, social class, gender, sexuality, and race. Mass incarceration, race and the criminal justice system, and the Black Lives Matter movement are a major focus in our studies. In addition to assigned readings, a documentary film series is also a part of the course calendar.

One class session will be devoted to the African American community’s response to, participation in, and assessment of the mid-term elections in November.

Books: The following books have been ordered at the Rutgers University Book Store.

1. Ta-Nehesi Coates. BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME. (Spiegel & Grau)
2. Eddie Glaude. DEMOCRACY IN BLACK. (Broadway Books)
3. Tayari Jones. AN AMERICAN MARRIAGE. (Algonquin Books)
4. Michelle Alexander. THE NEW JIM CROW: MASS INCARCERATION IN THE AGE OF COLORBLINDNESS. (New Press)
5. Jesmyn Ward. SING UNBURIED SING. (Scribner)

Additional Readings: Some of our readings will be found as articles or short data sheets to be accessed on the internet.

Student Requirements: Students are expected to attend each meeting of the class. Moreover, classroom participation is rewarded. Bonus points can be earned by attending and reviewing designated public lectures by guest speakers scheduled this term. A mid-term examination is included as a part of the course calendar. The format for the examination will be roughly 30 per cent “fill in the blanks”; the remaining 70 per cent of the examination will be essays. A final paper of 12 to 15 pages is required. The paper will address a thematic question which will require students to draw from information, data, and perspectives provided in the assigned books. The final paper is due on Thursday, 6 December.

