Comparative Political Theory: Race, Civilization, and Empire (3 credits)

UMass Amherst
Spring 2018
Room: TBA
Time: Wed. 6:45-9:15

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Course Overview

In recent years, political theorists have begun to engage in an enterprise called “comparative political theory” by turning attention to non-Western texts and theorists who have written outside of the geographic and theoretical coordinates of European political thought. At the same time, scholars in international political theory have fruitfully examined the role of empire and colonialism in shaping foundational concepts of Western political thought. Although these two areas of scholarship are somewhat connected, they often fail to inform each other. On the one hand, scholars of comparative political theory tend to ignore questions of empire, power, and colonial hierarchy, instead focusing on dialogue among what they perceive as separate civilizational traditions (e.g. West and non-West). On the other hand, scholars of empire and colonialism tend to focus exclusively on canonical thinkers in the history of Western political theory, ignoring how subaltern subjects also engaged questions of empire both partially from within and from without Western political thought.

In seeking to bridge comparative political theory and political theories of empire and colonialism, this seminar takes a different approach. Instead of comparing “Western” and “non-Western” systems of thought as discrete traditions of theorizing, we will examine the transmission and translation of ideas in relation to global systems of race and empire. While comparative political theory takes for granted the existence of bounded religious and political traditions, transnational approaches emphasize how processes of cross-cultural negotiation transform the conceptual foundations of modern political thought. We will thus read European thinkers who have either justified or disavowed systems of European imperialism in conversation with postcolonial and anti-colonial thinkers who have contested those very systems of power.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

Course readings, seminar discussions, and writing assignments are designed to help you to:

- Develop an in-depth understanding of the intellectual foundations of comparative political theory and political theories of empire and colonialism;
- Learn the essential analytical and argumentative tools involved in political theory;
- Make progress toward requirements necessary for successful completion of the graduate field examination in the history of political thought and/or contemporary theory;
- Learn the key interpretive skills involved in bringing different intellectual and theoretical traditions in conversation with one another;
- Produce original works of scholarship suitable for presentation at professional meetings and/or publication in academic journals.
Course Readings

Required Readings: There will be several required books to buy for this course. All of these titles are available at the University bookstore. All other readings will be posted on the course website: https://moodle.umass.edu. Required texts:

- Mahatma Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (Cambridge, 2009)
- Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Press, 2004)
- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Writings on Empire and Slavery* (Johns Hopkins, 2003)

Assignments and Evaluation

This is an advanced political theory seminar and as such students should come to class fully prepared to discuss the assigned course readings. Grades will be based on original research papers (20-25 pages) on topics of the student’s choosing (50%), two short response papers to the week’s readings (4-5 pages each), which includes framing 2-3 questions that can guide seminar discussion for that week (10% each), an oral presentation of one week’s readings and seminar facilitation for that week (10%), and general seminar participation (20%). The oral presentations and response papers should both avoid summary of the readings and instead present an analytic perspective on the readings that helps facilitate seminar discussion.

Course Policies

Academic Honesty Policy Statement

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. The procedures outlined below are intended to provide an efficient and orderly process by which action may be taken if it appears that academic dishonesty has occurred and by which students may appeal such actions.

Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of
intent. For more information about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please see the Dean of Students’ website:  http://umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/

**Disability Accommodations**
The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to making reasonable, effective and appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities and help create a barrier-free campus. If you are in need of accommodation for a documented disability, register with Disability Services to have an accommodation letter sent to your faculty. It is your responsibility to initiate these services and to communicate with faculty ahead of time to manage accommodations in a timely manner. For more information, consult the Disability Services website at http://www.umass.edu/disability/.

**Reading List and Class Schedule**

**Week One (1/24) – Introduction – No Reading**

**Week Two (1/31) – Comparative Political Theory in the Age of Empire**

James Tully, “Deparochializing Political Theory,” *Journal of World Philosophies*, 1, pp. 51-74  
Jennifer Pitts, “Political Theory of Empire and Imperialism,” pp. 211-235  
Charles Mills, “Decolonizing Western Political Philosophy,” *New Political Science*, 37, pp. 1-24

**Recommended:**

Robbie Shilliam, *The Black Pacific: Anti-Colonial Struggles and Oceanic Connections*  
Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*  
Margaret Kohn and Keally McBride, *Political Theories of Decolonization*  
Daniel Kapust and Helen Kinsella, *Comparative Political Theory in Time and Place*  
Juliet Hooker, *Theorizing Race in the Americas*  
Andrew March, “What is Comparative Political Theory?”  
Melissa Williams and Mark Warren, “A Democratic Case for Comparative Political Theory”  

**Week Three (2/7) – Du Bois and Kant – Empire, Universal History, and the Idea of Africa**

Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, pp. 241-311  
Du Bois, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” *The Souls of Black Folk*
**Recommended:**

WEB Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*
Du Bois, *Darkwater and Dusk of Dawn*
Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*
Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Color Line*
Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afro-Asiatic Roots of Civilization*
Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo*
Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*
Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*

**Week Four (2/14) – Du Bois and Kant – Cosmopolitanism and Perpetual Peace**

Kant, “Perpetual Peace,” *Political Writings*, pp. 93-115
Kant, *Writings on Race and Geography*, *Race and the Enlightenment* (Wiley), pp. 38-64

**Strongly Recommended:**


**Recommended:**

GWF Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*
Anthony Pagden, “Stoicism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Legacy of European Imperialism”
Inez Valdez, “It’s Not About Race: Good Wars, Bad Wars, and Kant’s Anti-Colonialism”
James Tully, *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity*
Katrin Flikschuh and Lea Ypi, *Kant and Colonialism: Historical and Critical Perspectives*
Thomas McCarthy, *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development*
Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens*

**Week Five (2/21) – James and Rousseau – The Haitian Revolution and the Rights of Man**

CLR James, *The Black Jacobins*, pp. vii-144, 224-378
David Scott, “Tragedy’s Time: Postemancipation Futures Past and Present”

**Recommended:**

Sybille Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Rev*
Michel Rolp-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*
David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*
Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History*
Adom Getachew, “Universalism after the Post-Colonial Turn: Interpreting the Haitian Rev”
Adam Dahl, “Black American Jacobins: Radical Abolition and the Transnational Turn”
Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the Caribbean*
Nick Nesbitt, *Universal Emancipation: The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment*
Alejo Carpentier, *Kingdom of This World*

**Week Six (2/28) – James and Rousseau – Slavery and the General Will**

Chris Miller, *The French Atlantic Triangle* (Duke, 2008), chapter 3 (& skim chapter 1)

*Recommended:*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Equality*
Jimmy Casas Klausen, *Fugitive Rousseau*
Jane Gordon, *Creolizing Political Theory: Reading Rousseau through Fanon*
Jane Gordon and Neil Roberts, *Creolizing Rousseau*
Neil Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage*
Louis Sala-Molins, *Dark Side of the Light: Slavery and the French Enlightenment*
Tzvetan Todorov, *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought*
Daniel Black, *The Coming*

**Week Seven (3/7) – Mariategui and Marx – Incan Communism**


*Recommended:*

Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*
Michael Lowy, “Marxism and Romanticism in Mariategui”
Thomas Angotti, “The Contributions of Mariategui to Revolutionary Theory”
Katherine Gordy, “Strategic Deployments,” *Comparative Political Theory*
Lance Selfa, “Mariategui and Latin American Marxism,” *ISR*

**Week Eight (3/14) – Spring Break – No Class**

**Week Nine (3/21) – Mariategui and Marx – Eurocentrism and Oriental Despotism**

**Recommended:**

Kevin Anderson, *Marx at the Margins*
Edward Said, *Orientalism*
Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”
Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* and *Ethnological Notebooks*
Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society*
Friedrich Engels, *Origins of the Family and Private Property*
Vivek Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*
Louis Althusser, “Contradiction and Over-Determination,” *For Marx*

**Week Ten (3/28) – WPSA Meeting in San Francisco – No Class**

**Week Eleven (4/4) – Gandhi and Mill – Nonviolence and Swaraj**

Mahatma Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, 1-124
Karuna Mantena, “Another Realism: The Politics of Gandhian Non-Violence”

**Recommended:**

Alexander Livingston, “Fidelity to Truth: Gandhi and the Genealogy of Civil Disobedience”
Bikhu Parekh, *Gandhi’s Political Philosophy*
Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*
MN Roy, *Radical Humanist: Selected Writings*
Leela Gandhi, *The Common Cause: Postcolonial Ethics and Democracy*
Ajay Skaria, *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi’s Religion of Resistance*

**Week Twelve (4/11) – Gandhi and Mill – Liberal Imperialism**

Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, chs. 3-4, 16-18 (pp. 32-56, 181-214)
Mill, “A Few Words on Non-Intervention,” *Foreign Policy Perspectives* No. 8, pp. 2-6
Uday Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 46-76

**Recommended:**

Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*
Domenico Losurdo, *Liberalism: A Counter-History*
Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization*
Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire*
Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*
Margaret Kohn and Daniel O’Neill, “A Tale of Two Indias”
Inder Marwah, “Two Concepts of Liberal Developmentalism”
Bikhu Parekh, “Liberalism and Colonialism: A Critique of Locke and Mill”
Duncan Bell, “John Stuart Mill on Colonies”
Week Thirteen (4/18) – Fanon and Tocqueville – Violence and National Culture

Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 1-62, 145-233
Jean-Paul Sartre, Preface to *Wretched of the Earth*, pp. xliii-lxii
Glen Coulthard, “Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition”

*Recommended:*

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*
Albert Memmi, *Colonizer and Colonized*
Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
Azzedine Hadour, “Sartre and Fanon: On Negritude and Political Participation”
Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*
George Ciccariello-Maher, *Decolonizing Dialectics*

Week Fourteen (4/25) – Fanon and Tocqueville – Democratic Empire

Tocqueville, “Report on the Abolition of Slavery (1839), pp. 3-53
Jennifer Pitts, “Empire and Democracy: Tocqueville and the Algeria Question”

*Recommended:*

Sheldon Wolin, *Tocqueville between Two Worlds*
William Connolly, *Ethos of Pluralization*
Cheryl Welch, “Colonial Violence and the Rhetoric of Evasion”
Margaret Kohn, “Empire’s Law: Colonialism and the State of Exception”
Roger Boesche, “The Dark Side of Tocqueville: On War and Emoire”
Kevin Duong, “The Demands of Glory: Tocqueville and Terror in Algeria”
Adam Dahl, *Empire of the People*

Week Fifteen (5/2) – TBD

Cesaire and Freud or Bolivar and Montesquieu?