

AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT
Political Science 516: Graduate Seminar in American Political Thought
University of Washington
Winter 2022
5 Credits
Wednesday, 1:30-4:20 p.m.
Course Website: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1518930>

Jack Turner
133 Gowen
jturner3@uw.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday, 2-4 p.m.

DESCRIPTION

This seminar introduces students to African American political thought as a distinct body of political theoretical knowledge—of general philosophical claims about freedom, resistance, intersectional oppression, leadership, insurgency, autonomy, and the nature of black politics. We will read major texts by Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, Anna Julia Cooper, W.E.B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, and Stokely Carmichael/Kwame Ture. Secondary readings will be drawn from *African American Political Thought: A Collected History* (2021), edited by Melvin L. Rogers and Jack Turner. We will pay close attention to both (1) the content of the texts and (2) questions of how to interpret the texts in a responsible scholarly manner.

Writing assignments will focus especially on the challenge of responsible interpretation. Students will write a 6-to-8-page midterm paper so that they may get feedback on their skills in textual reading and scholarly writing. They will then write a 15-to-20-page research paper at the end of the term on a text or thinker of their choice.

Class will meet regularly Weeks 1-8. Students will then have week 9 off to work on their research paper. Students will then do research presentations to the class in Week 10. Final papers are due at the end of finals.

TEXTS

The books below are available at the University Book Store. The editions specified are recommended. Readings not included below will be posted on Canvas.

Martin R. Delany, *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Robert Levine (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

Frederick Douglass, *The Speeches of Frederick Douglass*, ed. John R. McKivigan, Julie Husband, and Heather L. Kaufman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South*, intr. Janet Neary (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2016).

W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil*, intr. Manning Marable (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1999).

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (New York: Amistad, 2006).

Richard Wright, *12 Million Black Voices* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).
Stokely Carmichael/Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).
Melvin Rogers and Jack Turner, eds., *African American Political Thought: A Collected History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021) [AAPT].

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

1. Complete each week's reading prior to seminar.
2. Choose one week's reading and make an oral presentation on it at the start of seminar. The presentation should highlight striking themes in the works and pose a question that can serve as a jumping off point for class discussion.
3. Write one 6-to-8-page paper at the mid-point of the course, answering a prompt on the assigned readings provided by the instructor.
4. Write a 15-to-20-page research paper at the conclusion of the course. Preferably, it should be on a thinker or text in Black political thought not assigned in this class. But it's also permissible to do a paper on an assigned text that uses other texts by that author—as well as historically contemporaneous texts and secondary sources—to shed additional light on the text in question. A prospectus for the research paper is due in Week 8.

ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES

Midterm Paper:

Prompt distributed Thursday, January 27; paper due Monday, February 7.

Research Paper Prospectus:

Instructions distributed Thursday, February 10; prospectus due Monday, February 21.

Research Paper:

Due Friday, March 18.

EVALUATION

Quality of weekly participation:	15%
Quality of seminar presentation:	15%
Midterm Paper:	20%
Research Paper:	50%

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability should contact Disability Resources for Students, 448 Schmitz Hall, V: (206) 543-8924, TTY: (206) 543-8925, uwdss@u.washington.edu. If you have a letter from DRS confirming the need for academic accommodations, please present this letter to me so that we can discuss and arrange accommodations.

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/) (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/) (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).

CLASS SCHEDULE

1. January 5 Political Theory and Black Traditions

Read:

- a. bell hooks, "Theory as Liberatory Practice" (1994) [PDF]
- b. Michael Hanchard, "Contours of Black Political Thought: An Introduction and Perspective" (2010) [PDF]
- c. Melvin L. Rogers and Jack Turner, "Political Theorizing in Black: An Introduction" (2021), in *AAPT*, 1-29.

2. January 12 Martin R. Delany (1812-1885)

Read:

- a. *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* (1852) [Selections], in *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Robert S. Levine (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 189-216.
- b. "Call for a National Emigration Convention of Colored Men" (1853), 240-242.
- c. "Political Destiny of the Colored Race on the American Continent" (1854), 245-279.
- d. *Blake; or, The Huts of America*, in *Delany: Documentary Reader* (1862) [Selections], 297-314.
- e. *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party* (1861) [Selections], 336-357.
- f. Robert Gooding-Williams, "Martin Delany's Two Principles, the Argument for Emigration, and Revolutionary Black Nationalism" (2021), in *AAPT*, 77-94.

3. January 19

Frederick Douglass (1818-1895)

Read:

- a. “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (1852), in *The Speeches of Frederick Douglass*, ed. John R. McKivigan, Julie Husband, and Heather L. Kaufman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 55-92.
- b. “The Freedmen’s Monument to Abraham Lincoln” (1876), 337-355.
- c. “The Decision Has Humbled the Nation” (1883), 356-373.
- d. “Self-Made Men” (1893), 414-453.
- e. “Lessons of the Hour” (1894), 454-497.
- f. Sharon Krause, “Frederick Douglass: Nonsovereign Freedom and the Plurality of Political Resistance” (2021), in *AAPT*, 116-141.

4. January 26

Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964)

Read:

- a. *A Voice from the South* (1892)
- b. Carol Wayne White, “Anna Julia Cooper: Radical Relationality and the Ethics of Interdependence” (2021), in *AAPT*, 192-211.

5. February 2

W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963)

Read:

- a. *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* (1920)
- b. Paul Taylor, “W. E. B. Du Bois: Afro-modernism, Expressivism, and the Curse of Centrality” (2021), in *AAPT*, 235-259.

6. February 9

Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960)

Read:

- a. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)
- b. Farah Jasmine Griffin, “Zora Neale Hurston’s Radical Individualism” (2021), in *AAPT*, 314-329.

7. February 16

Richard Wright (1908-1960)

Read:

- a. *Twelve Million Black Voices* (1941)
- b. Tommie Shelby, “Richard Wright: Realizing the Promise of the West” (2021), in *AAPT*, 413-438.

8. February 23

Stokely Carmichael / Kwame Ture (1941-1998)

Read:

- a. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (co-authored with Charles V. Hamilton) (1967)
- b. Brandon M. Terry, “Stokely Carmichael and the Longing for Black Liberation: Black Power and Beyond” (2021), 593-630.

9. March 2

Research Week – No Class

10. March 9

Research Presentations