

PSCI 3054: AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

THE AMERICAN DREAM

COURSE SYLLABUS

SEMESTER: Fall 2023

CLASSROOM: Eaton Humanities Building 1B80

MEETING TIME: M, W, F 9:05 - 9:55 am

INSTRUCTOR

NAME: Sarah Brown (she/her)

EMAIL: Sarah.E.Brown@colorado.edu

OFFICE: Ketchum 125

OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays, 10 am - noon (drop in), and by appointment

CLASS DESCRIPTION AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

PSCI 3054, American Political Thought, investigates American political theories and ideas throughout the country's history. This iteration of the course organizes those theories and ideas around a recurring theme in American Political Thought- The American Dream.

What are the different visions of the American Dream? Where do these come from? And how have American political ideas, people, and events shaped, solidified, or shifted people's understanding of the American Dream?

This course is a recurring

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COURSE SCHEDULE

All readings, podcasts, and written assignments listed under each date are due by the start of class. I recommend completing the readings in the order they are listed.

- sometimes only portions of the reading are assigned.

This course schedule is subject to change. If there are any changes to the schedule, I will communicate these to you in lecture and via email.




WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

[Short Writing Assignment 1](#) (Due Thursday by 11:59 pm)

Initial Learning Reflection (Due Friday by 11:59 pm)

MONDAY, AUGUST 28
8:55 AM
8:55 AM



WEEK 5 – INDIVIDUAL VIRTUE

Short Writing Assignment 5 (Due Thursda



WEEK 7: THE CONSTITUTIONAL DEBATE

[Short Writing Assignment 7](#) (Due Thursday by 11:59 pm)

Mid-Semester Learning Reflection (Due Friday by 11:59 pm)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 9

AP Sources Simplified- "[Comparing the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution](#)" (5 min)

(Or Skim the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution

New Hampshire Public Radio Civics 101- "[Founding Documents: The](#)

WEEK 8: CONTRADICTIONS IN EQUALITY IN THE EARLY UNITED STATES
[Short Writing Assignment 8](#) (Due Thursday by 11:59 pm)

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WEEK 10: EQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY OVER TIME

[Short Writing Assignment 10](#) (Due Thursday by 11:59 pm)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30

Michelle Alexander- "Introduction" in *The New Jim Crow*

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1

: Astra Taylor- "Free to Be Winners" *Crw*





WEEK 14: IDENTITY AND OBSTACLES TO ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Short Writing Assignment 14 (Due Thursday by 11:59 pm)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4

Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex"

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

Ta-Nehisi Coates- "The Case for Reparations"



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

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WEEK 15: COURSE CONCLUSION

Final projects (Optional- Due Thursday by 11:59 pm)

Grade Reflections (Due Thursday by 11:59 pm)

Short Writing Assignment 15 (Due Thursday by 11:59 pm)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

: Rebecca

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THE WORK OF THE COURSE

- Individual or Group Oral Exams- A conversation with me or a group of your peers

FEEDBACK AND (UN)GRADING

This class is designed to allow you to focus on understanding the material, apply it to things that interest you, take academic risks, and grow your skillsets in a variety of ways. Research shows that students are less able to do these things when they are [worried about their grades](#). Therefore, while you will get a final grade at the end of the term,

I will instead provide you with feedback that will help you to improve your understanding of the concepts and readings and the way you communicate that understanding to others.

You will receive a variety of types of feedback in class, including:

- Whole Class Comments- Written feedback addressed to everybody to offer suggestions that most people in class would benefit from implementing.
- Peer Feedback- Comments from your peers on your work
- Individual Written Feedback- My comments on your written work, typically your learning assessments. Please know that I always read all of your short writing assignments, but you may not always receive an individual written comment.
- Numeric Feedback - A score between 1 and 5 that does not act as a formal grade, but rather indicates to you how well I perceive you to be understanding the material.

Final grades in the course will be determined based on

1. How much of the work for the class you opt to do
2. Your proficiency with course concepts and readings
3. How much you feel you have learned in the course
4. How much you improve your skills throughout the semester

In general, if you do the work I am asking you to do (Attend 32 classes, complete 8 short writing assignments, demonstrate a good-not perfect- understanding of the course concepts, and complete your learning reflections, including an end of semester grade meeting) you are guaranteed a B in the course. Students who opt to do less work will receive a lower grade. Students wanting to earn a higher final grade (A, A-, or B+) exceed the requirements for the course. To earn these grades, students must complete a final project or portfolio in the course. Additionally, most students earning these marks at the end of the semester attend more than the required 80% of classes, work diligently to improve their short writing assignments over the course of the semester, and work to attain a high level of proficiency with readings and concepts by the end of the semester.

The following table, while not the be-all-end-all of final grades, helps to lay out the work you should anticipate doing to attain the grade you want.

32 Classes +	32 Classes +	26 Classes +	20 Classes +
Complete 8+	Complete 8+	Complete 6+	Complete 4+
Demonstrate Good High Proficiency (4-5)	Demonstrate Good Proficiency (4)	Demonstrate Some Proficiency (2-3)	Demonstrate Some Proficiency (2-3)
Complete 3/3	Complete 3/3	Complete 3/3	Complete 2/3
Required	Optional	Not Required	Not Required
Required	Required	Optional	Not Required

The final grade you decide to aim for is not a reflection of who you are as a person, your work ethic, your passion for political theory, etc. It is merely a reflection of the grade you want or need to earn in the class. I will not judge you, think less of you, give you less feedback on the work you submit, or otherwise change my interactions with you based on the grade you decide to try to earn. At any given time, we all have different commitments and life circumstances that constrain or enable our choices. Please know that you are free to choose the grade that is right for you and accommodate your needs.

COURSE POLICIES

LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND MAKE UPS

This is an active learning class. Much of what you learn will come from your active participation in class sessions. As such, you are expected to attend class and to participate actively in class meetings. Because this course is interactive, participation (and therefore, attendance) are an integral part of your course grade. There are no "make ups" for participation. That said, you are a human being first and a student second. If you are not feeling well, please prioritize your health and well being and do not come to class. There is plenty of "wiggle room" for you to take care of yourself when the need arises. I encourage you to communicate with me regarding ongoing illnesses or life

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic misconduct, including cheating, plagiarism, submitting one's own work for credit in more than one class or semester, fabricating data, lying or threatening or bribing others, will be reported to the Honor Code. Additionally, academic misconduct will result in a no credit on the assignment in question and, depending on the severity of the offense, a failing grade in the course.

Plagiarism is, generally speaking, the representation of someone else's work as your own. This includes using a paper writing service or generative AI. Additionally, please be aware that plagiarism includes the failure to cite appropriately, which can be accidental. Ensure you have [cited thoroughly and properly](#) for all assignments. More information can be found on the [honor code website](#).

Often, students behave in academically dishonest ways when they are stressed or overwhelmed. Plagiarism or cheating are never the right answer to this. Instead, please talk to me if you need an extension or need additional tools to help you with planning and assignment management. Remember that the consequences of submitted plagiarized work are much greater than the consequences of submitting incomplete or unpolished work, late work,

POLITICAL DISAGREEMENTS

This course is about politics. In contemporary culture, politics can be polarizing. Some people lean into

If you have a temporary medical condition or require accommodations which you require accommodations, please get in touch with me as soon as possible to discuss options for continuing with the course. Also see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the D

PREFERRED STUDENT NAMES

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

HONOR CODE

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty.

All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: honor@colorado.edu, 303-492-5550. Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND/OR RELATED RETALIATION

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [inter-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), [intimate partner violence](#) (dating or domestic violence), stalking and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. Behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) is the primary office for these concerns,

