

POSC 275: Black Radical Political Thought, 1919-1969 (49352)

Spring 2018

Tuesday/Thursday 1:15-3:00pm

CMC 206

Course Instructor: Dr. Charisse Burden-Stelly
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Office Hours: Leighton 223
Tuesday: 3:30-5:00pm
Wednesday: 12:00-2:00pm
Thursday: 9:00-11:30am

Course Description

This course examines the history of Black radical political thought in the United States between 1919 and 1969. It explores internationalist and diasporic linkages that shaped, and were shaped by, Black American forms of activism, protest, and intellectual engagement. In the context of this course, "Black Radicalism" refers to militant politics and thought that fundamentally challenge, nationally and globally, economic exploitation, structural and material dispossession, social inequality, political marginalization, and private and state-sanctioned antiblackness. The political ideologies and practices we will consider include: revolutionary Black nationalism, pan-Africanism, Black internationalism, socialism and communism, and Black gender insurgencies. The course will pay special attention to the sociohistorical and political economic contexts that give rise to different Black radical formations.

Course Goals

This course is designed to help students achieve the following learning objectives:

- Identify the themes, issues, and questions that constituted Black radical political thought between 1919 and 1969
- Recover Black leftist and radical thinkers and modes of thought that have been erased, marginalized, or distorted by anticommunism, antiradicalism, and intellectual McCarthyism
- Understand the dialectics of radical insurgency and repression that shaped the experience of the Black left
- Discern how larger social movements, including the New Negro Movement, World Communism, Third Worldism, and Black Power, influenced and were influenced by Black radical theory and praxis
- Describe the origins, development, and contradictions of Black radical political thought
- Encourage students to think deeply, critically, analytically, and historically

Course Expectations

This is a writing-rich, discussion-based course. Students are expected to come to class conversant in the material, to contribute regularly, and to engage in critical intellectual inquiry.

All students must come prepared to each class with readings, notes, and questions. Readings should be completed by the date under which they are listed. Every member of the course is required to abide by the “Course Code of Conduct” agreed upon during the first meeting. The professor reserves the right to remove any students who are disruptive, disengaged, or disrespectful.

Students can expect the professor to: arrive to each meeting prepared and on time; to follow the syllabus or notify the class of modifications ahead of time; to evaluate and return work in a thorough and timely manner; to be available during scheduled office hours; to communicate clearly about expectations; and to run the course fairly and judiciously.

Laptops or tablets may be used for note taking in class. However, if these devices are used for social media, surfing the internet, or engaging in activities unrelated to the course, it will negatively impact students’ participation grade, and they may be asked to leave the class.

Skype Discussions

Throughout the term, scholars will be Skyping into the course to give brief discussions (typically 25-30 minutes) followed by a question and answer period. These Skype sessions will give students an opportunity to connect with professors whose work we will be reading and who are experts on the areas we will be covering. Students are expected to be engaged, attentive, and to come prepared with questions.

Required Readings

- Davies, Carole Boyce. *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Gore, Dayo F. *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War*. New York: NYU Press, 2011.
- Horne, Gerald. *Black Revolutionary: William Patterson and the Globalization of the African American Freedom Struggle*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013.
- Lester, Julius. *Revolutionary Notes*. New York: Grove Press, 1969. **[This book is available for purchase on Amazon.com and is on course reserve at Gould Library]**
- Makalani, Minkah. *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

*All other assigned readings will be available on Moodle

Course Requirements

Black Radical/Revolutionary Political-Intellectual Biography

- Abstract + sources Due April 17 by 8pm
- Paper outline Due April 26 by 8pm
- Rough draft Due May 15 by 8pm
- Final draft Due May 29 by 8pm

Revolutionary Notes

- First Submission Due April 24 by 8pm
- Second Submission Due May 22 by 8pm

Participation

- Quizlets
- Low-stakes assignments
- Discussion

Grading Policy

Political-Intellectual Biography	70%
“Revolutionary Notes”	20%
Participation	10%

Final grades will be based on cumulative points. A maximum of 1000 points can be earned. The following conversion from number to letter grade will be used:

A- 90-93.9	A 94-100	
B- 80-83.9	B 84-87.9	B+ 88-89.9
C- 70-73.9	C 74-77.9	C+ 78-79.9
D- 60-63.9	D 64-67.9	D+ 68-69.9
F below 60		

“Revolutionary Notes”

In the style of Julius Lester, throughout the course, students will prepare “revolutionary notes” responding to themes inspired by course readings, discussion, current events, etc. Entries will usually be 250 words in length and will critically engage the questions posed in the prompt. Responses should be formatted as dated entries in a single Word document and submitted on **April 24** and **May 22**. I will not be grading your individual entries but rather the completeness and thoroughness of the entire document.

Written Assignments

All assignments should be submitted **via Moodle** by 8:00pm on the due date. Please have a backup technology plan in place; no extensions will be granted based on computer or internet malfunctions.

Assignments must be appropriately formatted (12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, double spaced, right justified), and should include a **cover page** with the student’s name, date, and title of the assignment. They should follow Chicago Manual of Style **endnote format**. A guide can be found at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>

The Writing Center, located in 420 4th Libe, has peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the [writing center website](#). You can reserve specific times for conferences by using the [online appointment system](#). Walk-ins are welcome, though writers with appointments have priority.

The reference librarian for this course is Kristin Hall (khall@carleton.edu). Students are encouraged to ask a librarian for help with their research in this class. They can drop by the library's [Research/IT desk](#) to ask any question, at any point in the process, or chat with a librarian online 24/7. Librarians help students find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. For more information on hours and librarians, visit the Gould Library website at go.carleton.edu/library.

Academic Dishonesty

Students are required to do their own work for individual assignments and to make an equal contribution when working in groups. The professor expects that anything submitted is entirely original and a reflection of the student's own efforts. Plagiarism, cheating, bribes, and other forms of academic dishonesty will earn a failing grade. Plagiarism is defined as use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source. Examples include: the wholesale copying of passages from works of others and passing it off as your own, and the use of the views, opinions, insights, analysis, or research of another without proper citation. Additionally, Carleton's student disciplinary policy will be strictly followed in dealing with incidents of academic dishonesty.

Late Policy

Students will have three (3) "late days" that can be used throughout the term for any assignments, exams, or quizzes. Once those days are exhausted, no late work will be accepted, no make-up quizzes will not be administered, and no exceptions will be granted. The final paper is excluded from this policy.

Disabilities

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services Office (Burton Hall 03) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, sensory, or physical), please contact Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services, by calling 507-222-5250 or sending an email to cdallager@carleton.edu to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

This Syllabus

This syllabus is a "live" document. While students may rely upon it for readings and assignments, they should also be aware that unforeseen contingencies might require that we alter the syllabus from time to time. Students are therefore encouraged to attend class regularly and check Moodle for any updates or changes.

Course Schedule

I. What is Black Radical Political Thought?

March 27, 2018

Reading:

- Mark Solomon, “African Americans and American Communism,” in *Encyclopedia of Black Studies* edited by Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama (pp. 14-19)
- Winston James, “Being Black and Red in Jim Crow America: Notes on the Ideology and Travails of Afro-America’s Socialist Pioneers, 1877-1930” (pp. 45-63)
- Robin D.G. Kelley, “‘The Negro Question’: Red Dreams of Black Liberation,” in *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (pp. 36-59)
- Eric McDuffie, “Introduction” in *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (pp. 1-24)
- Rose Brewer, “Black radical theory and practice: Gender, race, and class,” (pp. 109-122)

March 29, 2018

Reading:

- *In the Cause of Freedom*, Introduction (pp. 1-21)
- Reference Librarian + Writing Center Presentation

II. Radical Black Internationalism and the New Negro Movement

April 3, 2018

Reading:

- *In the Cause of Freedom*, Chapter 1-Chapter 3 (pp. 23-102)

April 5, 2018

Reading:

- *In the Cause of Freedom*, Chapter 4 (pp. 103-131)

III. The Black Left and the Radical 1930s

April 10, 2018

Reading:

- *In the Cause of Freedom*, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 (pp. 133-194)

April 12, 2018

Reading:

- *In the Cause of Freedom*, Chapter 7 and Epilogue (pp. 195-230)

IV. Black Radicalism and the Onset of the Cold War

April 17, 2018

Reading:

- *Radicalism at the Crossroads*, Introduction-Chapter 2 (pp. 1-73)
- Abstract + Sources Due

V. Race, Labor, and Cold War Civil Rights

April 19, 2018

Reading:

- *Radicalism at the Crossroads*, Chapter 3 (pp. 74-99)

April 24, 2018

Reading:

- *Radicalism at the Crossroads*, Chapter 4 (pp. 100-129)
- *Black Revolutionary*, Introduction, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-28)
- Revolutionary Notes I Due

April 26, 2018

Reading:

- *Left of Karl Marx*, Preface and Introduction (pp. xiii-27)
- *Black Revolutionary*, Chapter 2-Chapter 4 (pp. 29-66)
- Midterm Evaluations
- Outline Due

May 1, 2018

Reading:

- *Left of Karl Marx*, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 (pp. 29-97)

May 3, 2018

Reading:

- *Black Revolutionary*, Chapter 5-Chapter 8 (pp. 67-123)

VI. Anticommunism, Antiradicalism, and Repression

May 8, 2018

Reading:

- *Left of Karl Marx*, Chapter 3 (pp. 99-129)
- *Black Revolutionary*, Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 (pp. 125-156)
- Peer Review

May 10, 2018

Reading:

- *Black Revolutionary*, Chapter 11-Chapter 12 (pp. 157-187)
- Gerald Horne Skype Lecture

May 15, 2018

Reading:

- *Left of Karl Marx*, Chapter 4-Chapter 6 (pp. 131-239)
- Rough Draft Due

VII. The Black Freedom Movement and Black Power Radicalism

May 17, 2018

Reading:

- *Radicalism at the Crossroads*, Chapter 5 and Conclusion (pp. 130-165)
- *Black Revolutionary*, Chapter 13-Chapter 14 (pp. 189-217)

May 22, 2018

Reading:

- *Revolutionary Notes*, Introduction and Part I. (pp. ix-24)
- Christopher M. Tinson, “Prologue,” “Voices of Black Protest,” and “Radical Commitments,” in *Radical Intellect: Liberator Magazine and Black Activism in the 1960s* (pp. 1-37, 74-119)
- Chris Tinson Skype Lecture

May 24, 2018-

Reading:

- *Revolutionary Notes*, “SNCC and the Israeli-Arab War” to “Agents and Demonstrations” (pp. 27-60)
- Ashley Farmer, “The Black Revolutionary Women” and “The Third World Black Women,” in *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (pp. 50-92, 159-192)
- Revolutionary II Notes Due

May 29, 2018

Reading:

- *Revolutionary Notes*, “The Oppression of Whites” to “Self-Criticism” (pp. 61-203)
- Course Evaluations
- Final Paper Due