Philosophy & Cultural Diversity

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Course Description:
American society is clearly culturally diverse. This course will explore the cultural diversity of America through an interrogation of the concept of “America” as a social contract: a state constructed by certain individuals and groups, perhaps for certain individuals and groups. This course will first engage with the vision of American politics seen through the philosophical tradition of social contract theory. We will then look at the various assumptions and biases of this mode of American political co-existence through the critical lenses of racial and feminist concerns. From here, we will look to other marginalized groups, spaces and communities for alternative visions of politics and ‘living together’ in America. We will end by attempting to envision a new America by taking seriously our ‘contractarian’ inheritance and the alternatives. Throughout this course, we will endeavor to understand a various cultural heritages in a time of great division and, hopefully, find tools with which to imagine and enact a ‘better’ future.

Required Texts:
Course Readings (Posted on Blackboard)

Course Requirements:

Essays
There will be three essay assignments: 2 essays of your choice from both sections of the course and 1 final essay.
• PAPER 1: For the first essay, you will choose to write on our American contract and at least ONE of the critiques of this contract (choosing from one of the 4 covered). This essay will include a relevant discussion of what the contract is, what one critique of that contract is (that you've chosen to write about), and a critical evaluation of that critique. You will receive more guidelines in Week 3. The paper will be due the beginning of Week 7.
• PAPER 2: For the second essay, you will choose to write about one of the three “Alternatives” discussed in weeks 7-9. We will discuss the guidelines for these papers in Week 7. They will be due the Monday after the end of the unit you're writing about.
• FINAL: The final essay will be your opportunity to construct a “new” America in light of what we've discussed throughout the course. I will provide more specific guidelines for this paper at the end of Week 9 and the paper will be due during finals week.
[All essays MUST BE SUBMITTED BOTH through the Blackboard SafeAssignment system AND on paper. Note: late essays will NOT be accepted.]

Presentation
Students will present their final 'reconstruction' papers/projects during week 10. These presentations should be approximately 10 minutes, and should clearly reflect your 'reconstructive vision.' Guidelines for these presentations will be handed out in Week 6.

Attendance & Participation
This course will require a high level of responsibility, participation, and engagement. Active participation in class, and successful completion of class reading and written assignments will be crucial for your success in this course. In general, attendance at all lectures and discussion sections with regular participation in discussions will receive an A. Two missed discussions (without a valid excuse) will generally lead to a C grade (modified up or down by lecture attendance and participation in discussion). More than three missed classes will lead to a failing participation grade.
Course Grade:

Grading Rubric:
- Attendance & Participation 10%
- Papers 1 & 2 25% EACH
- Final Paper 25%
- Presentation 15%

University of Oregon Philosophy Department Grading Standards:
A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.
B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.
C = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.
D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

[Please note: what counts as “excellent” or “OK,” for example, depends in part upon the nature and level of the class in question.]

Exam/Paper Grading
- A 92% or above
- A- 90-92%
- B+ 87-89%
- B 83-86%
- B- 80-82%
- C+ 77-79%

Students registered with the P/NP grading option must receive at least 70% in order to receive a P.

Academic Honesty
You will receive 0 points for any assignment in which you have engaged in acts of academic dishonesty, which include: plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating. If you are unsure about what 'counts' for any of these, don't hesitate to ask.
## Course Schedule:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WK.  1</td>
<td>Social Contract</td>
<td>Introduction &amp; Expectations&lt;br&gt;Locke, <em>Second Treatise</em> (Chapters)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WK.  3</td>
<td><em>Our</em> Social Contract</td>
<td>Declaration of Independence&lt;br&gt;Constitution of the United States&lt;br&gt;Emancipation Proclamation&lt;br&gt;13th, 14th, 15th, and 19th Constitutional Amendments</td>
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<td>WK.  6</td>
<td>Limitations &amp; Exclusions: Structures</td>
<td>Sheth, “Muslim Immigrants in Post-9/11 American Politics: The 'Exception' Population as an Intrinsic Element of American Liberation Midterm Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>WK.  8</td>
<td>Alternative Politics</td>
<td>Deloria &amp; Wildcat <em>Power and Place</em> (Chapters 1,3,6,10,13,14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WK.  9</td>
<td>Alternative Politics</td>
<td>Anzuldua <em>Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza</em> (Chapters 1-7)</td>
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<td>WK. 10</td>
<td>Reconstruction</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>WK.</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td><em>FINAL ESSAY DUE</em></td>
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