Aesthetics, Values, & Authority:

***Inventing America: Ideas, Ideals, and Ideologies***

The Honors College, Florida International University

IDH 3034-U22 (86430)

Fall 2020 Tuesdays and Thursdays: 2:00-3:15 PM

August 23 – December 4

Classroom: OBCC (Arena) 119

**Professor:**

José F. Rodríguez, Ph.D.

Assistant Teaching Professor, The Honors College

**Contact Info:**

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Office hours: by appointment

**Overview:**

Since the inception of the United States, the concept of American democracy has been contested. While we were taught in elementary school that The Founding Fathers came together in Philadelphia to write the Constitution, we were not told how little they all agreed on as to what that constitution should contain. In essence, we’ve been inventing America from the very beginning. Recent changes to the political and cultural landscape have brought up age-old questions about American democracy, the extent of freedom of expression, and the defining values of the so-called American Character. Key to the invention of America has been the central role of public discourse.

This course will offer a contribution to that civil discourse. We’ll be making our own attempt at inventing America and debating the various issues facing our society today. The course will take on a multi-disciplinary perspective and students are encouraged to draw upon their various disciplinary areas for contribution. Understanding society and government should not be left to only those who study political science or sociology. We all live in this society and should take some time to deliberate as to what it means to us and to others.

**Course Objectives/Outcomes:**

* Students will gain an understanding of the fundamental issues related to freedom of speech, democratic processes, and civil engagement.
* Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical complexities that influence current debates on the role of government and place of democracy.
* Students will be able to articulate a clearer definition of abstract concepts related to notions of democracy, freedom, liberty, and other such terms.
* Students will learn to recognize the influence of Western values on how they perceive themselves and others.
* Students will be willing to engage in discussion that includes salient analysis and debate.

**Required Texts:**

Crick, B. (2002). *Democracy: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford Press: New York. ISBN: 978-

0-19-280250-7

Warburton, N. (2009). *Free Speech: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford Press: New York. ISBN:

978-0-19-923235-2

**Required Readings:**

*See Canvas for additional readings, PDFs, etc.*

**Attendance & Classroom Etiquette:**

This course is ***heavily*** reliant on student participation and interaction. Failure to attend class on a regular basis will deprive you of the needed context from which to understand the readings and assignments. It is your responsibility to check with your peers regarding missed work or discussions. It is **your** responsibility to catch up on what you missed in class. Any major changes to assignment due dates will be posted to Canvas; however, in general, you are responsible for knowing about what happened in class.

In this class, we will be discussing many contentious issues. I want to create an atmosphere of dialogue, curiosity, and exchange. I want all students to be able to express their feelings, thoughts, ideas, and opinions. However, I also want students to challenge their pre-conceived notions. I want students to engage with material and ideas that they might not agree with. Part and parcel of living in a plural society is encountering and engaging with those with whom we may not agree. This is a university, and we should be able to have a civil discourse that is based on facts (evidence), reason, and logic.

**Preferred Communication Channels & Email Etiquette:**

There are two ways to get in touch with me: Canvas or my FIU email. I prefer to receive email directly to my FIU email (see above). I am generally available to meet with you. For the time being, I will not hold regular office hours; rather, we can set up meetings individually, just email me to set up a time.

When emailing me, include all the following information: full name, Panther ID, course enrolled, and be specific with your request or question. You are expected to read all emails that I send, and I’ll assume that you’re aware of all material and calendar changes and other messages communicated through email. Do not submit assignments via email, I will not accept them. All assignments are to be submitted via Canvas. If you’re emailing to set up an appointment, offer some dates and times that you are available.

Do not submit assignments via email, I will not accept them. All assignments are to be submitted via Canvas. Unfortunately, I can (will) not accept Google Docs, convert them to some other file that is more easily opened. Google Doc assignments will not be accepted.

**Missing Submission Policy:**

All assignments are to be submitted and done online through Canvas (unless explicitly told otherwise). Assignments are due when they are due, no exceptions. Do NOT email the me at 11:58p.m. stating there was a problem uploading the material or taking an exam/quiz. *It is your responsibility to submit assignments in a timely manner*. Unsubmitted assignments will automatically receive a zero grade in Canvas.

**Expectations of Performance:**

This section is meant to clarify and state my expectations of students and their performance in this class. To perform well, I expect that student will do the following:

* Read **all materials** that are assigned, BEFORE class
* Ask questions and engage in discussion and conversation
* Put forth maximal effort in all assignments (don’t half-ass it)
* Make time for this course, even if that means making personal sacrifices
* Inform me of personal emergencies (don’t need all the details, just the basics)
* Organization is key, write down all due dates, be diligent, don’t let things pass!
* Come prepared for class

**Religious Observances:**

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements or scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor *at the beginning of the semester* of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.

**Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges:**

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center, if you have not done so already.

**Academic Misconduct Procedures and Penalties:**

In the Honors College, the term “honor” refers both to academic accomplishment and character. Students in Honors should therefore adhere to and be held to the highest standards of personal academic accountability. Academic dishonesty in any form, including plagiarism, is antithetical to the very definition of being an Honors student at FIU. Consequently, an Honors College student found responsible for academic misconduct will be dismissed from the College.

An Honors faculty member may bring charges of academic misconduct against an Honors student if the faculty member suspects plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct. The faculty member will decide whether to pursue informal resolution, file formal resolution charges, or take no further action, and will follow the procedures outlined in the Academic Misconduct Procedures available at <http://integrity.fiu.edu/misconducts.html>

**Academic Misconduct Policy:**

Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Honors College policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity. Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

FIU Code of Academic Integrity: <http://undergrad.fiu.edu/academic-integrity/index.html>

FIU Honors College Plagiarism Policy: <http://honors.fiu.edu/students/policies/#misconduct>

**Student Portfolios:**

The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students’ learning outcomes. The portfolio method allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. You will decide (with instructor consultation) what “artifacts” or assignments to include for consideration in your portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of the student learning outcomes.

Portfolios provide a rich context for students to show what they have learned and to explain their learning process. Because the Honors curriculum is meant to be thought provoking and reflective, student self-assessment through portfolios will facilitate learning and provide in-depth assessment.

Each Honors College course includes at least one assignment that could potentially fit portfolio requirements.

**Engagement Requirements:**

Honors College students are required to accumulate at least 20 engagement points each academic year (Fall and Spring) by attending Honors College activities. Students attending only one semester (Fall or Spring) are required to accumulate 10 engagement points. See: <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/citizenship/>

**Community Service:**

As always, Honors College students must also complete 20 volunteer service hours. These hours DO NOT count toward the 20 citizenship points discussed above. See <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/community-service/>

**Honors Education in the ARTS (HEARTS):**

The HEARTS program is designed to give Honors College students opportunities to “explore and appreciate different artistic and cultural traditions and modes of artistic expression. HEARTS will also serve as a clearinghouse (and curatorial framework) for our students to experience the arts on campus and in the community by providing them with information about cultural activities and access to performances with free or discounted tickets. See: <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/hearts/>.

**Additional Resources:**

***Panthers Care***

If you are looking for help for yourself or a peer, Panthers Care encourages you to express any concerns you may come across as it relates to any personal behavior concerns or worries you have, for the classmate’s well-being or yours; you are encouraged to share your concerns with FIU’s Panthers Care website <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/panthers-care/>

***Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)***

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers free and confidential help for anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns that life brings. Learn more about CAPS at <http://caps.fiu.edu>. Professional counselors are available for same-day appointments. Don’t wait to call 305-348-2277 to set up a time to talk or visit the online self-help portal.

**Global Learning Objectives:**

This course has been certified as meeting the university’s Global Learning requirement. The course’s major assignment, Oral History Project, satisfies all three of the Honors College Global Learning Objectives.

*Global Awareness*: Through your engagement in the oral history project, you will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape the diverse thinking of multiple figures in diverse cultural contexts.

*Global Perspective*: Through your engagement in the oral history project, you will be able to analyze the multiple causal forces that shape the perspectives of historical individuals — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.

*Global Engagement*: Through your engagement in the oral history project, you will demonstrate a willingness to engage in evidence-based investigation in order to solve a global issue.

*Global Learning Co-Curricular Activity*: You will perform at least twenty hours of Community Service per academic year either through the Honors College service partnerships or through other community service projects and/or events. If you want to apply this service to your graduation portfolio, be sure to document your hours.

**Course Assignments:**

*Individual and Team Assignments*

* There will be three individual assignments and two team-based assignments.
  + Five groups of three, plus two groups of two = 19 (total groups = 7)

*Analysis Paper (Individual Assignment)*

* In order to demonstrate your understanding of the material, the analysis paper will require you to reflect and react to the readings, lectures, and discussions and to select one topic which will be the focus of an *analysis* (not summary).
  + Excellent papers will have incorporated the various theories and ideas from both the class discussions and assigned readings. Students are welcome to include additional material beyond what is assigned in class.
* All papers must conform to the following regulations: typed, double-spaced, proofread, free of major grammatical errors, front and back printed, and stapled. Please be brief and to the point…**no more than five pages**.
* Additional Considerations:
  + Take your paper to the Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.fiu.edu>
  + Excellent papers are free of major grammatical errors and have a clear logic and flow to the arguments; they’ve been proofread.
  + You are expected to adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Honors College and Florida International University.
* All papers must include the following information: Full Name, Panther ID, Course & Section, and Course Title.

*Reflection Papers (Individual Assignment)*

* At a few moments in the semester, you’ll be asked to reflect on what you’ve been learning and how you’ve been growing. Reflections are meant to help place what you’ve learned into context and to demonstrate your acquisition and comprehension of the course materials.
* Reflections are also meant for personal growth and development; they’re meant to show *you* were you’ve been and how far you’ve come along. Those who write thoughtful, comprehensive, and detailed reflections can expect to receive higher points than those who write surface-level summaries.

*Current Affairs Discussion (Team Assignment)*

* Every other week or so, one team will provide a reading to the class about a current topic in the news. The topic need not be political in nature, though it must have a focus on topics being discussed in class.

**EVERYONE IS EXPECTED TO READ THE ARTICLE!**

* Using the email available in Canvas, the group will send a link or copy of the article to the entire class **the night before they present**. The group will give a brief presentation and lead a discussion on the article. The presentation may include a brief summary of the article; but more importantly, it must **analyze, synthesize, and evaluate** the article’s importance to our understanding of the course topics. The group will need to develop **five discussion questions**.
* Use the resources from the class (i.e., texts, PDFs, podcasts, vids) to help provide a vocabulary for understanding the concepts addressed in the article. Groups will be assessed on their ability to clearly identify the problems presented in the article, provide a response and/or possible solutions, collaborate with each other, and promote discussion among their classmates.
  + DO NOT simply summarize. Remember, analysis is more than just summary (i.e., describing). Analysis involves breaking down ideas into smaller parts, synthesis involves assembling and arranging ideas, and evaluation involves making and defending judgments based on evidence. The purpose of this assignment is to **demonstrate your ability to explain and apply the topics** being discussed in class and in the readings.
* The current politicization of knowledge is making it more difficult to discover the truth in a biased-free manner (or as close to biased-free as we can get). Therefore, I’m limiting the sources from which you may draw your current affairs articles to the following news media outlets:
  + *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, National Public Radio, The Washington Post, The Atlantic Monthly, BBC News, Marketplace*
  + Notice the omission of all the major cable news channels.
* Teams will be assessed not only on the novelty of the topic chosen but also their ability to engage the entire class in discussion, as well as their ability to collaborate with each other. (15 mins for discussion).

*Student-Lead Discussions (Team Assignment)*

* Every other week or so, one group will provide a discussion and analysis of a designated reading. **EVERYONE MUST READ!**
  + The group will give a brief presentation and lead a discussion on the assigned reading. The presentation may include a brief summary of the article; but more importantly, it must **analyze, synthesize, and evaluate** the reading’s importance to our understanding of the topics we’ve been discussing in class or listed in the syllabus. The group will need to develop **five discussion questions**.
  + Use the other readings from the class (i.e., text, PDFs, podcasts, vids) to help provide a vocabulary for understanding the concepts you’ll be discussing. Groups will be assessed on their ability to clearly identify the problems presented in the reading, provide a response and/or possible solutions, collaborate with each other, and promote discussion among their classmates.
* DO NOT simply summarize. Remember, analysis is more than just summary (i.e., describing). Analysis involves breaking down ideas into smaller parts, synthesis involves assembling and arranging ideas, and evaluation involves making and defending judgments based on evidence. The purpose of this assignment is to **demonstrate your ability to explain and apply the topics** being discussed in class and in the readings.
* Teams will lead a class discussion on the chapter and may include a classroom activity. Teams will be assessed not only on the novelty of their presentation of the material but also their ability to engage the entire class in discussion, as well as their ability to collaborate with each other. (40 mins for discussion).

*Photo Essay (Individual Assignment)*

* Essays are usually written documents, a few pages, that require the use of language alone. A photo essay is the combination of pictures and words to tell a story.
  + You will provide a photo essay on the issue you feel that most confronts America today.
    - It can be national, regional, or even local
    - It can be political, social, economic, or all of them
  + Using photographs, you will have created a story that tells about a major issue confronting America. The pictures will have a logical sequence and will be, in many ways, like moving images.
  + Pictures must be carefully curated
* Your photo essay must contain the following:
  + Clear theme
  + Mostly original pictures, though you may need to use stock footage for some things
  + A written piece that explains the reasons for the selection of the photograph and how the entire series of pictures relate to one another and the theme at hand.
  + Additional Resources:
    - <https://www.photocontestinsider.com/photo-essay-examples/>
    - <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-create-a-photo-essay#what-is-a-photo-essay>
    - <https://www.lightstalking.com/create-meaningful-photography-essay-5-steps/>
    - <https://owl.excelsior.edu/online-writing-and-presentations/multi-modal-writing/multi-modal-writing-photo-essays/>
* On the due date, submit the following:
  + Folder with photo essay pics
  + Five-page maximum written portion

Unfortunately, I can (will) not accept Google Docs, convert them to some other file that is more easily opened. Google Doc assignments will not be accepted.

*In-Class Activities and Quizzes*

Unscheduled and unannounced. The student must be present to submit.

Assignments are due on the day indicated in this syllabus or as announced by the professor. No late assignments will be permitted. All assignments that are written are to be printed out and turned in during the class meeting on the day it is due. Assignments WILL NOT be accepted via email; DO NOT email papers, unless specifically instructed to do so.

**Course Grades:**

Analysis Paper(s) 20%

Reflection Papers 10%

Current Affairs Discussion 15%

Student-Lead Discussion 20%

Photo Essay 20%

Participation/Interaction 15%

**Grading Scale:**

A A- B+ B B- C+ C D F

93 90 87 83 80 77 70 67 66

This syllabus and the following calendar are tentative and thus subject to change. Changes will be announced in class or by email sent to students’ FIU address.

**COURSE CALENDAR (subject to change)**

*All dates are tentative, and the instructor holds the right to change due dates and presentation dates, providing ample notice to students.*

*Check Canvas for additional readings. Modules in Canvas are listed by the titles used below.*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topic of Discussion** | **Readings/Assignments** |
| *Week 1*  Tuesday  Aug 24 | Overview of syllabus, review course expectations, discuss group and individual assignments, begin discussion of course themes: what does it mean to be an American? | *Readings:* Course syllabus |
| *Week 1*  Thursday  Aug 26 | Inventing America: the myths we live by | *Readings:* Canvas PDF, The American Bible—Introduction; the Declaration of Independence |
| *Week 2*  Tuesday  Aug 31 |  | *Readings:* Canvas PDF, Myth and Meaning  **Aug 30: Last Day to Drop/Add** |
| *Week 2*  Thursday  Sep 02 |  | *Readings:* Canvas PDF, Ideas Americans Live by; Extra—The American Dream  ***Assign Teams*** |
| *Week 3*  Tuesday  Sep 07 | Underpinnings of Democracy: what does it mean and how is it supposed to function? | *Readings:* Democracy, Intro and Ch 1: The Word & the Deed  ***Due: Current Affairs Discussion #1 (Group 1)*** |
| *Week 3*  Thursday  Sep 09 |  | *Readings*:Democracy, Ch 3: Republicanism & Democracy  ***Due: Student-Lead Discussion #1 on Ch 3 (Group 2)*** |
| *Week 4*  Tuesday  Sep 14 |  | *Readings:* Democracy, Ch 6: The Conditions of Modern Democracy; Canvas PDF: What Democracy Is and Is Not…  ***Due: Current Affairs Discussion #2 (Group 3)*** |
| *Week 4*  Thursday  Sep 16 | Citizenship: duties, expectations, compulsories | *Readings:* Democracy, Ch 7: Democratic Citizenship  ***Due: Student-Lead Discussion #2 on Ch 7***  ***(Group 4)*** |
| *Week 5*  Tuesday  Sep 21 | *Writing Workshop on Analysis Papers* | *Readings:*  ***Due: Analysis Paper (First Draft)*** |
| *Week 5*  Thursday  Sep 23 |  | *Readings:* Democracy, Ch 4: Comme disait M. de Tocqueville |
| *Week 6*  Tuesday  Sep 28 | Freedom of Speech: Balancing liberty and responsibility | *Readings:* Free Speech, Ch 1: Free Speech  ***Due: Current Affairs Discussion #3 (Group 5)*** |
| *Week 6*  Thursday  Sep 30 |  | *Readings:* Free Speech, Ch 2: A Free Market in Ideas?  ***Due: Student-Lead Discussion #3 on Ch 2***  ***(Group 6)*** |
| *Week 7*  Tuesday  Oct 05 |  | *Readings:*Free Speech, Ch 3: Giving and Taking Offense  ***Due: Reflection Paper #1*** |
| *Week 7*  Thursday  Oct 07 | The Role of the Press in a Democracy | *Readings:* Canvas PDF, Journalism & Discourse  ***Due: Student-Lead Discussion #4 on Canvas PDF up to pg 31 (Group 8)*** |
| *Week 8*  Tuesday  Oct 12 |  | ***Student Participation Check-In*** |
| *Week 8*  Thursday  Oct 14 |  | *Readings:*  ***Due: Current Affairs Discussion #4 (Group 7)*** |
| *Week 9*  Tuesday  Oct 19 | Social Media and Democracy | *Readings:*Free Speech, Ch 5: Free Speech in the Age of the Internet; Canvas PDF, Six Ways Social Media Effects Democracy  ***Due: Student-Lead Discussion #5 on Ch 5***  ***(Group 1)*** |
| *Week 9*  Thursday  Oct 21 |  | *Readings:* Canvas PDF, Social Media & Democracy  ***Due: Current Affairs Discussion #5 (Group 2)*** |
| *Week 10*  Tuesday  Oct 26 |  | *Readings:* Free Speech, Conclusion: the Future of Free Speech; Canvas PDF, The Road to Digital Unfreedom—Three Painful Truths about Social Media |
| *Week 10*  Thursday  Oct 28 | Patriotism and Nationalism | *Readings:* Canvas PDF, Psychology of Patriotism & Nationalism  ***Due: Student-Lead Discussion #6 on Canvas PDF (Group 3)***  ***Due: Analysis Paper (Second Draft)*** |
| *Week 11*  Tuesday  Nov 02 |  | *Readings:* Canvas PDF, Research on Patriotism and Nationalism after 9-11  ***Due: Current Affairs Discussion #6 (Group 4)***  **Nov 2: Last Day to Drop with DR** |
| *Week 11*  Thursday  Nov 04 |  | *Readings:* Canvas PDF, Sen Fullbright on the American Character |
| *Week 12*  Tuesday  Nov 09 | Democracy and Populism | *Readings:* Democracy, Ch 5: Democracy & Populism  ***Due: Student-Lead Discussion #7 on Ch 5 (Group 5)*** |
| *Week 12*  Thursday  Nov 11 | Veteran’s Day Holiday—University Closed | **NO CLASS!!!** |
| *Week 13*  Tuesday  Nov 16 |  | *Readings:* Canvas PDF, Cult of Personality pgs 394-400; Wiki Definition  ***Due: Current Affairs Discussion #7 (Group 6)*** |
| *Week 13*  Thursday  Nov 18 | Individualism v. the Common Good | *Readings:* Canvas PDF, J. Stuart Mill—Individuality  ***Due: Current Affairs Discussion #8 (Group 8)*** |
| *Week 14*  Tuesday  Nov 23 |  | *Readings*: Canvas PDF, Maintaining Freedom  ***Due: Student-Lead Discussion #8 on Canvas PDF (Group 7)***  ***Due: Analysis Paper (Final Draft)*** |
| *Week 14*  Thursday  Nov 25 | **Thanksgiving Day Holiday** | **NO CLASS!!!** |
| *Week 15*  Tuesday  Nov 30 |  | ***Due: Photo Essay*** |
| *Week 15*  Thursday  Dec 02 |  | ***Due: Photo Essay***  ***Due: Reflection Paper #2*** |
| *Week 16*  Dec 07 & 10 | Final Week of Classes | ***GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR FINALS!!!*** |

**“People don’t have ideas, ideas have people”**

**– ­Carl Jung**

**Psychoanalyst**

**“Europe was created by history. America was created by philosophy”**

**– Margaret Thatcher**

**Former U.K. Prime Minister**

**“America is the only country that went from barbarism to decadence without civilization in between”**

**– Oscar Wilde**

**19th-20th Cent. British Playwright & Author**

**“Democracy arises out of the notion that those who are equal in any respect are equal in all respects; because [humans] are equally free, they claim to be absolutely equal”**

**– Aristotle**

**“The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people”**

**– George Washington**

**“Democracy is not a spectator sport”**

**– Marian Wright Edlman, Children’s Defense Fund Founder**