

Du Bois and After

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Tu/Th @ 11:30-12:50, Cooper 101
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Books : W.E.B. Du Bois, *Writings* (Library of America); *Darkwater* (Washington Square); *Dark Princess* (Mississippi); and Susan Gillman and Alys Eve Weinbaum (eds.) *Next to the Color Line* (Minnesota). All books are available at Amherst Books in downtown Amherst.

Course description : This course offers a systematic study of the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, drawing on the whole range of his life and writing in order to assess his importance for theorizing race, racism, and the human condition. What do we mean by "race"? How is our understanding of history, consciousness, and hope transformed by the experience of anti-black racism? What is the role of gender, class, and nation in theorizing race and racism? In Du Bois' early work on these questions, especially his masterpiece *Souls of Black Folk*, we encounter some of the most significant foundational work in the black intellectual tradition. Themes of double-consciousness, the color line, and the veil set many of the terms of discussion for the twentieth century and after. In this course, we will read this early work closely, but also consider the development of his later thought in historical and intellectual context, putting Du Bois in dialogue with his contemporaries William James, Booker T. Washington, Josiah Royce, and others, as well as considering contemporary appropriations of his work. Lastly, we will read Du Bois critically by considering recent scholarship on his often fraught relationship to questions of gender, class, and transnational identity. Across these readings, we will develop a deep, engaged appreciation of the scope and power of Du Bois' thinking and the fecundity of his intellectual legacy.

This course will be in seminar style and student-centered. We will begin with a set of readings, including some of Du Bois' most famous essays, his masterwork *Souls of Black Folk*, and three books that reflect his voice as both an autobiographer and creative writer. These readings will introduce us to the core ideas of Du Bois' work. From those readings, each student will develop an independent, semester-long project. As part of those projects, students will select essays by and/or about Du Bois for reading in the following weeks – we will read and discuss the student-selected essays in class. We will conclude with readings on Du Bois and class, gender, and sexuality in order to assess the limits and possibilities of his legacy.

Course requirements : The most important part of this course is your final project, which is a 20+ page paper (or approved equivalent) on a topic of your choosing. Your essay will comprise 60% of your grade, so is of utmost importance. As well, you are expected to come to class every day prepared and ready to discuss the material. Class participation comprises 20% of your grade. The remaining 20% will come from an ongoing class glossary project (details in a separate document), a project that will allow us to assemble notes and critical definitions as a collective endeavor.

No more than two unexcused absences are permitted, except in cases of emergency. If such an emergency arises, please be in contact with your class Dean as well as your professor, in order to have proper documentation of your situation. Attendance is mandatory in part because the class sessions are irreplaceable (you can only learn if you hear discussion of the ideas), in part – larger, in fact – because you are smart, observant, and interesting. Your classmates deserve to hear your reflections, critiques, and exploratory inquiries.

Course Readings

4 Sept – Hello!

6 Sept – 'Jefferson Davis as a Representative of Civilization'

11 Sept – 'The Conservation of Races' and 'The Development of a People' (r)

13 Sept – 'On Being Ashamed of Oneself: An Essay on Race Pride' and 'The Propaganda of History'

18 Sept – *Souls of Black Folk*, Chs. I-II

20 Sept – *Souls of Black Folk*, Chs. III-IV

25 Sept – *Souls of Black Folk*, Ch. X

27 Sept – *Souls of Black Folk*, Ch. XI

02 Oct – 'The Talented Tenth'

04 Oct – 'The Talented Tenth: Memorial Address' (r)

09 Oct – break

11 Oct – *Darkwater*

16 Oct – *Darkwater*

18 Oct – *Darkwater*

23 Oct – *Dark Princess*

25 Oct – *Dark Princess*

30 Oct – *Dusk of Dawn*

01 Nov – *Dusk of Dawn*

06 Nov tba

08 Nov tba

13 Nov tba

15 Nov tba

20 Nov – break

22 Nov – break

27 Nov tba

29 Nov tba

04 Dec – Carby, 'The Souls of Black Men'

06 Dec – Cooppan, 'Move On Down the Line: Domestic Science, Transnational Politics, and Gendered Allegory in Du Bois'

11 Dec – Tate, 'Race and Desire: *Dark Princess: A Romance*'

13 Dec – Moten, 'Uplift and Criminality'