

SOAN 288: DIVERSITY, DEMOCRACY, AND INEQUALITY IN AMERICA

Spring 2021

Carleton College

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Professor Wes Markofski

Class: MW 11:30am-12:40pm, F 11:10am-12:10pm (3a) (Online)

Office Hours: MW 3:45-4:45pm, Thurs 10-12pm or by appt.

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Does social difference always lead to conflict and inequality? Can we forge common ground with justice across deep differences? What forms of respect, recognition, reciprocity, and redistribution do democratic citizens owe one another? Can the cultivation of diverse human experiences and relationships across difference lead to more robust and ethical democratic institutions? We will explore these and related questions through a roughly equal mix of democratic theory and empirical studies of race/class/gender/religion diverse grassroots democratic movements in the U.S. In doing so, we will consider the demands and challenges of "different types of difference" (racial-ethnic, gender-sexuality, class-culture, citizenship, language, and religion) for addressing inequality and pursuing ethical democracy in the United States (and beyond).

Student Learning Outcomes

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology has specified six student learning outcomes we want students to acquire before graduating. The relevant outcomes for this course are:

- Articulating the complexity of contemporary socio-cultural phenomenon in their many dimensions (e.g., temporal, structural, spatial, and symbolic).
- Applying sociological theory to analyze socio-cultural phenomena.
- Learning how to connect information about historical and contemporary socio-cultural phenomena.
- Drawing upon your understanding of historical and contemporary socio-cultural phenomena to engage the world.

Course Materials

There are three required books for the course, which are available at the Carleton bookstore. Other required readings will be made available on the Moodle course website.

- Inazu, John D. 2016. *Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving through Deep Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stout, Jeffrey. 2010. *Blessed are the Organized: Grassroots Democracy in America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wood, Richard L. and Fulton, Brad R. 2015. *A Shared Future: Faith-Based Organizing for Racial Equity and Ethical Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Course Requirements

Your final grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

Participation 10%	[Due each class session]
Reading Questions 10%	[Due each class session]
RQ Fridays 5%	[Due each Friday]
BYO(D)T 5%	[Due Monday, 4/19]
Discussion Leadership Assignment 10%	[TBD]
3 Critical Response Papers 36%	[Due Monday of weeks 2, 4, 6 (Wed), 8]
Final Paper Presentation 4%	[Due Friday, 5/28 or Monday, 5/31]
Final Paper 20%	[Due Wednesday, 6/2]

A = 100-93; A- = <93-90; B+ = <90-87; B = <87-83; B- = <83-80; C+ = <80-77; C = <77-73; C- = <73-70; D+ = <70-67; D = <67-63; D- = <63-60; F = <60

Policy on Late Work: Late work will be penalized one grade increment (e.g., A to B, B to C) per day in the absence of clear and demonstrable extenuating circumstances (e.g., extended illness, family emergency, letter from dean's office, etc.).

Readings: To do well in this course, it is imperative that you commit to active, focused reading prior to each class meeting in order to complete the readings and reading questions and be prepared to engage dynamically in class discussions.

Some questions to keep in mind while reading: What is the main argument of the section/text? Key concepts and definitions? What evidence or methods are used to support the authors' arguments? What might be missing? Make a note of concepts/arguments you find difficult to understand (to bring up in class). Make a note of things you agree/disagree with, or find plausible/implausible, exciting/problematic, etc. (to bring up in class discussions).

Reading Questions: In order to facilitate active, critical engagement with the readings, and to stimulate discussion & debate with one another (through which much of our learning will occur), each student is required to upload via Moodle at least two reading questions prior to each class meeting:

- (1) One (or more) question, comment, or critique about a main idea in the text. (*Examples: The ideal of racial democracy great in theory, but I don't think it can work in practice, and here's why ... Or*

What does Habermas mean by “post-secular society”? Or Do multicultural identity politics provide a sufficient basis for democratic solidarity? ...)

- (2) One (or more) comment or question comparing, contrasting, or otherwise relating something from the readings to a prior reading, personal experience, or contemporary issue. *(Examples: Young’s notion of the politics of difference seems to differ from Anderson’s vision of the imperative of integration in a couple ways, here’s how ... Or What similarities and differences exist between the Black Lives Matter movement and democratic organizing as discussed in Wood and Fulton? Or Do Alexander and Habermas think about democracy and civil society in the same way? ...)*

Reading questions should be posted by 10am before each class session. You may miss two session’s worth of reading questions without consequence; beyond that, each failure to upload reading questions will incrementally lower your reading question grade. Reading question submissions can range from a couple sentences up to a single paragraph in length. The key is to demonstrate substantial, thoughtful engagement with each day’s readings.

Participation. Your personal success in this course (as well as its collective success) depends on your active and sustained engagement throughout the entire term. I expect everyone to participate at a high level; however, I recognize we don’t all have the same personalities or learning styles. While participation includes asking questions and contributing vigorously (yet respectfully) to class discussions and small group work, it also involves consistent presence and attentiveness to others throughout the term. Active participation also means refraining from non-course related use of electronic devices during class time. *Think of the class as a mini-democratic public sphere in which any and all questions, arguments, and perspectives can be brought to the table for deliberation, discussion, and critique.* You may miss two class sessions without consequence; beyond that, each missed class will incrementally lower your participation grade.

Civil Discourse @ Carleton: I strive to create an inclusive and respectful classroom that values diversity. Let’s work together to ensure that classroom discussions throughout the term reflect our shared commitment to academic and egalitarian norms of mutual respect, recognition, and tolerance. Note this does not mean engaging in “tone policing” or mandating emotionless argument: sometimes authentic academic/public discourse can become heated! Rather, it involves the difficult task of combining our passionate personal, intellectual, political, moral, or religious convictions with what the philosophical and psychological literature refers to as “intellectual humility,” defined as a “willingness to improve one’s knowledge of the world” and “low concern for intellectual domination” over others. It is “closely allied with traits such as open-mindedness, a sense of one’s fallibility, and being responsive to reasons. Thus, intellectual humility advocates for conviction through critical self-reflection” (humilityandconviction.uconn.edu). Let’s work together to listen to, and learn from, our different experiences and understandings of the world, even when we find it difficult to do so.

Please keep these ideas in mind, revisiting them at times throughout the term to aid our collective efforts at promoting civil discourse and learning across difference at Carleton:

- Listen carefully to what others are saying, even when you strongly disagree with what is being said. Comments you make (asking for clarification, sharing critiques, expanding on a point, etc.) should reflect that you have paid attention to the speaker's actual points.
- Respect others' rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own. When you disagree, challenge or criticize the idea, not the person.
- Don't interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
- Support your statements. Use evidence and provide a rationale for your points.
- Share responsibility for including all voices in the discussion. If you have much to say, try to hold back a bit; if you are hesitant to speak, look for opportunities to contribute.
- Recognize that we are all still learning. Be willing to change your perspective, and make space for others to do the same. (www.crlt.umich.edu/examples-discussion-guidelines)

Discussion Leadership Assignment: Those who have a say in how and what they learn tend to learn more and enjoy the process better. As such, each student, with a partner, will have the opportunity to facilitate class discussion for roughly one half of one class period (~30-35 minutes) during the term. This means you will be “extra familiar” with the required reading assignments, arrive with discussion questions, presentation, or other prepared discussion format, and be the primary discussion facilitators for the first segment of one class period. You will email me a brief outline of your discussion leadership plans by 9pm the day before you lead discussion.

BYO(D)T (Bring Your Own (Democratic) Theory): A short 3-4-minute in-class presentation describing an academic or non-academic democratic theorist and relating them to a theme/theory from class.

Critical Response Papers: Three 2-3-page (double-spaced) critical response papers, uploaded to Moodle by 11:59pm on 3 of the 4 weeks on which they are due (Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8). You have the freedom to choose which 3 of 4 dates you choose to submit response papers.

Final Paper Idea Presentation: A 3-4 minute presentation of your final paper, to be presented Friday, 5/31 or Monday, 6/3, describing your final paper main idea & argument, followed by peer feedback.

Final Paper: An 8-page (double-spaced) paper, due Wednesday, 6/2, at midnight, topic TBA.

Paper Formatting: All papers must be uploaded to Moodle in either a Microsoft Word or PDF file format and use APA, MLA, Chicago, or ASA citation styles.

Important Note: If at any point in the term you become concerned about your grade, a particular assignment, classroom participation or classroom climate issues, falling behind, or anything else, *please don't wait to come visit me during office hours or otherwise contact me!* The sooner we identify potential problems and concerns, the more effectively we will be able to work together to address them.

Plagiarism & Academic Integrity

In line with Carleton's policy on [academic integrity](#) and [plagiarism](#), it is assumed that a student is the author of all coursework submitted by that student. Please refer to Carleton's [full policy](#) for additional information or see me if you have questions.

Academic Support

College & COVID-19: In these unprecedented times, we will need to exhibit flexibility and patience with each other throughout the term. I have done my best to design the course so that everyone can be successful, regardless of personal circumstances. Communication will be key; please keep me updated about your situation in addition to reaching out to the other relevant offices on campus. If you experience significant technological problems that limit your ability to participate, please contact the ITS Helpdesk at 507-222-5999 or helpdesk@carleton.edu. For announcements of known technical issues, visit the [Helpdesk portal](#). If your personal situation (due to COVID-19 illness or other circumstances) begins to impact your ability to engage with the course, please contact me and/or the Dean of Students Office.

Taking Care & Well-Being: With the college, I urge you to take care of yourself—your health and well-being—throughout this term and your entire Carleton career. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, don't hesitate to contact me and/or other campus resources such as [Student Health and Counseling](#) or the [Office of Health Promotion](#).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services office (Henry House, 107 Union Street) 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, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact disability@carleton.edu or call Sam Thayer (?10), Accessibility Specialist (x4464) or Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services (x5250) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Technological Resources for Students with Disabilities: The Assistive Technology program brings together academic and technological resources to complement student classroom and computing needs, particularly in support of students with physical or learning disabilities. Accessibility features include text-to-speech (Kurzweil), speech-to-text (Dragon) software, and audio recording Smartpens. If you would like to know more, contact aztechs@carleton.edu or visit go.carleton.edu/aztech.

Learning Strategies & Time Management: Oscar Alvarez, Academic Skills Coach, is eager to help you develop learning strategies that work in the Carleton context. His goals are to heighten your awareness of your personal strengths and to offer different ways you can approach your academic work so you're more efficient and effective. For details on how to schedule a videoconference with Oscar, visit: [Learning Strategies & Time Management](#). If you prefer to learn these skills and strategies on your own, visit "[Helpful DIY Resources](#)."

Library: Librarians work as liaisons to academic departments, and yours can be found at <https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/library/help/help/liaisons/>. You can make an online appointment with your library liaison or chat with a librarian online 24/7. You can also [email and call](#). 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.

The Writing Center: The Writing Center is offering a full schedule of videoconferences with 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 their [online appointment system](#).

Class Presentations and Public Speaking: Speech coaching is a student-staffed resource designed to assist you with class presentations, comps talks, and other speech-related events. Your coach can assist you with speech & communication skills including clarity, organization, articulation, projection, body language, eye contact, and effective use of aids (e.g., notes, PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.). Depending on your goals, your coach can also work with you on the content of the presentation: organization, voice, clarity, and, ultimately, persuasive impact. For more information: go.carleton.edu/speakeasy.

The Term-Long Program for Multilingual Writers: If you are a second language writer and believe you might benefit from working individually with a writing consultant on a regular basis this term, email Renata Fitzpatrick, [Multilingual Writing Coordinator](#), at rfitzpatrick@carleton.edu. She can arrange once- or twice-a-week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term. *Meetings will be in an online format until in-person classes resume on campus.*

Title IX: Carleton is committed to fostering an environment free of sexual misconduct. Please be aware all Carleton faculty and staff members, with the exception of Chaplains and SHAC staff, are “responsible employees.” Responsible employees are required to share any information they have regarding incidents of sexual misconduct with the Title IX Coordinator. Carleton’s goal is to ensure campus community members are aware of all the options available and have access to the resources they need. If you have questions, please contact Laura Riehle-Merrill, Carleton’s Title IX Coordinator, or visit the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website: <https://www.carleton.edu/sexual-misconduct/>.

Course Outline and Reading Schedule

* Please read the selections in order as they are listed on the syllabus, and be sure to bring the day’s readings with you to class. Stop and start your reading at the obvious place (section beginning/end, first/last paragraph, etc.) unless otherwise noted.

THEORIZING DIFFERENCE & DEMOCRACY

Mon 3/29 (Week 1)

Course Introduction, Jane Addams and Ethical Democracy

- Jane Addams and Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Introduction to the Illinois Edition & Introduction

Wed 3/31

Difference and Inequality (1)

- Rogers Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, pp. 2, 4 (from “The third undertheorized”)-6 (stop at “Chapter 4”), Chapter One

Fri 4/2

Difference & Inequality (2)

- Elizabeth Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, Chapter One

Mon 4/5 (Week 2)

***** Critical Response Paper #1 Due *****

Gender & Sexuality (1)

- Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Foreword to the 2011 Edition, Chapter 6

Wed 4/7

Gender & Sexuality (2)

- Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, pp.91-95
- Nancy Fraser, “From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a ‘Postsocialist’ Age”

Fri 4/9

Religion & Language (1)

- Jürgen Habermas, “Religion in the Public Sphere” and “Notes on Post-Secular Society”

Mon 4/12 (Week 3)

Religion & Language (2)

- Michelle Dillon, “Can Post-Secular Society Tolerate Religious Differences?”
- Rogers Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, pp.4-6 (re-read), Chapter 3

Wed 4/14

Democracy, Nationalism, Immigration, & Citizenship (1)

- Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others*, Introduction & Conclusion

Fri 4/16

Democracy, Nationalism, Immigration, & Citizenship (2)

- Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others*, chapter 5

Mon 4/19 (Week 4)

***** Critical Response Paper #2 Due *****

- BYO(D)T

Wed 4/21

- BYO(D)T

Fri 4/23

Race & Ethnicity (1)

- Cornel West, *Democracy Matters*, pp. 63-86 (stop at “This stream”)
- OPTIONAL: Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*, pp.230 (start from “Prophetic pragmatism”)-235

Mon 4/26 (Week 5)

Race & Ethnicity (2)

- Mustafa Emirbayer and Matthew Desmond, *The Racial Order*, Chapter 7

PRACTICING DEMOCRACY WITH DIFFERENCE

Wed 4/28

A Shared Future (1)

- Richard Wood and Brad Fulton, *A Shared Future*, Introduction & Chapter 1

Fri 4/30

A Shared Future (2)

- Richard Wood and Brad Fulton, *A Shared Future*, Chapters 2-3

Mon 5/3 (Week 6)

Midterm Break

Wed 5/5

***** Critical Response Paper #3 Due *****

A Shared Future (3)

- Richard Wood and Brad Fulton, *A Shared Future*, Introduction to Part II, Chapters 4-5
- OPTIONAL: Chapter 6

Fri 5/7

A Shared Future (4)

- Richard Wood and Brad Fulton, *A Shared Future*, Chapter 7 & Conclusion

Mon 5/10 (Week 7)

Blessed are the Organized (1)

- Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized*, Preface, Chapter 1, Chapters 5-6

Wed 5/12

Blessed are the Organized (2)

- Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized*, Chapters 8-9, Chapter 11

Fri 5/14

Blessed are the Organized (3)

- Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized*, Chapters 16-17

Mon 5/17 (Week 8)

***** Critical Response Paper #4 Due *****

Blessed are the Organized (4)

- Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized*, Chapter 18 & Chapter 20

Wed 5/19

Confident Pluralism (1)

- John Inazu, *Confident Pluralism*, Introduction

Fri 5/21

Confident Pluralism (2)

- John Inazu, *Confident Pluralism*, Part I (Chapters 1-4)

Mon 5/24 (Week 9)

Confident Pluralism (3)

- John Inazu, *Confident Pluralism*, Part II (Chapters 5-8)

Wed 5/26

Confident Pluralism (4)

- John Inazu, *Confident Pluralism*, Conclusion

Fri 5/28

***** Final Paper Presentations *****

Mon 5/31 (Week 10)

***** Final Paper Presentations *****

Wed 6/2

Conclusion (TBA) (*Final Course Evaluations*)

***** Final Paper Due Wednesday, June 2, by Midnight *****