

Professor Currah  
Brooklyn College, CUNY  
Spring 2008  
4 hours; 4 credits  
Class meets Fridays 12:15 -- 2:40 and Tuesdays 12:15 -- 1:20  
Room 3403 James

Draft of January Feb. 1, 2008

## Political Science 12W -- Analytic Approaches to Political Problems: States and their Borders

### Course Description:

The working thesis of this course is that states are produced and defined at their borders. We will interrogate this idea by asking the following questions: What is a state? How has it been defined in political/social theory and been instantiated through the way the United States has policed its borders? What is the difference between a “nation” and a “state” and why does that distinction matter? How have national fantasies of what it means to be an American influenced immigration policies? How has the current administration controlled the movements of populations – entering the U.S., traveling within it, and leaving it – with recent regulative and legislative changes? In labeling individuals as either eligible or ineligible to enter the U.S., what expert discourses have state actors used to classify individuals’ identities? How have the definitions used to exclude people from entering the United States reflected, reproduced, and consolidated a national identity?

Material covered in this course will include readings on the history of immigration restrictions in the U.S.; the history of particular types of barriers to entry based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, disability, and politics; and theoretical reflections on states, borders, identities, and “othering.” This course will draw on work from the political science subfields of political theory and U.S. politics, and from interdisciplinary areas of inquiry such as diaspora and transnational studies, race and ethnic studies, gender studies, queer studies, disability studies, and surveillance studies.

### Office Hours and contact information

Tuesdays, 1:20 - 2:30 p.m.  
Fridays, 8 – 9 am.  
Or by appointment  
Office: 3401 James  
Email: [profcurrah@gmail.com](mailto:profcurrah@gmail.com)

### Required Texts:

1. Reading Packet I. Available at Far Better Copy, Hillel Place..
2. Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference, with Writing in the Disciplines*. Available in the Brooklyn College Bookstore (in the basement of Boylan) *in the book sections for English 1 or English 2*.

**Course Objectives:** By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Learn the different definitions, approaches and critical interpretations of the course’s central concepts, including: state, nation, nationalism, borders, borderlands, statelessness, diaspora, the constitutive other, norms, deviance.
- Learn how to conduct research in the fields of political theory and American politics, and some of the interdisciplinary areas included in this course, such as American Studies.

- Understand the basic objectives and content of a literature review
- Learn how to develop a good thesis for a review of a particular theme you select that addresses scholarly literature on the subject of states and borders, broadly construed.
- Learn how to write a solidly-researched and clearly organized critical literature review
- Learn the correct use of APA standards to cite sources

#### Course grading and assessment:

- (1) 20%: **Four short papers** (“thinkpieces”) of three typed, double-spaced pages. Each paper is a thematic and critical discussion that analyzes three readings. Papers are due February 19<sup>th</sup>, March 11<sup>th</sup>, April 15<sup>th</sup>, and May 6<sup>th</sup>.
- (2) 10%. **Class Presentation:** Thoughtful presentation and discussion of an assigned reading
- (3) 55% **Literature Review**
  - (A) 5% Proposal for Literature Review (March 4<sup>th</sup>)
  - (B) 10% Annotated Bibliography (March 25<sup>th</sup>)
  - (C) 10% Draft of Literature Review (April 18<sup>th</sup>)
  - (D) 30% Final Literature Review of ten pages (May 13<sup>th</sup>)
- (4) 15% **Participation:** Demonstration that you have done the reading; relevant, topical discussion of each class’s readings and issues
- (5) **Attendance:** One percentage point will deducted for every absence after the third absence; ½ point per tardiness.

#### Important College Deadlines

1. Thursday, January 31: Last day to add a course;
2. Monday, February 11: Last day to file Pass/Fail application;
3. Thursday, February 14: Last day to drop a course without a grade;
4. Monday, March 17: Last day to file for Spring 2008 Graduation;
5. Wednesday, April 9: Last day to apply for withdrawal from a course with a W (non-penalty) grade;
6. Thursday, April 10: Last day to resolve Fall 2007 Incomplete grades
6. Thursday, April 10: Last day to resolve Fall 2007 ABS grades

## Students with Disabilities

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services please provide your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her.

## University's Policy on Academic Integrity:

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site:

<http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS

### THE STATE

#### Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup>: Introduction to the Course

#### Tuesday, January 29<sup>th</sup>: The State as Produced by a Social Contract; Weber's Definition

John Locke, Selections from *Second Treatise of Government* (first published 1689), edited by CB McPherson. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980. Distributed in class.

Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, pp. 1-21. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965. (First published in German, 1919). Distributed in class.

Optional: Hobbes Leviathan. Distributed in class

#### Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup>: Modifying Weber's Definition

John Torpey, "Coming and Going: On the State Monopolization of the 'Legitimate Means of Movement,'" and "Conclusion," in *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State*. Cambridge, UK: 2000, pp. 4-20, and 158-167, plus notes. Distributed in class.

#### Tuesday, February 5: States, Crises, and Emergency Measures

Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995, pp. 15-29.

**Read one of the following two texts:**

***Hamdi V. Rumsfeld (03-6696) 542 U.S. 507 (2004). O'Connor opinion and Scalia dissent. (Available online at <http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/search/display.html?terms=hamdi&url=/supct/html/03-6696.ZO.html>)***

Nasser Hussain, "Beyond Norm and Exception: Guantanamo," *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 33 (Summer 2007). Posted on Blackboard.

Optional: Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, pp. 1-5, 11-22. Distributed in class.

## THE NATION

### Friday, February 8: Nations and Nationalism

Benedict Anderson, "Introduction," and "Cultural Roots," from *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 1-7 and 9-36.

### Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>: COLLEGE Closed

### Friday, February 15: Anderson, continued

Benedict Anderson, "The Origins of National Consciousness," "Creole Pioneers," from *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 37-46 and 47-65.

## "US" and "THEM"

### Tuesday, February 19<sup>th</sup>: "Us" and "Them"

#### SHORT PAPER ONE DUE IN CLASS

Zygmunt Baumann, "Us and Them," from *Thinking Sociologically* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 37-53.

### Friday, February 22: "We the People"

Eric Foner, "We the People," in *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: Norton, 1998), pp. 37-45, plus notes.

Dred Scott vs. Sandford, 60 U.S. 393 (1856)

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### Tuesday, February 26: Constructing White America

Ian F. Lopez, "White Lines," in *White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: NYU Press, 1996), pp. 1-36, plus notes.

### Friday, February 29

*No readings, catch up day.*

### Tuesday, March 4: Constructing White America, continued.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW PROPOSAL DUE IN CLASS

Ian F. Lopez, "Racial Restrictions in the Law of Citizenship," in *White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: NYU Press, 1996), pp. 37-47, plus notes.

**Friday, March 7: Constructing White America, continued**

Ian F. Lopez, "The Prerequisite Cases" in *White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: NYU Press, 1996), pp. 49-77, plus notes.

**Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America**

SHORT PAPER TWO DUE IN CLASS

Mae M. Ngai, "Illegal Aliens: A problem in law and history," *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, pp. 1-15, plus notes,

**Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America, continued**

Mae M. Ngai, "The Johnson-Reed of 1924 and the Reconstruction of Race in Immigration," from *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, pp. 17-53, plus notes,

**Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>,**

In class film: *Shopping to Belong*, directed by Irene Sosa, 2007.

**Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup>: NO CLASSES**

**Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America, continued**

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE IN CLASS

Mae M. Ngai, "Braceros, 'Wetback,' and the National Boundaries of Class," from from *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, pp. 127-166, plus notes.

Korematsu vs. the United States, 23 U.S. 214 (1944)

**Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America, continued**

Mae M. Ngai, "The World War II Internment of Japanese Americans and the Citizenship Renunciation Cases," from from *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, pp. 1175-224, plus notes.

**Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> : Finding Average Americans**

Sarah E. Igo, "Introduction," from *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 1-22, plus notes.

Newspaper articles about polling to be handed out in class.

**Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup> Finding Average Americans**

Sarah E. Igo, "Polling the Average Populace," from *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 103-149, plus notes.

Sarah E. Igo, "Epilogue," from *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008, pp. 281-299, plus notes.

**Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>: Constructing the Normal through Deviance: The Bell Curve**

Lennard J. Davis, "Constructing Normalcy," in *The Disability Studies Reader*, edited by Lennard J. Davis (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 9-28.

**Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>: Constructing the Normal through Deviance: "Normates and their others"**

Rosemarie Garland Thompson, "The Cultural Work of American Freak Shows, 1835-1940," in *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia, 1997), pp. 55-70, plus notes.

**Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>: Constructing the Normal through Deviance: Controlling Sexuality at the Borders**

SHORT PAPER THREE DUE IN CLASS

Siobhan B. Somerville, "Sexual Aliens and the Racialized State: A Queer Reading of the 1952 U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act," in *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings*, edited by Eithne Luibhéid and Lionel Cantú, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp. 75-91 .

**FRONTIERS and MASCULINITY**

**Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>: Frontiers**

DRAFT OF LITERATURE REVIEW DUE IN CLASS

Frederick Jackson Turner, "Contributions of the West To American Democracy," From *The Frontier in American History*, 1920.

Susan Faludi, "President of the Wild Frontier," from *The Terror Dream: Fear and Fantasy in Post 9/11 America* (New York: Holt, 2007), pp. 146-164 plus notes.

**Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK**

**Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK**

**Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>: Security, Masculinity, and Borders**

Susan Faludi, "Precious Little Jessi," from *The Terror Dream: Fear and Fantasy in Post 9/11 America* (New York: Holt, 2007), pp. 165-195 plus notes.

**BORDERLANDS**

**Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>: Security, Masculinity, and Borders, continued**

Susan Faludi, "Original Shame," from *The Terror Dream: Fear and Fantasy in Post 9/11 America* (New York: Holt, 2007), pp. 199-216 plus notes.

Selection from Pablo Vila, *Crossing Borders, Reinforcing Borders: Social Categories, Metaphors, and Narrative Identities on the U.S. Mexico Frontier*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000. Distributed in class.

**Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>: Borderlands**

SHORT PAPER FOUR DUE IN CLASS

M. Baud and W. van Schendel, "Toward a Comparative history of Borderlands," *Journal of World History*, vol. 8. no. 2, pp. 211-242.

Nayan Shah, "Between 'Oriental Depravity' and 'Natural Degenerates': Spatial Borderlands and the Making of Ordinary Americans," *American Quarterly*, 57.3 (2005) 703-725.

Optional: Gloria Anzaldua, ...

STATELESSNESS AND DIASPORA

Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup> : **Statelessness**

Hannah Arendt, "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man," from *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), pp. 341-384.

Linda Kerber, "Toward a History of Statelessness in America," *American Quarterly*, 57.3 (2005) 727-749.

Optional: Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State?* (New York: Palgrave, 2007). Ask to borrow a copy from me if you're interested in reading this long essay.

**Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>: Diaspora**

FINAL LITERATURE REVIEW DUE IN CLASS

Robin D. G. Kelley, "How the West Was One: The African Diaspora and the Re-Mapping of U. S. History." In Bender, Thomas (Editor), *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*. Ewing, NJ, USA: University of California Press, 2002. pp 123-14