

W.E.B. Du Bois
 (Fall 2023 [B Quad])

This is a draft syllabus and is subject to change

Instructor: Dr. Haskins
 Email: alex.haskins@wheaton.edu

Course Meetings: M 6:30pm-10:00pm
Student Hours: MWF 3:40-5pm, Th 1-3pm (MSC 213)

Department Mission Statement:

The mission of the Department of Politics and International Relations is to equip students with knowledge about politics and government, with methods for analyzing political actors and institutions, and with the ability to apply biblical and theological perspectives to public life.

i. Course Overview and Objectives

Considered one of the most significant American political thinkers of the twentieth century, William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) Du Bois stands as a towering figure in a range of humanistic and social scientific disciplines. From watershed concepts like the “color line” and “double-consciousness” to his pioneering work in what would become urban sociology, revisionist U.S. historiography, and Negro/Black/Africana Studies, Du Bois’ contributions to contemporary scholarship are as vast as they are enduring. In this course, we will read select key works of Du Bois’ with attention to a variety of interpretations. Our aim is to collectively determine—from a distinctly Christian perspective—the degree to which we might find the arguments encountered in Du Bois’ texts persuasive (or not) as they bear on both Christian faith/practice and on the world. Through dialogue and writing, students will *develop their ability to compare and critically (though charitably) assess* the disparate foundations and influences of Du Bois’ work while also *establishing their own scholarly, political, economic, and social voices*. In so doing, students will work out a nuanced view of comparative, global, and African diasporic political and social thought, both within and outside of the global church.

In short, this course aims to improve students’ ability to:

- **Assess** the claims of Du Bois’ most famous works in a charitable, yet critical, manner
- **Develop** nuanced normative, social, and political arguments concerning Du Bois’ theories and observations through dialogue and writing

ii. Required Texts

No prior background in African diasporic history or knowledge of Du Bois is required. The readings below will be available for purchase in the bookstore. I will provide all other readings. Readings will be in English. If you have concerns obtaining the texts below, please contact me.

- Du Bois. *Souls of Black Folk* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s), 1997.
- Du Bois. *Black Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2014.

iii. Assignments, Grading, and Policies

Participation 25 %

Regular class attendance, active discussion posting, and active in-class participation facilitate the successful comparison and assessment of the concepts, observations, and historical material encountered in this course. Thus, attendance, discussion posts, and participation in class are mandatory. Absences due to personal emergencies, illness, or other legitimate causes will be excused with advanced notice and proper documentation, where applicable. Good participation reflects quantity *and* quality of in- and out-of-class comments. Students are expected to come to class with texts readily available, having done the reading and having prepared for respectful and substantive discussion. Laptops are allowed only for course-related activities; other observed activities will result in a grade reduction. I am available for any student wishing to discuss methods for engaging more effectively in class discussion. Discussion posts will require students to (1) select a quote that best exemplifies a key theme of the day’s reading (50-75 words) for the upcoming class period and (2) interpret the quote and assess its merit for African diasporic politics now (less

than 150 words). Discussion posts will be due the midnight before the relevant class session via Canvas and will form part of the basis for in-class discussion.

Class Attendance/Participation: 15%

Canvas Discussion Posts: 10%

Analysis Essays 75%

Analysis essays serve as a written means for students to demonstrate their ability to practically reflect on course material and develop their writing skills. For the essay assignments, students may select one of two options: (1) two shorter essays or (2) a longer research essay. If students choose the first option, for each essay they must choose a theme (to be approved by the professor) to analyze in service of a sustained argument. The first essay must focus on a theme in either *Souls*, *Darkwater*, or across the two works. Similarly, the second essay must focus on a theme in either *Black Reconstruction*, *Dusk of Dawn*, the *International Writings*, or across any two works. Essay 1 is 1000-1200 words and is due week 4; essay 2 is 1300-1500 words and is due week 8. If students choose the second option, they must choose a theme (to be approved by the professor) to analyze in service of a sustained, research-based argument (2000 words). This means students will need to go beyond assigned class readings and incorporate scholarly (i.e. peer-reviewed) secondary sources into their research essay. A 1000-word prospectus composed of a research question, 5 annotations, and a literature review will be due week 4 and the final research essay (1800-2000 words) will be due week 8. With both options, students are expected to consult with the professor concerning the viability of their essay arguments. All essays should be doubled-spaced, 12pt font, and normal margins. Essays must be on time. Essays must be original work from the student; plagiarism is not tolerated under any circumstance and will result in failure on the assignment and possibly failure in the course or further College sanctions. If students are unclear on what constitutes plagiarism, they should consult the Student Handbook and Community Covenant.

Option 1:

Essay 1 (1000-1200 words): 30%

Essay 2 (1300-1500 words): 45%

Option 2:

Essay Prospectus (1000 words): 25%

Research Essay (2000 words): 50%

Grading Range

_____	A: 100-94	A-: 93-90
B+: 89-87	B: 86-84	B-: 83-80
C+: 79-77	C: 76-74	C-: 73-70
D+: 69-67	D: 66-64	F: 63-0

iv. General Policies

Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a faculty member. I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on Wheaton College's campus with the College. Confidential resources available to students include Confidential Advisors, the Counseling Center, Student Health Services, and the Chaplain's Office. More information on these resources and College Policies is available at www.wheaton.edu/sexualassaultresponse.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Intellectual honesty is vital to our academic community and for my fair evaluation of your work. All work submitted in this course must be your own, completed in accordance with the Student Handbook and Community Covenant. You may not engage in unauthorized collaboration or make use of generative AI tools or software. Any failure to uphold this will result in a zero on the assignment.

Inclusive Language

As per the faculty rules, I expect students to use gender inclusive language for human beings.

Learning and Accessibility Services

Wheaton College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented learning differences, physical or mental health conditions that qualify for accommodations under the ADA. Any student needing academic adjustments is requested to contact the Learning and Accessibility Services Office as early in the semester as possible. To contact LAS, please email las@wheaton.edu or call 630.752.5615. If you already have an accommodation letter, I am available to discuss how to implement the accommodation.

Writing Center

Writing Center: The Writing Center is a free resource that equips undergraduate and graduate students across the disciplines to develop effective writing skills and processes. This academic year, the Writing Center is offering [online appointments only](#). Learn more about online consultations for [undergraduates](#) and [graduate students](#), and [make an appointment](#).

v. Tips for Success

In my experience, students who follow these tips tend to do well. I encourage you to heed them.

- *Finish the reading at least 24 hours before it is due.* For example, finish Wednesday's class reading by Tuesday morning. This will require time management, but it allows more time for reflection.
- *Take notes as you read, in the text.* This will allow you to track your reactions to the readings and think (ahead of class) about intriguing or puzzling passages.
- *Come to office hours.* I do not bite. I am invested in you succeeding in this course.
- *Talk with your peers about the readings outside of class.* It helps you process and vocalize your views on the text(s) in preparation for class discussion.
- *Map out the “A-L-E” (Argument-Logic-Evidence) of the text before, during, and after class.* Your reproduction of the “A-L-E” of class texts helps enrich both our class discussion and your written assignments.
- [For any writing assignment] *Outline your argument—section by section, paragraph by paragraph.* If you cannot justify why a section or paragraph should be included in the writing assignment, do not include it.

vi. Reading Schedule

Assignments listed under each day are ***due for that day***.

[Pages of Reading]

I. The “Early” Du Bois

Week One

M (10/16): **NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)**

Week Two

M (10/23): Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk* (1903); Forethought, chs. I-VI
Gooding-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois* (2009) ch. 1

[~118]

Week Three

M (10/30): Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk* (1903); chs. VII-XIV, The Afterthought
Taylor, “W.E.B. Du Bois: Afro-Modernism, Expressivism, and the Curse of Centrality” (2021)
ESSAY ONE & RESEARCH PROSPECTUS OUT

[~121]

II. The “Radical” Du Bois

Week Four

M (11/6): Du Bois, *Darkwater* (1920); chs. II, VI-VII
James, *Transcending the Talented Tenth* (1997) chs. 1-2
Myers, “Beyond the Psychological Wage” (2019)

[~118]

ESSAY ONE DUE or RESEARCH PROSPECTUS DUE

Week Five

M (11/13): Du Bois, *International Writings* (1900-1947); selections

- “The Present Outlook for the Darker Races of Mankind” [1900], 17pp
- “The African Roots of War” [1915], 14pp
- “Of the Culture of White Folk” [1917], 14pp
- “Worlds of Color” [1925], 25pp
- “What Japan Has Done” [1937], 5pp
- “Prospect of a World Without Race Conflict” [1944], 14pp
- “Colonies and Moral Responsibility” [1946], 12pp
- “An Appeal to the World”, Introduction [1947], 21pp

III. The “Socialist” Du Bois

Week Six

M (11/20): Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* (1935)^{TR} chs. 7, 10

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Holt, *Black Over White* (1979) introduction, ch. 7

Week Seven

M (11/27): Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* (1935)^{TR} chs. 14, 16

[~100]

Douglas, *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Critique of the Competitive Society* (2019) ch. 3

IV. The “Autobiographical” Du Bois

Week Eight

M (12/4): Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn* (1940); Apology, chs. I, IV-V, VIII, IX

[~124]

Balfour, *Democracy’s Reconstruction* (2011) ch. 4

ESSAY TWO & RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Further Reading

Du Bois. [The Oxford W.E.B. Du Bois 19-Volume Set](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2007.