

HISTORY 600: DU BOIS FOR TODAY
Fall 2010

W. E. B. Du Bois, African American journalist, activist, historian, sociologist, poet, novelist, and playwright, was a cultural giant whose work is constantly being reevaluated. Du Bois's impact on contemporary intellectual life is extensive. He is valued as a literary figure whose contributions to American letters have yet to be fully probed, and as a cultural analyst whose perceptive studies of race relations are still widely consulted by contemporary social scientists, literary critics, and theorists. Du Bois's long life, spanning Reconstruction through civil rights protest in the early 1960s, is in many respects a microcosm of the modern period and encompasses the most dramatic events of the 20th century. As an activist as well as an intellectual, Du Bois helped shape many of these events. The 21st century is still harvesting this polymath's rich insights. This Du Bois colloquium will focus on four themes in Du Bois's life and work: race, gender, imperialism, and culture.

Organization. The class format features mini-lectures, discussion, and student-initiated presentations. Students will work on a seminar paper based on research they have done on Du Bois's published writings and/or his papers. As Du Bois's interests were widely ranging, students have a wide choice of what to study. They can focus on that aspect of Du Bois they find most engaging and that has pertinence for today's issues. Students will share the results of their work with other students in class meetings, and submit the paper at the end of the course. More on the technical aspects of writing the paper will be covered in a separate handout. The reading load is heavy, and Du Bois is not always an easy author.

Evaluation. Attendance will be kept for each class session. There is a reason for this. Attendance keeping awards the commitment of those students who diligently come to class. Attendance is also important for a class in which participation is a key element. The root of the term "colloquium" comes from Latin and means "to talk together." Engaged students learn more. As students are responsible for each meeting's work, they are expected to be on time. Grades will be based on the following:

1) Organizing class discussion. A pair of students will chair one discussion on the collective readings, and both will receive the same grade (15%). Additionally, each student will deliver one 20-minute briefing on their own research subject near the end of the semester (15%). (Checklists on how to do these assignments will be distributed separately.) Note that as the class calendar turns on students making their presentations and leading discussions as scheduled, failure to do so without a compelling reason will result in a lowered grade.

2) Annotated bibliography. An annotated bibliography is one that includes notes that describe the books or articles in question. The annotated bibliography (10% of the grade) consists of works the student is consulting for his or her paper.

3) Book review. The book review will discuss a book written by or about Du Bois other than the required course texts, and will constitute 20% of the grade. (It is permissible to use items from the Du Bois Reader that we have not read collectively.) The book review and annotated bibliography support the final research paper. Specific handouts on how to compile the bibliography and write the book review will be distributed separately.

3) Research paper. A research paper worth 40% of the total grade. A handout on how to write this will be distributed separately.

Attendance. Anyone can have up to 4 unexcused absences (i.e., one month of classes) without penalty. Students who are members of teams, or involved with University-sponsored activities that may occasionally take them away from class, should provide a schedule of their absences to their professors. Students with constant schedule conflicts, should make a decision about whether to take the course. Those otherwise missing more than 4 class sessions cannot earn more than a C in the course. As per university regulations, there is no penalty for religious observances.

Research and consultation days. There are three days when class will not convene. These are Oct. 19, the midterm study break; and November 23 and 30. During what is normally the class time, I will be in my office to consult with and assist any student with his or her research.

Classroom policies. Mutual respect for divergent viewpoints is essential for productive class discussions. Class discussions can be lively and intense, but they must be diplomatic. Thoughtfully assess an idea; don't attack the person expressing it. Please turn off cell phones, pagers, and other noisemakers while in class, and enter and leave the room quietly at the beginning and end of the session. Laptops are useful adjuncts to learning, but they have proven to be a distraction in the classroom setting. Please do not use laptops in class. Newspaper reading, text messaging, and dozing mean lost learning opportunities. Extensions on written assignments must be requested 48 hours in advance of due dates. There are no extensions on presentations.

Special needs students. Students with special needs will be accommodated and should make their requests as early in the semester as possible and well in advance of assignment due dates.

Textbooks. Books for purchase are at the University Bookstore and at Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative, 426 W. Gilman St. Texts owned by campus libraries are on reserve. The following are required:

W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* – this will be provided to you in digital form.
 David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Biography* ((Henry Holt & Company, paper)
 - this is the condensed version of the Pulitzer Prize-winning 2-volume book.
 David Levering Lewis, ed. *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Reader* (Henry Holt & Company, paper)

Articles to download:

Michael Adas, "Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology," *Journal of World History* 15 (March 2004)

Alys Weinbaum, "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Sexual Politics of Black Internationalism." *Social Text* 19 (Summer 2001)

Howard Winant, "Discussion Article: Race and Racism: Towards a Global Future," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29 (September 2006)

Contact with professor: I have an office in the History Department and another in Afro-American Studies. The History Department office is located in 5111 Humanities. The telephone number is 263 1845. Due to staff shortages, e-mail is better than leaving phone messages. My e-mail address is bplummer@wisc.edu. You are automatically subscribed to the class list if you are registered. If you haven't received any mail from the class list by the end of the second week of the semester, please let me know. Students should also feel free to use the list to communicate with one another and share information about the course. E-mail is not a substitute, however, for class attendance and participation.

COURSE CALENDAR

September 7 – Introduction to the seminar

September 14 – Readings to be discussed today:
Biography, Preface and chs. 1-4; *Reader*, pp. 20-75

September 21– Readings to be discussed today:
Souls, Forethought and chs. 1-6; *Reader*, pp. 76-133, 271-286

September 28 – Readings to be discussed today:
Biography, chs. 5-8; *Reader*, pp. 135-37, 142-47, 151, 165-68

October 5 – Readings to be discussed today:
Souls, ch. 7 to Afterthought; *Reader*, pp. 231-70;

October 12 – Readings to be discussed today:
Biography, chs. 9-12; *Reader*, pp. 220-26, 697; Adas, "Contested Hegemony"

October 19 – Midterm Break – No class meeting. Today's readings will be discussed on October 26.

E-mail me your proposed paper topic by the end of the week.

Biography, chs. 13-14; *Reader*, pp. 289-314; Weinbaum, "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Sexual Politics..."

October 26 – Readings to be discussed today:

Biography, chs. 13-14; *Reader*, pp. 289-314; Weinbaum, “W. E. B. Du Bois and the Sexual Politics...”

Biography, chs. 15-17; *Reader*, pp. 637-82.

November 2 – Readings to be discussed today:

Biography, chs. 18-19; *Reader*, pp. 333-53, 365-76, 380-387

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

November 9 – Readings to be discussed today:

Biography, chs. 20-22; *Reader*, pp. 388-408, 411-428

In class: 1st three student research presentations

November 16 – Readings to be discussed today:

Howard Winant, "Discussion Article"; *Reader*, pp. 429-36, 439-65, 480-515

In class: 2nd three student research presentations

BOOK REVIEW DUE

November 23 – No class meeting. Today’s readings will be discussed on December 7

Reader, pp. 527-593

November 30 – No class meeting. Today’s readings will be discussed on December 7

Reader, pp. 610-25; 734-56.

December 7 – Readings to be discussed today:

Reader, pp. 527-593; 610-25; 734-56

December 14 – Remaining student research presentations.

December 21

SEMINAR PAPERS DUE IN PROFESSOR’S MAILBOX BY 4:30 P. M. EARLIER SUBMISSION IS OKAY.