

TRUMP SYLLABUS 2.0

An introduction to the currents of American culture that led to “Trumpism”

6.28.2016

SYLLABI



BY N. D. B. CONNOLLY & KEISHA N. BLAIN

On June 19th, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ran a web version of a [mock college syllabus](#) that sought to explore the deep historical and political roots of Donald Trump’s political success during the 2016 Presidential campaign. The syllabus suffered from a [number of egregious omissions and inaccuracies](#), including its failures to include contributions of scholars of color and address the critical subjects of racism, sexism, and xenophobia on which Trump has built his candidacy.

In May 2016, Donald Trump became the Republican Party’s presumptive nominee for President of the United States. Not since Barry Goldwater’s 1964 bid has a major political party produced so polarizing a candidate. Many, including Trump himself, attributed the campaign’s success to factors unique to Trump, like his wealth, his celebrity, and his professed

aversion for “political correctness.” Trump’s political ascendancy came, however, as his personal fortunes did: through inheritance.

This course, assembled by historians N. D. B. Connolly and Keisha N. Blain, includes suggested readings and other resources from more than one hundred scholars in a variety of disciplines. The course explores Donald Trump’s rise as a product of the American lineage of racism, sexism, nativism, and imperialism. It offers an introduction to the deep currents of American political culture that produced what many simply call “Trumpism”: personal and political gain marred by intolerance, derived from wealth, and rooted in the history of segregation, sexism, and exploitation.



Photograph by Gage Skidmore / Flickr

The readings below introduce observers to the past and present conditions that allowed Trump to seize electoral control of a major American political party. By extension, this syllabus acknowledges the intersectional nature of power and politics. The course emphasizes the ways that cultural capital like Trump’s grows best under certain socioeconomic conditions. Trump’s open advocacy for race-based exclusion and politically motivated violence on matters both foreign and domestic cannot be separated from the historical and day-to-day inequalities endured by people of color, women, and religious minorities living in or migrating to the United States. Concerned less with Trump as a man than with “Trumpism” as a product of history, this course interrogates the connections between wealth, violence, and politics.

The weekly readings are organized by themes captured by Trump’s own statements on the campaign trail during the 2016 presidential election. The syllabus is built for flexibility. The recommended books may be used in whole or in part. Primary sources can work under one theme or across weeks. A [collection of assignments to accompany this syllabus](#) appears on the website of the African American Intellectual History Society—with the contributing faculty member’s name provided for attribution.

WEEK 1: “Trumpism’s” Antecedents
“Let’s make America great again.” —Ronald Reagan

Secondary Readings

- Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (Knopf, 1982).
- Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Simon & Schuster, 1995).
- Stephen D. Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
- Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008* (Harper, 2008).
- Christopher S. Parker and Matt A. Barreto, *Change They Can’t Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America* (Princeton University Press, 2013).
- Philip Bump, “In 1927, Donald Trump’s Father was Arrested After a Klan Riot in Queens,” *Washington Post*, February 29, 2016.

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- Frederick Douglass, “The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro,” speech, July 5, 1852.
- George Wallace, “1963 Inaugural Address as Governor of Alabama,” speech, January 14, 1964.
- Barry Goldwater, “Extremism in the Defense of Liberty is No Vice,” speech, July 16, 1964.
- Richard Nixon, “Silent Majority Speech,” speech, November 3, 1969.
- *Boogie Man: The Lee Atwater Story*, directed by Stefan Forbes (Interpositive Media, 2008).



WEEK 2: White Power and Plausible Deniability

“I don’t know what you’re even talking about with white supremacy or white supremacists. I don’t know.”

Secondary Readings

- W. E. B. Du Bois, “The White Worker,” and “The Counter-Revolution of Property,” *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880* (Russel & Russel, 1935).
- Edmund S. Morgan, “Toward Racism,” in *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (Norton, 1975).
- Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (Oxford University Press, 1995).
- Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Color Blindness, History, and the Law,” in *The House that Race Built: Black Americans, US Terrain*, edited by Wahneema Lubiano (Pantheon, 1997).
- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Lynne Rienner, 2001).
- Carol Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth About our Racial Divide* (Bloomsbury, 2016).

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- *American History X*, directed by Tony Kaye (New Line Cinema, 1998).
- *Park Avenue: Money, Power, and the American Dream*, directed by Alex Gibney (PBS, 2012).

WEEK 3: Blackness and Right-Wing Multiculturalism

“Look at my African American over here! ... Are you the greatest?”

Secondary Readings

- Stuart Hall, “Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance,” in *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (Unesco, 1980).
- Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society* (South End Press, 1983).
- Ian Haney Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class* (Oxford University Press, 2014).
- Leah Wright Rigueur, *The Loneliness of the Black Republican: Pragmatic Politics and the Pursuit of Power* (Princeton University Press, 2015).
- Angela Davis, Frank Barat, and Cornel West, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement* (Haymarket, 2016).

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- Ben Smith and Byron Tau, “[Birtherism: Where it All Began](#),” *Politico*, April 22, 2011.
 - James Baldwin, “My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation,” in *The Fire Next Time* (Dial Press, 1963).
 - *The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader: Documents, Speeches, and Firsthand Accounts from the Black Freedom Struggle, 1954–1990*, edited by Clayborne Carson, David J. Garrow, Gerald Gill, Vincent Harding, and Darlene Clark Hine (Penguin, 1991).
 - *Race: the Power of An Illusion*, directed by Christine Herbes-Sommers, Tracy Heather Strain, and Llewellyn M. Smith (California Newsreel, 2003).
-

WEEK 4: Immigration Policies and the Rise of Islamophobia

“A total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States”

Secondary Readings

- Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton University Press, 2004).
- Leti Volpp, “[The Citizen and the Terrorist](#),” *UCLA Law Review*, vol. 49, no. 5 (2001–2002), pp. 1575–91.
- Jonathan Hafetz, *Habeas Corpus after 9/11: Confronting America’s New Global Detention System* (NYU Press, 2011).
- Amaney A. Jamal and Nadine Christine Naber, *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects* (Syracuse University Press, 2008).
- Moustafa Bayoumi, *How Does it Feel to Be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America* (Penguin, 2009)
- Douglas Cox and Ramzi Kassem, “[Off the Record: The National Security Council, Drone Killings, and Historical Accountability](#),” *Yale Journal on Regulation*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2014): pp. 363–400.

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- “[A Guide to the Memos on Torture](#),” *New York Times*, June 25, 2004.
 - Aziz Ansari, “[Why Trump Makes Me Scared for My Family](#),” *New York Times*, June 24, 2016.
-

WEEK 5: Illusions of National Security

“I will build a great wall ...”

Secondary Readings

- Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in*

California (University of California Press, 1971).

- William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, *Forgotten Dead: Mob Violence Against Mexicans in the United States, 1848-1928* (Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol* (University of California Press, 2010).
- Ana Elizabeth Rosas, *Abrazando el Espíritu: Bracero Families Confront the US- Mexico Border* (2014).
- Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*, rev. ed. (University of New Mexico Press, 2006 [1995]).
- Sarah Mahler, *American Dreaming: Immigrant Life on the Margins* (Princeton University Press, 1995).

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- Theodore Schleifer, “Trump Defends Criticism of Judge with Mexican Heritage,” CNN, June 5, 2016.



Photograph by Johnny Silvercloud / Flickr

WEEK 6: On Mexicans and Mexican-Americans

“... And I will make Mexico pay for that wall.”

Secondary Readings

- George Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1993).
- David Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (University of California Press, 1995).

- Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (2008 [1998]).
- Otto Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse* (University of Texas Press, 2002).
- Geraldo Cadava, *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Harvard University Press, 2013).
- Greg Grandin, “Why Trump Now? It’s the Empire, Stupid,” *The Nation*, June 9, 2016.

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- *Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, directed by Hector Galan (NLCC Educational Media, 1996).

WEEK 7: Misogyny, Sexism, and Shaming the Female Body

“Blood coming out of her ... wherever”

Secondary Readings

- Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (Vintage, 1981).
- *The Politics of Women’s Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance and Behavior*, edited by Rose Weitz (Oxford University Press, 1998).
- Janice Delany, Mary Jane Lupton, and Emily Toth, *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation* (Dutton, 1976).
- Sheila Jeffreys, *Beauty and Misogyny: Harmful Cultural Practices in the West* (Routledge, 2005).
- *The Female Face of Shame*, edited by Erica L. Johnson and Patricia Moran (Indiana University Press, 2013).
- Karen Tumulty, “Trump’s History of Flippant Misogyny,” *Washington Post*, August 8, 2015.

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference,” in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, edited by Beverly Guy-Sheftall (Norton, 1995).
- *Generation M: Misogyny in Media and Culture*, directed by Thomas Keith (Cinema Politica, 2008).

WEEK 8: Violence, Authoritarianism, and Masculinity

“I’d like to punch him in the face.”

Secondary Readings

- Stuart Hall, “Authoritarian Populism: A Reply to Jessop et Al.” *New Left Review*, no. 151

(1985).

- Michael S. Kimmel, “The Cult of Masculinity: American Social Character and the Legacy of the Cowboy” in *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays By Men on Pleasure, Power, and Change* (Oxford, 1987).
- Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Atheneum, 1992).
- Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Race and Gender in the United States* (University of Chicago Press, 1995).
- David Rosen, “Donald Trump and the Crisis of Masculinity,” *CounterPunch*, February 26, 2016.
- Amanda Taub, “The Rise of American Authoritarianism,” *Vox*, March 1, 2016.

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- Ida B. Wells, *The Light of Truth: Writings of an Anti-Lynching Crusader* (Penguin, 2014).
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “On Homecomings,” *The Atlantic*, May 9, 2016.
- Selections from *Charleston Syllabus: Readings on Race, Racism and Racial Violence*, edited by Chad Williams, Kidada Williams and Keisha N. Blain (University of Georgia Press, 2016).

WEEK 9: Racial Double Standards under Mass Incarceration

“I could stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn’t lose any voters.”

Secondary Readings

- Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (Routledge, 1996).
- Khalil Gibran Muhammad, “Where Did All the White Criminals Go?: Reconfiguring Race and Crime on the Road to Mass Incarceration,” *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society* vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 72–90.
- Elizabeth Kai Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Harvard University Press, 2016).
- Steven Thrasher, “A Black Body on Trial: The Conviction of HIV-Positive ‘Tiger Mandingo,’” *BuzzFeed*, November 30, 2015.
- Heather Ann Thompson, *Blood in the Water: The Attica Uprising of 1971 and its Legacy* (Pantheon, 2016).

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- *The Central Park 5*, directed by Ken Burns (Florentine Films, 2013).
- Donald Trump, “Bring Back the Death Penalty. Bring Back Our Police!,” *New York Post*, May 1, 1989. Accessed in Oliver Laughland, “Donald Trump and the Central Park Five: The Racially Charged Rise of a Demagogue,” *The Guardian*, February 17, 2016.



Photograph by Gage Skidmore / Flickr

WEEK 10: Racism, Real Estate, and the Strange Career of Trump's Wealth

"I've never lost in my life."

Secondary Readings

- Harry Hurt III, *Lost Tycoon: The Many Lives of Donald J. Trump* (Norton, 1993).
- David M. P. Freund, "Marketing the Free Market: State Intervention and the Politics of Prosperity in Metropolitan America," in *The New Suburban History*, edited by Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue (University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 11–32.
- Kim Moody, *From Welfare State to Real Estate: Regime Change in New York City, 1974 to the Present* (New Press, 2007).
- David Graham, "The Lie of Trump's Self-Funding' Campaign," *The Atlantic*, May 13, 2016.
- Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams: Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban America* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- US Riot Commission, "The Kerner Report," in *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Bantam, 1968), pp. 1–29.
- Bowery Boys. *A Short History of Trump: The Roots of Donald's Wealth, from Quiet Queens Beginnings to Glitzy Midtown Excess*, podcast audio, The Bowery Boys: New York City History, 22:3, April 29, 2011.
- Michael Fletcher, "A Shattered Foundation," *Washington Post*, January 24, 2015.

WEEK 11: American Fables, Indigenous History

“Who’s that, the Indian?”

Secondary Readings

- *Native American Voices: A Reader*, edited by Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot (Pearson Education, 2001).
- Camilla Townsend, *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma* (Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2004).
- Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (University Press of Kansas, 2004).
- *Reading Native American Women: Critical/Creative Representations*, edited by Inés Hernández-Avila (Altamira Press, 2005).
- Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Harvard University Press, 2006).
- Gord Hill, *500 Years of Indigenous Resistance* (PM Press, 2009).

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- “Lakota Accounts of the Massacre at Wounded Knee,” in *The Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1891*, vol. 1, pp. 179–181.
- Ramon Roubideaux, interview by Joseph H. Cash, “‘It Set the Indian Aside as a Problem’: A Sioux Attorney Criticizes the Indian Reorganization Act,” Institute of American Indian Studies, South Dakota Oral History Center (University of South Dakota: 1934).
- *Early Encounters in North America: Peoples, Cultures, and the Environment*, database, Alexander Street (n.d.).

WEEK 12: Disability and Disability Culture in America

“What he looks like is his level of intelligence.”

Secondary Readings

- Joseph P. Shapiro, *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement* (Ballantine, 1994).
- Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (Routledge, 1996).
- Eli Clare, “Stolen Bodies, Reclaimed Bodies: Disability and Queerness,” *Public Culture*, vol. 13, no. 3 (2001), pp. 359–66.
- Rabia Belt, “Contemporary Voting Rights Controversies through the Lens of Disability,” *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 68 (2016), pp. 1491–1523.
- *Understanding Disability: Inclusion, Access, Diversity, and Civil Rights*, edited by Paul T. Jaegar and Cynthia Ann Bowman (Praeger Publishers, 2005).
- *Blackness and Disability: Critical Examinations and Cultural Interventions*, edited by Christopher M. Bell (Michigan State University Press, 2011).

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- [It's Our Story: Of, By and For ... People with Abilities](#), YouTube channel, posted by It's Our Story, 2010.
- [Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement](#), database, The Regents of the University of California, July 14, 2004.

WEEK 13: Sexuality and LGBTQ Rights

"I'll overturn the shocking gay marriage decision."

Secondary Readings

- George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (Basic, 1994).
- Barbara Perry, "Doing Gender and Doing Gender Inappropriately: Violence Against Women, Gay Men, and Lesbians" in *In the Name of Hate: Understanding Hate Crimes* (Routledge, 2001).
- Cathy J. Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" in *Sexual Identities, Queer Politics*, edited by Mark Blasius (Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 200–228.
- Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton University Press, 2009).
- Horacio N. Roque Ramírez, "'That's My Place!': Negotiating Racial, Sexual, and Gender Politics in San Francisco's Gay Latino Alliance, 1975–1983," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2003), pp. -258.
- Kenji Yoshino, *Speak Now: Marriage Equality on Trial* (Crown, 2015).

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- Chicago-Kent College of Law at Illinois Tech. "[Loving v. Virginia, 388 US 1 \(1967\)](#)," Oyez.
- Daughters of Bilitis, "[Statement of Purpose](#)," *The Ladder*, vol. 1 (1956).
- Audre Lorde, *I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities*, (Women of Color Press, 1980).
- Thomas B. Stoddard, "Why Gay People Should Seek the Right to Marry" (1989) in *We Are Everywhere: A Historical Sourcebook of Gay and Lesbian Politics*, edited by Mark Blasius and Shane Phelan (Routledge, 1997), pp. 753–6.
- *How to Survive a Plague*, directed by David France (Public Square Films, 2013).

WEEK 14: Trump's GOP Takeover, Contextualized

"The Republicans ... have to get tougher. This is too tough to do it alone, but ... I think I'm going to be forced to."

Secondary Readings

- Mark Blyth, *Austerity: The History of a Dangerous Idea* (Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons, *Right-wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort* (Guilford Publications, 2000).
- Jeffrey A. Winters, *Oligarchy* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore and Thomas J. Sugrue, “The New Gilded Age, 1980–2000” in *These United States: A Nation in the Making, 1890 to the Present* (Norton, 2015), pp. 536-88.
- Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore and Thomas J. Sugrue, “United We Stand, Divided We Fall, Since 2000,” in *These United States: A Nation in the Making, 1890 to the Present* (Norton, 2015), pp. 589-626.
- *National Review* Symposium, “Conservatives Against Trump,” *National Review*, January 21, 2016.
- Brent Staples, “Donald Trump and Reconstruction-Era Politics,” *New York Times*, March 3, 2016.

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- “Donald Trump: ‘I Don’t Want to Be President’—Entire 1987 CNN Interview (Larry King Live),” YouTube video, posted by CNN, May 9, 2016.
- “Confessions of a Republican (LBJ 1964 Presidential Campaign Commercial) VTR 4568-26,” YouTube video, posted by TheLBJLibrary, July 9, 2014.
- “Mitt Romney’s Full Speech Against Donald Trump” *New York Times* video, 17:09, posted by the Associated Press, March 3, 2016.
- Chris Deaton, “Kristol Explains ‘Never Trump’ Argument,” *The Weekly Standard*, March 19, 2016.
- Paul Ryan, “On the State of American Politics,” speech, March 23, 2016.

WEEK 15: History in Trump’s America

“Make America great again.” —Donald Trump

Secondary Readings

- Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (Basic, 1992).
- Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the “American Way”: the Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2008).
- Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom* (Harvard University Press, 2010).
- Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Haymarket, 2016).
- Geoff Eley, “Fascism Then and Now,” *Socialist Register* vol. 52 (2016), pp. 91–117.

Primary Sources and Multimedia

- [“Trump 101,”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 19, 2016.
- N. D. B. Connolly, et al., letter to the editor, [“‘Trump Syllabus’ Is as White as the Man Himself,”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 23, 2016.

The authors wish to thank the over one hundred scholars who contributed titles for consideration in this project. Chad Williams, Leah Wright Rigueur, Stephen G. Hall, Caitlin M. Zaloom, and Sharon Marcus deserve special thanks for their editorial assistance. We also thank the editorial team at the Chronicle of Higher Education for inspiring and later supporting this project. 📖

Featured image: Photograph by Tony Webster / Flickr

#GENDER #POLITICS #EDUCATION #RACE #RACISM #AMERICAN STUDIES #SYLLABUS