**Political and Social Thought Core Seminar I**

Fall Term 2024

Professor Isaac Ariail Reed (iar2c@virginia.edu)

Mondays 3:30-6:00 PM

Office hours (Randall Hall 221): <https://scheduleisaacariailreed.as.me>

Unless noted below, written responses of 500-1000 words are due each week by Sunday at midnight before class on Monday. These are to be **pasted into** the place provided for them on the Canvas site for this class. (Please do not upload a word document or pdf, if you wish to receive credit for your paper.) **You may skip one response paper.** This means you are responsible for 9 response papers, plus one presentation, this semester.

How to approach the readings and films? What you are expected to get out of the readings, in preparation for class discussion, can vary. Sometimes, I will provide advice on approaching the readings at the end of the previous seminar session, **but also** you should always check the canvas site under “modules” to see if I have left written advice for you.

**Notes on Books to Acquire**

If the reading has three stars next to it (\*\*\*), it will be made available on the Canvas Site. Other readings you should acquire yourself. For many classics of social and political theory for which the copyright has expired, many editions are available. The editions listed will be the ones I bring to class. I would further note that Norton Critical Editions can be particularly useful, since they often provide both useful/contextualizing footnotes as well as critical and biographical essays. I use the Norton Critical Edition for *Souls of Black Folk* and for the *Selected Political Writings* of John Locke. All films will be available on Canvas site, but I would also recommend getting together in groups to watch the films on a larger screen.

**Outline of Readings and Seminar Sessions**

### September 2: Welcome!

*No response paper due Sept 1.*

\*\*\*Kolakowski, Leszek. 1978. "How to be a Conservative-Liberal-Socialist: A Credo." *Encounter* 50(4): 9-13.

## Part I: Modern Society in Question

### September 9: Why are we doing this?

\*\*\*Weber, Max. 1946. "Science as a Vocation." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 129-156. New York: Oxford University Press.

### September 16: The French Revolution (Special Guest Jamelle Bouie)

Required Film:

*\*\*\*Danton*. Directed by Andrzej Wajda. 1983.

Don’t remember your AP history unit on the French Revolution, or do you have the sneaking suspicion it was not enough? Read this:

--Doyle, William. 2001. *The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Highly recommended films—I will reference these in my comments, and they are available on CANVAS, but they are not required:

*\*\*\*Nuit de Varennes*. Directed by Ettore Scola. 1982.

*\*\*\*Un peuple et son roi [One Nation, One King]*. Directed by Pierre Schoeller. 2018.

### September 23: All that is solid melts into air

--Tucker, Robert C., ed. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. Selected readings: pp. 66-125, 143-200, 469-500.

### September 30: Differentiated or reductive modernity?

\*\*\*Weber, Max. 1948. "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 323-359. New York: Oxford University Press.

\*\*\*Arendt, Hannah. 2018. "Labor, Work, Action." *In Thinking Without a Bannister: Essays in Understanding 1953-1975*, edited by Jerome Kohn, 291-307. New York: Schocken Books.

### October 7: The modern subject in question

--Du Bois, W.E.B. 1999. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Norton Critical Editions. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 039397393X. Chapters 1, 2, 4, 8, 9.

### October 14

Fall Break

### October 21: Wait, what is the individual, exactly? (Special Guest Richard Handler)

\*\*\*Durkheim, Émile. 1969. "Individualism and the Intellectuals." *Political Studies* 17(1): 14-30.

\*\*\*Goffman, Erving. 1956. "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor." *American Anthropologist* 58(3): 473-502.

## Part II: Political and Moral Responses to the Modern World

### October 28: Origins of liberalism

--Locke, John. 2016. *Second Treatise of Government*. In *Selected Political Writings*, edited by Paul E. Sigmund, 17-84. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

### November 4: About that Revolution you mentioned…

--Burke, Edmund. 1987. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, **pp. 3-87.**

### November 11: Divorce reconsidered

--Pateman, Carole. 1988. *The Sexual Contract*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, **pp. 1-76, 154-188, 219-234.**

### November 18: The impossible modern

\*\*\*Weber, Max. “Types of Legitimate Domination,” pp. 215-251 in *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. University of California Press, 1978.

--Franz Kafka, “Before the Law,” translated by Mark Harman in *Franz Kafka: Selected Stories* Harvard University Press/Belknap, 2024. AVAILABLE AT: <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/features/franz-kafka-before-the-law>

--Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” *National Review* 1989.

**November 25: Week of Thanksgiving—no class meeting**

Take home assignment:

Return to one of the readings for the semester. Prepare a presentation, exactly 5 minutes in length, where you reflect on that reading in a way that is \*distinct from your response paper for that week\*. You can bring whatever notes you want to give your presentation (on December 2), and you are welcome to visit me in office hours to discuss your presentation.

**December 2: Presentations**