

PST Political and Social Thought—Core Seminar II

PST 4870—Spring Term 2019

Tuesdays, 3:30–6:00 pm, Nau 242.

Professor Michael Joseph Smith (mjsmith@virginia.edu)

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-5 and Thursdays 1:30-4; Gibson S-396 (and by appointment).

Except when noted below, written responses of 500-800 words are due each week before class. “Double responses” of 1600-2000 words on two weeks of reading are possible when listed or when negotiated in advance. Please submit essays on Mondays by 7 pm to pst3rdyear@gmail.com. This term, students will partner to prepare discussion questions in advance and to take some responsibility for leading the class discussion based on their questions. Questions will be due to me on the Sunday evenings before the Tuesday class; I’ll then edit (if needed), and post them to Collab. This work will substitute for the response essay normally due that week.

Outline of Readings and Classes

I. Responses to Dilemmas *in extremis*

January 15: Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, entire. (No essay due.)

January 22: Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, and
Louis Begley, *Wartime Lies*.

January 29: Julie Otsuka, *When the Emperor was Divine*; and
Laila Lalami, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*.

February 5: Toni Morrison, *Beloved*.

II. Concepts of Vocation, Social Justice, and Ethics

(I encourage you to write one double response on two of the following four weeks of reading.)

February 12: W.G. Runciman, ed., *Weber: Selections in Translation*, Part I, Part II, entire (pp. 1-134); Part III, ch 7-8 (pp. 135-192); Part IV, 10-13 (pp. 209-268); Part V, 17-18 (pp. 331-354); Part VI, entire (pp. 357-391).

February 19: Robert McAfee Brown, ed. *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr*, chapters 1, 7-9, 10, 12-16, epilogue.

February 26: W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*.

March 5: Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*.

Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” from *Why We Can’t Wait*.

»Spring Break: no class on March 12. «

March 19: John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*.

III. Encountering/Understanding/Fearing “Others”

March 26: Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

April 2: Tzvetan Todorov, *The Morals of History*, Introduction, chapters 1-5, 7, 9-14, Conclusion.

April 9: J. M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*.

April 16: Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity*.

Conclusions

April 23: Judith Shklar, *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, chapters 1, 2,14,18, 20.

May 1: Albert O. Hirschman, *The Rhetoric of Reaction*.



The Fourth Year Thesis Conference occurs on April 27, 2019, from 8:45am--5:30 pm. Your presence at this event is required.