

PSYCHOPOLITICS OF US AND THEM

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Office hours: T 2-3:30, F 9-10:30, and by appointment



Contemporary life in the United States is characterized by numerous us-and-them divisions. Some of these—tied to racial injustice, for instance—are longstanding. Others—the rise of authoritarianism, the assault on truth—are more recent. In this course, we will explore some of the most significant and troubling us-and-them crises of our time.

During the course of reading and discussing these works, we will also ask: What can we, as psychologists, contribute to lessening the divisions at hand?

Course requirements will consist of a class presentation and class participation, a “Looking Outward” journal (weekly entries, in dialogue with the news, approximately one page, single-spaced, kept in a Google Drive file, to be submitted each Friday morning, before class), a 5-7 page mid-semester essay (due Friday after spring break), and a 15-20 page final paper (due May 14th). The presentation and class participation, taken together, will count for approximately 20%. The journal will account for (approximately) 20% too. The mid-semester paper will count for 25%, and the final paper will count for 35%.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Glover, Jonathan. *Humanity: A Moral History of the 20th Century*

Haidt, Jonathan. *The Righteous Mind*

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *Strangers in Their Own Land*

Stanley, Jason. *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them*

Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*

OUTLINE OF COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS

JANUARY 28: INTRODUCTION: WHY THIS COURSE?

FEBRUARY 4: THE CHALLENGE OF CIVILIZATION

Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

FEBRUARY 11: BRUTAL, AND SICKENED BY BRUTALITY

Glover, *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, Chapter 1, Part One (pp. 1-44),
Part Two (pp. 47-116)

FEBRUARY 18: THE DUAL MEANING OF “HUMANITY”

Glover, Part Three (pp. 119-152), Part Five (pp. 237-314)

FEBRUARY 25: REALISM AND THE FRAGILITY OF HOPE

Glover, Part Six, pp. 315-364, pp. 379-397;
Part Seven (pp. 399-414)

MARCH 4: FASCISMS, THEN AND NOW

Stanley, *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them*

- MARCH 18: WHAT, AND WHERE, IS “CASTE”?**
Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*,
Parts I & II
- MARCH 25: THE VARIETIES OF CASTE EXPERIENCE**
Wilkerson, Parts III & IV
- APRIL 1: THINKING AND BEING BEYOND CASTE**
Wilkerson, Parts V, VI, & VII
- APRIL 8: THE CHALLENGE OF UNDERSTANDING**
Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land*,
Parts One & Two
- APRIL 22: FATHOMING THE DEEP STORY**
Hochschild, Parts Three, Four, & Afterword
- APRIL 29: DIVIDED WE FALL**
Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are
Divided About Politics and Religion*, Parts I & II
- MAY 6: WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF CIVILIZATION?**
Haidt, Part III

An Important Note

Depending on circumstances, classes may be recorded via Zoom. And I’m supposed to add: “Duplication or redistribution of video capture recordings by any other party without the consent of the course instructor is prohibited.” (So, don’t do that!). More generally, given the fact that we’re still living in COVID-world, we all need to be prepared to make adjustments—including Zooming—if needed.

REGARDING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Here is what I want to say, in the simplest of terms: *the work you do for this course must be your own*. This doesn't mean that you can't draw on others' work or be influenced by it. What it means is that the product you create must reflect *your* efforts, *your* efforts, *your* imagination. It will also involve a moral promise on your part—a promise that you must uphold and enact as you go about your work. Please familiarize yourself with the College's [Academic Integrity Policy](#). You are responsible for knowing the policy and abiding by it. Academic integrity is not only about honesty, however. It is about preparedness for class, intellectual commitment, openness to new ideas, the capacity to listen to others, and much more. Let's work together to create the best possible learning environment.

REGARDING ATTENDANCE AND EXCUSED ABSENCES:

We expect you to attend class regularly and to fulfill all obligations of the course as outlined on this syllabus and discussed during class. Also, please read and abide by the College's [Student Attendance at Class and Excused Absence Policy](#).

SOME IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Regarding Accessibility Resources and Requests for Reasonable Accommodations:

For the College policy, please check out [Requests for Reasonable Accommodations](#). For information regarding accessibility resources, you can do so through the [Office of Accessibility Services](#).

Textbook Affordability:

It is expected that you will have textbooks and other required class materials in order to achieve academic success. If you are unable to purchase course materials, please go to the [Financial Aid Office website](#) to contact a staff member, who will be happy to provide you with information and assistance. There are several options available for providing course materials to students at no or low cost, and we'll be glad to help in whatever way we can.

Holy Cross Academic Resources:

[Academic Services and Learning Resources](#)

[Center for Writing](#)

[Writer's Workshop](#)

[Class Deans](#)

[Library](#)

Holy Cross Student Support Resources:

[Counseling Center](#)

[Office of the College Chaplains](#)

[Health Services](#)

A comprehensive list of on-campus and online wellness resources is available [here](#).

Other sources of support include:

[Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)

[Office of Multicultural Education](#)

Regarding confidentiality and mandatory reporting:

As instructors, 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 your professor. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep the information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, any information that you disclose that addresses sexual misconduct or relates to a prior suicide attempt or an intention to attempt suicide requires my sharing that information with those on campus who are able to provide you with necessary resources.

Following the College's Sexual Misconduct Policy, we will share information about sexual misconduct with the College's Office of Title IX Initiatives. If you would like to talk to Title IX directly, they can be reached at 508-793-3336 or via [email](#). For more information, please visit the [Sexual Respect and Title IX](#) website. If you would like to discuss the matter confidentially, you can contact the [Chaplains' Office](#), 508-793-2448; [Counseling Center](#), 508-793-3363; and/or [Health Services](#), 508-793-2276. Following the College's Suicide Protocol, if you disclose a prior suicide attempt or an intention or plan to attempt suicide, we will share that information with the Chair of our student CARE Team, who will engage in appropriate outreach.