

## PSCI 208W: Liberalism, Racism and U.S. Citizenship

**Instructor:** Nathan Feldman

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**Class meeting time:** Monday, Wednesday: 10:25 - 11:15 AM

**Class location:** Frederick Douglass Room 420

**Course format:** Seminar

**Office hours:** Tuesday 10 AM-12 PM; 2-4 PM. (Book using this link: <https://calendly.com/nhf2109/office-hours>)

**Credit hours:** 4.0

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION, OBJECTIVES, AND OUTCOMES**

What does it mean to be a citizen of the United States? Who can even achieve this status? These questions have become politically relevant as the Trump administration seeks to end birthright citizenship. However, they are not new.

Surveying United States history, this course asks what it has meant to be a full member of the American political community. We will be reading a mixture of primary sources and secondary texts. We will discover that citizenship in the United States has meant different things to different people, that it has been—and remains—contested and malleable. This discussion-based seminar will culminate in a 15-page research paper.

This course, which has no pre-requisites, will introduce you to this critical aspect of American political development. By its end, you will have mastered a wide range of sources from a variety of time periods and disciplines.

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

Margot Canaday, *Straight State* (2009)

Eric Foner, *Second Founding* (2019)

James Forman, Jr., *Locking Up Our Own* (2017)

Martha Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (2018)

Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (2004)

Ana Raquel Minian, *Undocumented Lives: The Untold Story of Mexican Migration* (2018)

## GRADES

This course will be examined on three in-class midterms, a take-home final, and three short responses. Your grade will be made up as follows:

### Final Paper:

This course concludes with a (c. 15-page) essay on a topic related to the course. I will give you broad leeway to pick your topic, but you must meet with me to have it okayed. The nature of this assignment will vary according to your interests. You can write a normative paper (what ought to be), a historical paper, or an analysis of liberalism, racism, and citizenship in the U.S. today.

They will be due **December 12 at 10 PM**. This is worth 70% of your grade.

### Annotated Bibliography:

En route to writing your paper, you are required to submit an annotated bibliography. You will select 15 sources and, in 100-150 words, appraise them. This will be worth 30% of your grade. These must be complete by **October 14 at 10 PM**.

## COURSE POLICIES

### *Attendance*

Attendance is mandatory; however, needless to say, you can have an excused absence for reasons of illness, religious obligation, and/or emergency.

Four (4) unexcused absences will result in the student's failing the semester.

### *Class Etiquette*

This tackles some of the most intractable, enduring, and provocative questions of American politics. I encourage you to "try on" new ideas and new arguments. Come prepared to think complex, challenging thoughts. Please be kind and respectful in class discussions. Speak on the basis of your own experience and let others do the same. Expect your peers to disagree. Do as Justice Ginsburg counselled: Disagree without being disagreeable. Assume that your peers are well-intentioned, but if classroom dynamics don't feel right, let me know. I will do my level best to foster an inclusive classroom, and I count on your cooperation in achieving this goal.

### *Electronics*

It's OK to use laptops/iPads in class to either take notes or use an electronic copy of the reading.

*Seek my help when you need it*

In addition to the support resources available to you through the university, I am also here to help. You are always welcome to contact me with questions about our coursework, as well as to express your concerns about our learning environment. I welcome suggestions about how to meet your learning needs and to improve the classroom experience. You can always email me or visit my office hours. Please allow up to 2 days for email responses, although I will try to get back to you sooner.

### *Generative AI*

I strongly encourage you not to use generative AI to either summarize readings or write your papers. It's a way of ensuring you learn nothing. More stringently, you are responsible for the accuracy of everything you write. You are required to disclose if your work was created, whole or in part (and, if so, what part), with a GenAI tool. Failure to disclose this constitutes a violation of academic honesty.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic honesty means acting with truthfulness and sincerity in carrying out all aspects of our individual and collaborative work, maintaining ownership over our work and acknowledging our debt to the work of others.

Students can best meet their obligation to academic honesty by adhering to the Academic Honesty Policy in all academic matters. This includes completing their work through their own honest efforts and expecting and encouraging honesty among their peers.

The text above is an excerpt taken from <https://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/>, where students may – and should! – also find the full policy.

## **STUDENT RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

Please feel comfortable speaking with me about challenges you are experiencing within and outside of the classroom so that I may submit a CARE Referral on your behalf. A CARE Referral is submitted when the level of concern for a student necessitates inclusive, multi-layered support from the campus community. The CARE network administrator only shares information with staff who need to know it to help you. I care about your success and am committed to my role in helping you get connected to appropriate campus resources.

If there are accommodations of any sort that would make the class work better for you, please come talk to me about it.

If you think you may need to seek accommodations due to a disability, the Office of Disability Resources (<http://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/index.html>) can help you figure out your options. Speaking with faculty about disability-related accommodations is strictly confidential; I encourage you to come see me with concerns or requests. Other resources that may prove helpful during your time at the University of Rochester:

-CARE (<https://www.rochester.edu/care/about.html>)

- The Writing & Speaking Center (<http://writing.rochester.edu/index.html>)
- Tutoring (<http://www.rochester.edu/college/cetl/undergraduate/tutoring.html>)
- University Counseling Center (<http://www.rochester.edu/uhs/ucc/>)
- David T. Kearns Center (<https://www.rochester.edu/college/kearnscenter/>)
- Office of Minority Student Affairs (<http://www.rochester.edu/College/OMSA/>)

### Introductory Concepts

- Monday, August 25, 2025—Introductions
- Wednesday, August 27, 2025—Michael Walzer, “What Does It Mean to Be an ‘American,’” *Social Research*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (1990), pp. 591-614
- Wednesday, September 3, 2025—Judith Shklar, “The Liberalism of Fear” (on Blackboard); Gary Gerstle, “The Protean Character of American Liberalism,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (1994), pp. 1043-1073
- Monday, September 1, 2025—No Class
- Monday, September 8, 2025—Rogers Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz,” *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 87, No. 3 (1993), pp. 549-566; Barbara Fields, “Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the USA,” *New Left Review* Vol. 181, (1990)

### The Early Republic and Antebellum Era

- Wednesday, September 10, 2025—David Sorkin, *Jewish Emancipation: A History Across Five Centuries* (on Blackboard); 1790 “Nationality Act”; “Mayflower Compact”; Edmund Morgan, “The Problems of Popular Sovereignty” (on Blackboard).
- Monday, September 15, 2025—Ira Katznelson, “As God Rules the Universe” (on Blackboard); Edmund Morgan, “Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox,” *The Journal of American History* Vol. 59, No. 1 (1972), pp. 5- 29; Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (on Blackboard); David Walker, “Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World” (on Blackboard)
- Wednesday, September 17, 2025—Martha Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America*, Intro to Chapter 5
- Monday, September 22, 2025—Martha Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America*, Chapter 6 to Epilogue
- Wednesday, September 24, 2025—No Class

### The Second Founding, Reconstruction, and “Redemption”

- Monday, September 29, 2025—Eric Foner, *Second Founding*, Intro to Chapter 2
- Wednesday, October 1, 2025—Eric Foner, *Second Founding*, Chapter 3 to Epilogue
- Monday, October 6, 2025—W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, Chapter 7, 14, 16
- Wednesday, October 8, 2025—Desmond King and Stephen Tuck, “De-Centring the South: America's Nationwide White Supremacist Order after Reconstruction,” *Past & Present* No. 194 (2007), pp. 213-253; Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself* (2013), Introduction and Part II (on Blackboard)
- Wednesday, October 15, 2025—Peer Review Day

### The Second Reconstruction

- Monday, October 20, 2025—Mary L. Dudziak, “Brown as a Cold War Case,” *The Journal of American History* Vol. 91, No. 1 (2004), pp. 32-42; Barbara Ransby, "Behind-the Scenes View of a Behind-the-Scenes Organizer" (on Blackboard); Zora Neale Hurston, Letter to the *Orlando Sentinel* (1955) (on Blackboard); Omar Wasow, “Agenda Seeding: How 1960s Black Protests Moved Elites, Public Opinion and Voting,” *American Political Science Review* Vol. 114, No. 3 (2020), pp. 638-659
- Monday, October 13, 2025—No Class
- Wednesday, October 22—Martin Luther King, Jr. readings (on Blackboard).
- Monday, October 27, 2025—Bayard Rustin, “From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement,” *Commentary* (1965); Peniel E. Joseph, “Rethinking the Black Power Era,” *The Journal of Southern History* Vol. 75, No. 3 (2009), pp. 707-716; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* Vol. 91, No. 4 (2005), pp. 1233-1263
- Wednesday, October 29, 2025—Sophie Schuit and Jon C. Rogowski, “Race, Representation, and the Voting Rights Act,” *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 61, No. 3 (2017), pp. 513-526; Elizabeth U. Cascio and Ebonya Washington, “Valuing the Vote: The Redistribution of Voting Rights and State Funds Following the Voting Rights Act of 1965,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 129, No.1 (2014), pp.379-433

### Sex and Sexuality

- Monday, November 3, 2025—Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* Vol. 1 (1989), pp. 139-167; Catherine MacKinnon, “Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: Towards Feminist Jurisprudence,” *Signs* Vol. 8, No.4 (1983), pp. 635-658; Cathy Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics,” *Gay and Lesbian Studies* Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 437-465
- Wednesday, November 5, 2025—Margot Canaday, *Straight State* 1, Intro and Part 1
- Monday, November 10, 2025—Margot Canaday, *Straight State*, Part 2 and Conclusion

### Migration

- Wednesday, November 12, 2025—Frederick Whelan, “Democratic Theory and the Boundary Problem, Boundary Problem,” *Nomos* Vol. 25 (1985), 13-47; Michael Walzer, “Membership” (on Blackboard)
- Monday, November 17, 2025—Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, Introduction to Chapter 4
- Wednesday, November 19, 2025—Mai Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, Chapter 5 to Epilogue
- Monday, November 24, 2025—Ana Raquel Minian, *Undocumented Lives: The Untold Story of Mexican Migration*, Intro to Chapter 4
- Wednesday, November 26, 2025—No Class
- Monday, December 1, 2025— Ana Raquel Minian, *Undocumented Lives: The Untold Story of Mexican Migration*, Chapter 5 to Afterword

### Mass Incarceration

- Wednesday, December 3, 2025—Susanne Schwartz, “ ‘The Spawn of Slavery’? Race, State Capacity, and the Development of Carceral Institutions in the Postbellum South,” *Studies in American Political Development* Vol 32, No. 2, 181-198; W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Spawn of Slavery”

(on Blackboard); Vesla Weaver, "Frontlash, Race and the Development of Punitive Crime Policy," *Studies in American Political Development* 21 (2007): 230-265

- "Special Issue: Constructing the Carceral State," *The Journal of American History* Vol. 102, no. 1 (2015)
- Monday, December 8, 2025—James Forman, Jr., *Locking Up Our Own*, Intro to Part 1.
- Monday, November 10, 2025—James Forman, Jr., *Locking Up Our Own*, Part 2 to Epilogue