CAST/POLT 338 - The Problem of Citizenship: From Aristotle to Arizona
Spring 2015

Thursday 7:00-9:00 pm
King 235

Professor Gilda Rodríguez  Office hours:
King 141D  Thursday 3:00-5:00 pm,
gilda.rodriguez@oberlin.edu  or by appointment

Course Description:
This course will analyze the development of the concept of citizenship in the history of political thought. Normative theories of the individual’s relationship to his/her political community have structured notions of belonging, membership, and rights and responsibilities that have shaped the practice of citizenship. We will engage the theoretical literature on conceptions of citizenship, from the Ancients to the present, focusing particularly on their implications for inclusion and exclusion in a political community.

After examining various contemporary debates in the citizenship literature, we will focus on the theory and practice of American citizenship, and the struggles for access to full membership of minority groups in the United States. Specifically, we will engage the limitations of the model of American citizenship in relationship to the history of the African American freedom struggle, and to the precarious political position occupied by Latinos/as and immigrants of Latin American descent in the present day.

Course Objectives:
- Understand the dominant meanings of the concepts “citizen” and “citizenship” and why their meanings are contested in the contemporary moment
- Develop a historical perspective of citizenship in Western political thought and its influence in today’s theory and practice of citizenship
- Analyze the boundaries created by citizenship and the relationship of the concept to membership and exclusion
- Examine the American project of citizenship, both historically and in the contemporary moment, with particular attention to the promise of equality for all embodied in the Declaration of Independence
- Intervene critically in the ongoing debates about citizenship and its connection to politics more broadly through discussion and writing assignments
- Develop critical thinking and writing skills through course activities and assignments

Requirements:
Active participation in class - 25%
As a seminar, this course and its success depend in great part on your active, informed participation and your willingness to critically analyze the course material. In order to participate effectively, you should complete all of the assigned readings in advance of our
class meeting. Please bring the weekly readings to class with you, so that we can easily reference them in our discussions.

Attendance at every class is required. Please make every effort to arrive on time. You are allowed ONE unexcused absence without a direct penalty; any unexcused absence beyond that will result in a reduction by 1/3 of a letter grade of your final grade in the course (i.e., a B+ would become a B).

Weekly discussion board posts/reading responses – 25%
Every week you will post a short reflection (minimum 300 words) on the readings for the week to a class discussion board on Blackboard. Your reflection may deal with themes in one or more readings and should expand upon, anticipate, and/or draw connections between our in-class discussions. Your posts should be submitted by **Thursday at noon each week**, beginning in the second week.

I will post a series of discussion questions to serve as prompts for your thinking; feel free to address one or more of those questions, or choose your own topic to discuss. These assignments are meant to get you thinking and writing about the issues in the class on a regular basis, and before you tackle a larger, more “formal” writing assignment. Think of them as an extension of the dialogue in our class discussions and treat them as such—you are expected to read and engage with your classmates’ posts. You may miss up to TWO board posts without penalty.

Each post will be graded individually and should make a clear connection to one or more readings, demonstrating careful engagement with the ideas therein. Posts must make substantive comments on the reading(s) in both content and length. Referring to the reading(s) through specific references, with citations, is the best way to keep you close to the text. This is meant to be a critical commentary on the texts, and not simply an opinion piece. Late posts will not receive credit.

**Final paper – 50%**
Your final project for the course will be a paper of 15-20 pages in length (minimum 3750 words). This assignment can be approached either as a critical engagement with course material, requiring no outside research, or as a research paper related to issues covered in the course. If you choose the first option, you will be expected to make substantial use of readings from at least 5 weeks of the course. I will distribute more detailed guidelines throughout the semester; you will be required to discuss your paper topic with me well in advance of the deadline and turn in preliminary work in preparation for your final draft. The final paper will be due on **Sunday, May 17 at 11:00 am**.

- All written assignments should be submitted electronically via our Blackboard course site.
- Late papers will be penalized a full letter grade for each day beyond the due date; late board posts will receive no credit.
- Feel free to contact me via e-mail with any questions or concerns. Please allow 24 hours for a reply to your message, though in most cases I will respond much sooner.
- No electronic devices, including (but not limited to) laptops and phones, may be used without my prior permission.

Honor Code:
All students must follow the policies regarding academic honesty as outlined in the Oberlin College Honor Code. Please familiarize yourself with the policies, which can be found online at http://www.oberlin.edu/studentpolicies/honorcode/. No violations will be tolerated. If you have any questions about proper citation, the relationship of the Honor Code to your work in this course, or any other related issues, please do contact me.

Your final paper should include the statement “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment.” For practical reasons, and to maintain the flow of discussion, I do not require that you include the Honor Pledge in your discussion board posts. However, you are still required to adhere to the Honor Code in your discussion board work: all writing should be your own and any references to others’ work should be properly cited.

Students with Disabilities:
If you have a disability of any kind that may require academic accommodations in this course, please come see me during office hours or a scheduled appointment as soon as possible. If you have not already done so, do contact the Director of the Office of Disability Services, Jane Boomer, (jane.boomer@oberlin.edu, x55588, Peters Hall G28), who is responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities.

Readings:
There are four required books for this class; all are available at the Oberlin bookstore, but may be purchased or rented online or elsewhere. They are also on reserve or available as electronic resources at/via Mudd Library.


All other readings can be found on the course's Blackboard site.
Weekly Schedule:

Readings are listed in the order in which I suggest reading them. Blackboard readings are followed by an asterisk.

1. February 5: What Is Citizenship?

2. February 12: The Origins of Citizenship
   - Aristotle, The Politics, selections*

3. February 19: Modern Citizenship 1

4. February 26: Modern Citizenship 2
   - Declaration of the Rights of Citizen and Man, 1789*

5. March 5: Citizenship and the Nation-State 1
   - Brubaker, Rogers, Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany, Introduction and chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-84).

6. March 12: Citizenship and the Nation-State 2
   - Brubaker, Rogers, Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany, Chapters 5-8 and Conclusion (pp. 85-189).

**7. March 19: Feminist Critiques**
- Mill, John Stuart, *The Subjection of Women*, selections*

**SPRING BREAK**

**8. April 2: Final Paper Writing Workshop (No Discussion Post)**

**9. April 9: Citizens and Aliens/Insiders and Outsiders**

**10. April 16: The Boundaries of Citizenship**

**11. April 23: American Citizenship**
12. April 30: A Nation Within a Nation — The African American Struggle for Citizenship
- Dred Scott v. Sandford (1856)*
- Douglass, Frederick, “What to a Slave is the 4th of July?”* 
- Wells, Ida B., Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*
- Weaver, Vesla, “Black Citizenship and Summary Punishment: A Brief History to the Present” Theory and Event 17.3 Supplement (2014).*

In Class: Film — Birth of Nation, D.W. Griffith

13. May 7: Citizenship, Culture, and Legal Status — Latinos in the U.S.
- Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, Arizona S.B 1070*

In Class: Video clips from recent news coverage on Latin American immigration.

FINAL PAPER DUE SUNDAY, MAY 17 AT 11:00 AM ON BLACKBOARD