

COLQ 1020-09: Donald Trump's America

Instructor

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Office Location

Norman Mayer 302

Office Hours

Tue & Thur, 11:00-12:00,
and by appointment

Course Information for Fall 2023

CRN: 50273

Date & Time: Monday 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Classroom: Greenbaum – MacLaren Classroom

Course Overview

The Honors Freshman Colloquium is a course designed to introduce first year honors students to the intellectual life of Tulane University. Honors colloquia are designed to be seminars in which students engage in thought-provoking inquiries into some issue or problem or question, with course work organized around readings, discussion, and writing.

This colloquium will introduce students to the state of American politics and society surrounding the presidency of Donald Trump. It is not designed to be solely a look at his election in 2016 and his administration; instead, it is a broad exploration of the factors that lead to his election and the resulting “state of the union.” Through readings and discussion of current events, we will explore the history of our current state of public opinion, issues regarding polarization, race relations, and gender dynamics, and the prospects for forming a “united” country in the midst of a divisive era.

Learning Outcomes

This course will help students to understand the current state of public opinion, assess ways in which the country is divided politically, and explore factors that serve to unify a diverse American population. Upon completion of this course, students will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes: 1) analysis of course readings and presentation of ideas in class discussion; 2) ability to relate topics addressed in the course to current political and social events; and 3) ability to assess, in both oral and written assignments, the factors that lead to disunity in the United States as well as the factors that still unify Americans.

Required Texts

- Carlos Lozada, *What Were We Thinking*. 2020, Simon & Schuster. 978-1-9821-4562-0
- Ezra Klein, *Why We're Polarized*. 2020, Simon & Schuster. 978-1-4767-0032-8
- and a third book TBD

Assignments

There will be four components to the grade in this course. Students will complete three essays that explore course topics; instructions for the first essay are included at the end of this syllabus; the other two essay assignments will be provided later in the semester. Class participation will also be factored into the final grade (and therefore weekly attendance is expected). These components will contribute to the final course grade as follows:

Assignment	Date Due	Points
Class Participation	Weekly	24 Points
Book Debate	October 2	6 Points
Essay 1	October 2	20 Points
Essay 2	November 6	20 Points
Essay 3	December 14	30 Points
TOTAL		100 TOTAL POINTS

Course Policies

- **Format:** This course is a seminar. As a result, weekly attendance is critical both for individual student learning as well as the successful operation of each class session. Students should come with course materials read in advance, prepared to engage one another in discussion. In all circumstances students are encouraged to stop me for questions or comments.
- **Grading:** This course will be graded according to Tulane's plus/minus grading system. Grades will be available by seeing me before or after class or during office hours. I will not provide grades over email or by phone.

A	93-100	A-	90-92.99	B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99	B-	80-82.99	C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99	C-	70-72.99	D+	67-69.99
D	63-66.99	D-	60-62.99	F	59.99 and below

- **Expectations:** Students are expected to attend each class, to be on time, and to have all course materials read prior to the class in which they are discussed. Please turn off all electronic devices during class. Laptop computers are not permitted in class; please turn them off and put them away before class starts. All assignments must be completed for a student to pass the course. Requests for regrading any exam or assignment must be made no later than one week after it has been returned. No make-ups will be allowed except in very serious circumstances (I reserve the right to determine what is "very serious"). Course incompletes will only be allowed for circumstances in which the student is physically unable to complete the course; the student must otherwise be passing the course in order to be granted an incomplete.
- **Accommodations:** If you have any kind of special circumstances, such as a disability, illness, or handicap, or if you are involved with a university activity that requires you to miss class, let me know as soon as possible. This information is confidential. All students attending Tulane University with documented disabilities are eligible and encouraged to apply for services with the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility. Please see me or go to <https://accessibility.tulane.edu> for more information. Students needing accommodations must provide me a copy of the accommodation granted by the GCSA as soon as possible.

- **Academic Integrity:** As described in the Tulane University [Code of Academic Conduct](#), students are expected to uphold the honor and integrity of the academic process. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating on an exam (either providing answers to or receiving answers from another student), plagiarism (the use of another author's words or arguments without attribution), and unauthorized collaboration (working with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of any course requirement). If a student commits any violation of academic integrity, I will pursue disciplinary action as outlined in the Code of Academic Conduct.
- **Academic Freedom:** In any classroom situation that includes discussion and critical thinking, particularly about political ideas, there are bound to be many differing viewpoints. Students may disagree with each other at times, or with me. These differences can help enhance class discussion and create an atmosphere where students (and I) will be encouraged to think and learn. In any event, grades will not be adversely affected by any beliefs expressed in class or in assignments.
- **Note regarding syllabus dates:** Please take into consideration the due dates for essays when scheduling other activities, travel, etc. This applies especially to course requirements that occur immediately before or after holidays. Please also note the university-designated makeup dates: October 14, 15 and November 11, 12. These dates will be used for makeup classes in the event of a university closure.
- **Religious Accommodation Policy:** https://registrar.tulane.edu/Academic_Calendar (bottom of the page)
- **Title IX Policy / Support:** <https://allin.tulane.edu/>
- **Code of Student Conduct:** <https://conduct.tulane.edu/resources/code-student-conduct>
- **Compliance with COVID-19 Regulations:** <https://tulane.edu/covid-19/health-strategies>

Course Schedule

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Assignment</u>
1	August 21	Introduction to the course / Syllabus distribution
2	August 28	Lozada Intro and Chapters 1-2
	September 4	<i>No class - Labor Day</i>
3	September 11	Lozada Chapters 3-5
4	September 18	Lozada Chapters 6-8
5	September 25	Lozada Chapters 9-10 and Epilogue
6	October 2	In-class debate / ESSAY 1 DUE
7	October 9	Klein Intro and Chapters 1-3
8	October 16	Klein Chapters 4-5 and Interlude
9	October 23	Klein Chapters 6-8
10	October 30	Klein Chapters 9-10 and Afterword
11	November 6	Book 3, part 1 / ESSAY 2 DUE
12	November 13	Book 3, part 2
	November 20	<i>No class - Thanksgiving</i>
13	November 27	Book 3, part 3
14	December 4	Book 3, part 4
	December 14	ESSAY 3 DUE AT NOON

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Guidance for Doing the Reading / Preparing for Class

Every week we will read a few chapters and have an in-depth discussion of the events, people, and ideas presented in that material. As a result, it is quite important for you to come to class with the reading finished and with some ideas of what you'd like to talk about. Additionally, the information from the readings should be woven through the essays you will write for this class, so it is doubly important that you be prepared to think and talk about the readings each week.

The 'assignment' below is not something I'm going to make you turn in¹, but it is a suggested method of approaching the readings and preparing for class discussion. Feel free to use as much (or little) of this method as you wish, but please consider working through this 'assignment' as you prepare for class.

3-2-1 assignment

Write (or take notes) about each week's readings using the 3-2-1 format. In this case the 3-2-1 assignment will involve listing:

- The 3 main points of the readings
- 2 questions you have about the readings
- 1 thing you would like to follow up on

If you are inclined to write out this material for use during class, consider writing a solid paragraph for each of the three main points and some contextual information for each of your questions and follow-up. The assignment isn't just a list. It's a format that allows you to create thoughtful responses. Don't worry about word count or pages written – focus on what you want to say, and say it in a clear, meaningful way.

¹ Though I reserve the right to make this a turned-in assignment, applied to your participation grade, if class discussions are not robust.

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Essay # 1 Instructions

The purpose of the first paper is to demonstrate that you can read critically and make arguments supported by evidence from the text.

Please address the following questions in an essay of 3-5 pages (double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins). You should incorporate material from our class discussions as well as the text to support your answers; be sure to include page numbers if making references to the text. You do not need to do outside research for this essay, but if you choose to, be sure to include a full reference as a footnote.

This essay is due **in hard copy** at the beginning of class on Monday, October 2, 2023.

1. Provide a brief summary of *What Were We Thinking*. What does Lozada mean when he says this book is an 'intellectual history' of the Trump era?
2. To Lozada, who are the people that support Trump, and what ideas motivate them? What about Trump's critics? Who are they and what ideas motivate them?
3. Pick one of the books that Lozada summarizes that should be the third book for our class.
 - a. (Briefly) describe the book.
 - b. Generally speaking, does Lozada have a positive, negative, or neutral take on the book?
 - c. What theme or topic does this book address? How does this book – and more broadly, how would our attention to this theme/topic – advance our understanding of Donald Trump's America?
 - d. Does the book you are recommending affirm or challenge your previous ideas/assumptions about "Trump's America." Explain what your previous idea/assumption was and how this book might affirm or challenge it.
 - e. Ultimately, why should this book, rather than any other book summarized by Lozada, be the third book for our class?