Theorizing Diversity – POL 509

Course Syllabus
Graduate Seminar, Department of Politics

Professor Alan Patten
Fall 2010

Contemporary liberal democracies are characterized by important forms of diversity, including racial, religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity. The course examines recent work in normative political theory that debates how liberal democracies ought to respond to these varying forms of diversity. How should concepts of “race,” “religion,” and “culture” be understood by political theorists interested in these debates? Do racial, religious, and/or cultural minorities as such have rights to recognition or accommodation? And what would the basis of any such rights, or of opposition to them, be in the principles of liberal democracy?

Books worth acquiring:
- Amy Gutmann (ed.) Color Conscious
- Tommie Shelby, We Who Are Dark

Week 1

Introduction to Course Themes

Anthony Appiah, “Race, Culture, Identity” in Amy Gutmann (ed.) Color Conscious

Week 2

Conceptualizing race


Further Reading:

**Week 3**

*Race and justice*


George Sher, “Reverse Discrimination, the Future, and the Past,” *Ethics* (1979)

Amy Gutmann, “Responding to Racial Injustice” in Amy Gutmann (ed.) *Color Conscious*


Background:
pair of Supreme Court cases (2007) “Parents Involved in Community Schools” and “Meredith v. Jefferson County”

Further Reading:


Anne Philips, *The Politics of Presence*

Iris Young, *Democracy and Inclusion*.

**Week 4**

*Historical Injustice*


Week 5

*Black Politics and Black Identity in the United States*

Tommie Shelby, *We Who Are Dark*.

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Week 6

*Religious Liberty – Free Exercise*


Background:  
Supreme Court, *Sherbert* (1963), *Yoder* (1972) and *Smith* (1990) cases.

Further Reading:  
Nancy Rosenblum (ed.) *Religious Accommodation in Pluralist Democracies*  
Amy Gutmann, *Identity in Democracy*, ch. 4  
Brian Barry, *Culture & Equality*, ch. 5.  
Alan Patten, *Equal Recognition* (manuscript), ch. 6

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Week 7

*Religious Liberty – Establishment*


Background:  
Week 8

Liberalism and culture I

Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, chs. 5-6.
Joseph Raz, “Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective,” ch. 8 of *Ethics in the Public Domain*
Joseph Carens, *Culture, Citizenship, and Community*, ch. 3.

Further Reading:
Alan Patten, *Equal Recognition* (manuscript), ch. 3.

Week 9

Liberalism and culture II

Sarah Song, *Justice, Gender, and the Politics of Multiculturalism*, ch. 3

Further Reading:
Alan Patten, *Equal Recognition* (manuscript), chs. 4-5.

Week 10

Conceptualizing Culture

Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*.
Alan Patten, “Rethinking Culture: The Social Lineage Account,” draft manuscript.

Background:

Anthony Appiah, The Ethics of Identity, ch. 4
Seyla Benhabib, The Claims of Culture.

Week 11

Multiculturalism and gender

Susan Okin, “Feminism and Multiculturalism: Some Tensions,” Ethics, 1998
Jeff Spinner, “Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression, and the State,” Ethics (2001)

Further Reading:
Susan Okin, Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?, including critical responses
Anne Phillips, Multiculturalism without Culture

Week 12

Multiculturalism and Social Solidarity

David Miller, “Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Theoretical Reflections”
Paul Sniderman and Luuk Hagendoorn, When Ways of Life Collide.

Further Reading: