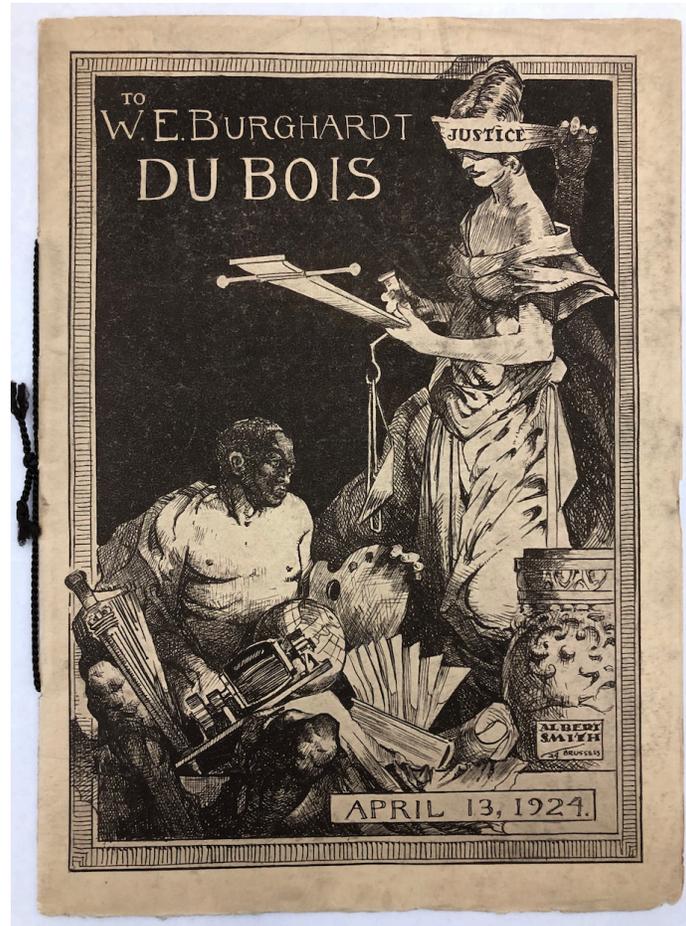


W. E. B. Du Bois's Sociological Dream

Sociology 188-13 | Fall 2019 | Tufts University



Cover of a program for a dinner in honor of Du Bois at the Café Savarin, New York, NY. Source: UMass Special Collections and University Archives

****Final update Fall 2019****

When: Thursdays, 9-12
Where: 209 Eaton Hall & Koppelman Gallery
Instructor: Associate Professor Freedom Blume Oeur
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Office Hours: Drop-in: Wednesdays, 3-4, and Fridays 11-12; and by appointment

Welcome. This inaugural upper-level seminar invites students to experience, interrogate, draw inspiration from, and challenge W. E. B. Du Bois’s sociological dream: a complex and contradictory landscape of ghostly hauntings, occasional hallucinations, scientific hypotheses, imaginative fiction, sorrow songs, apocalyptic prophecies, political miscues, Communist leanings, peaceful prayers, autobiographical reflections, demands for Truth and Beauty, and yearnings for racial emancipation. We start by investigating the emergence of scientific sociology in the U.S. and the overlooked but pioneering efforts of the Du Bois-Atlanta School. From there our study of Du Bois’s sociological dream will take us from Germany to Boston, Atlanta University to the NAACP, and China to Ghana; and throughout we’ll peruse a range of materials including archival documents, Du Bois’s own writing and select secondary literature, infographics, opinion pieces, audio interview recordings, children’s books, speculative fiction, and visual images.

Two themes will help bring focus to our seminar. The first is Du Bois’s famous and prescient proclamation that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.” Using *the color line* as a metaphor and a category of difference and division, we will inspect the stubborn existence of the color line from various angles: for example, how we can see it and hear it, how it intersects with gender and social class, how Du Bois used religion to help explain it, and how it is part of the fabric of U.S. society as well as the larger world order. Second, our seminar will take a special look at Du Bois as a *propagandist*. To that end, we will comb the pages of the NAACP’s magazine *The Crisis*, which Du Bois founded and which he was involved with for nearly a quarter century. To support this effort, our class will work closely with Steffani Jemmison and Jamal Cyrus’s exhibition, “Alpha’s Bet is Not Over Yet,” featured this fall at the Tufts Art Gallery. This exhibition is a reading room that contains copies of old issues of Black political periodicals, including *The Crisis*. By immersing ourselves in this exhibition and by working together to create a special issue of *The Crisis*—in conjunction with Dr. Chantal Zakari’s book-making class at the SMFA—we will engage with Du Bois’s bold pronouncement that “all art is propaganda.”

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To examine the contributions of the Du Bois-Atlanta School as the architect of modern U.S. sociology, and how those continue to shape the discipline today.
- To interrogate the evolving nature of Du Bois’s thinking on race and politics across his long career.
- To apply a Du Boisian sociology that links theory and praxis in a range of assignments.
- To use Du Bois’s sociological dream to elaborate on and develop your own.
- To mine archival materials and historical records for their historical lessons and for what they can teach us today.

REQUIREMENTS

Respect. Please engage respectfully with me and your classmates. Beyond basic matters of civility, this means respectful intellectual engagement.

Required Course Materials. There is one required text for the course:

- Morris, Aldon. 2015. *The Scholar Denied: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology*. Oakland: University of California Press.

All other materials will be available electronically on Canvas. These will include many readings and images. Materials may be added (and removed) throughout the course, so stay tuned! This syllabus will remain a work-in-progress throughout the term and your feedback is always welcome on how to improve the class curriculum.

Assignments.

- [20%] Participation and Attendance. There is no strict attendance policy other than to say that participation is impossible if you don't attend, which will hurt your grade. *With that being said*, attendance for this class is absolutely vital. Our class is small and so the success of the entire class depends on active participation from each of you.
- [10%] Reading Reflections. For classes 2-6 (5 class meetings), you'll prepare a two-paragraph reflection on the week's readings. You should post these by 5pm before class to the Canvas discussion board. You're required to read each of your classmate's reflections before class.
- [20%] Class special issue of The Crisis. As a class, we'll use various media to create a special issue of *The Crisis* magazine. With the help of Dr. Chantal Zakari of the SMFA, we'll use a Risograph printer to create physical copies of this issue.
- [20%] Group Presentation and Paper #1. In groups of 2-3, you'll lead discussion for one week of class (worth 10% of this grade), which will include preparing a handout for that class and sharing a paper idea with your classmates; and then writing a 5-page double-spaced paper due one week after your presentation (worth 10% of this grade). Examples of past presentations will be uploaded onto Canvas. More details to come.
- [30%] Paper #2. A final 15-page double-spaced paper, on a topic of your choice, due December 17.

Grading Scale. Please don't worry about your grades. The best-case scenario is that everyone gets an A. Let's work together so that everyone does.

A+ (100), A (94-99), A- (90-93), B+ (87-89), B (84-86), B- (80-83), C+ (77-79), C (74-76)
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Paper Extension Policy. You have a 2-day, 48-hour grace period that you can use, if you'd like, however you wish *across all 2 papers for the class*. So, you could take 1 extra day to work on 2 different papers; or 2 extra days on 1 paper, all without penalty. After you've exhausted your 48 hours, you won't be granted an extension and your paper will be subjected to the normal penalty (2/3 of the grade docked each day the paper's late). To take advantage of the grace period, *you must let me know via email at least 24 hours before that particular paper is due*. This policy pertains only to the papers and not the reading reflections and *The Crisis* special project.

Academic Honesty. Our course will abide strictly by the guidelines laid out in the Tufts Statement of Academic Integrity, available at:

- <http://ase.tufts.edu/biology/bgguide/classes/tahonesty.htm>

A comprehensive review of university policies is available at:

- <http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/publicationsandwebsites/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

This requires you to cite appropriately, understand what constitutes plagiarism, and consult me before submitting the same paper for this class and another (past or current) class. Possible violations of the policies outlined in the Statement of Academic Honesty will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Student Accessibility. Please reach out to me privately if you require any accommodations.

Emergencies and Illnesses. As a general rule, contact me if something comes up and you expect to miss class. Sports games, missed alarm clocks, and the like are not legitimate reasons for missing class. If you're sick, fill out the short-term illness notification on SIS. For extended absences (missing two or more consecutive classes), you must also provide medical documentation through the Health Center. In these instances, I'll consider giving you the option of completing make-up work for the course. For these and other major concerns, I encourage you to reach out to your academic dean and to have him or her contact me.

Contacting Freeden. Feel free to email me but check first if the information you need is on this syllabus. So your email doesn't get lost, make sure to include a subject in the subject line and the course number (Soc 188).

Electronics. While you're free to use your laptop if you prefer to type up your class notes, I expect that you will not use class time to browse the internet (unless you're doing so for class purposes). Electronics are distracting. As for phones, *you may not have them out at any time during class*, unless, again, they're for class purposes. Using electronics out of compliance will harm your participation grade.

CLASS MATERIALS

Credo. This is the digital repository of the Special Collections and Archives at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. It's named after a 1904 statement written by Du Bois, in which the scholar laid out his philosophy for racial emancipation. Credo contains digital copies of a large majority of the Du Bois Papers. It's an incredible resource and get to know it well! We'll explore many of the materials in this archive in class.

- <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums312>

The Crisis Magazine. The early issues of this publication—and especially those years when Du Bois was involved with the magazine: 1910–1934—will be a main source for our class. You can access those issues from 1910 to 1922 at the Modernist Journal Project:

<https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=crisisnaacp>

While it's less easy to navigate, you can also find many issues on Google Books:

<https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=crisisnaacp>

The Tufts Digital Collections & Archives, in the basement of Tisch Library, also recently received a collection featuring a large selection of issues between 1929 and 2002. Stop by and check them out:

<https://dca.tufts.edu/about/news/The%20Crisis%20Magazine>

The Brownies' Book. This was a monthly children's magazine run by Du Bois and *The Crisis* that ran from 1920 to 1921. The website Tar Baby and the Tomahawk has all the issues in full:

<http://childlit.unl.edu/topics/edi.brownies.html>

Recorded Interviews with Moses Asch. We'll listen to a few of these in class, though you'll want to hear them all. Thirteen snippets of the long interview on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_lcXGftqWjSymS0FF79R1eJyPkA_SfzxFqk

Du Bois Library. Freeden has proudly assembled over 30+ books on Du Bois, including primary and secondary sources, over the years. You're welcome to stop by his office and check out a book if you can't locate it at Tisch.

GENERAL RESOURCES

Basic Needs Security. I urge you to contact the Office of Student Success and Advising, your academic dean, or another campus official you trust, if you're having difficulty securing stable housing and sufficient food to eat, and especially if these difficulties are interfering with your academic performance. Please also feel free to reach out to me if I can help secure resources or put you in touch with others who can help.

Canvas. This will have everything pertinent to the course including announcements and course materials. Make sure you can access it, and that you're set up to receive emails and other announcements from me.

- <https://canvas.tufts.edu/>

WebEx. In the event of extreme weather or if the university officially cancels classes, we *may* hold class on WebEx. This is preferable to skipping class and relying on rescheduled classes. I'll let you know as soon as possible if we'll be meeting on WebEx, and will send you the access code to join my "personal room." Your responsibility *before the class* is to make sure you're able to access WebEx. You'll need to download a plug-in. Check to make sure your video, sound, muting, chat, etc. works. While there are limitations, we'll plan to treat a WebEx session as a normal class: you'll be able to make comments and ask questions, etc., and I can easily share PowerPoint slides and other media. Or I may plan to videotape a lecture you can watch later.

- <https://it.tufts.edu/webex>

Office Hours. Students who make use of office hours tend to do better in class. Think of these as "student hours." Feel free to stop by with a classmate. The time will be more productive if you come prepared with specific concerns and questions. Office hours held before an assignment is due may require an online sign-up. Send me an email if you can't make my drop-in hours so we can schedule another time to meet.

Annotating. This is the process of engaging actively with a text by marking it up. Use whatever annotation system works best for you. A helpful online annotation guide is available at:

- <http://guides.hcl.harvard.edu/sixreadinghabits>

Writing. There are many excellent writing resources available. As a general rule, I won't read drafts of written assignments. However, I'm happy to discuss outlines or written brainstorming in office hours, if you send me these in advance. Check out Purdue University's excellent Online Writing Lab (OWL), which covers all dimensions of writing. It has a great overview of ASA formatting and style, which you should use for papers in this class.

- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein have excellent suggestions for writers. Check out their templates for basic rhetorical devices in writing:

- <http://www.csub.edu/eap-riap/theysay.pdf>

Writing Tutoring. Take advantage of the writing tutoring available through the Academic Resource Center:

- <http://uss.tufts.edu/arc/writingtutoring>

Citing and Referencing. Use the American Sociological Association’s style guide in your papers:

- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/01/>

Schedule. A full bibliography with all the course readings will be uploaded to Canvas later in the term.

| WELCOME! MEETING DU BOIS IN THE ARCHIVES | |
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| 9/5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to the course. ▪ Review syllabus and course expectations. ▪ What can archival materials tell us about Du Bois? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Various interesting documents Freedmen found this summer in the archives. ▪ Du Bois, “Jefferson Davis as a Representative of Civilization” (1890). ▪ Du Bois’s audio interview with Moses Asch. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Early College Years, Fisk U.” ○ “Harvard U.” ○ “Germany.” ○ “Atlanta U.” |

| CONSTRUCTING A THEORY OF THE COLOR LINE: SCIENTIFIC SOCIOLOGY & AND THE ATLANTA SCHOOL | |
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| 9/12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The Conservation of Races” (1897). |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Du Bois, <i>The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois</i> (2007). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “University of Pennsylvania.” ▪ Aldon Morris, <i>The Scholar Denied</i> (2015). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction and Chapters 1-3. ▪ Saidiya Hartman, <i>Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments</i> (2019). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “An Atlas of the Wayward.” <p><i>*Reading Reflections #1 due</i></p> |
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| <p>ELUCIDATING THE COLOR LINE: BASIC POLITICAL POSITIONS</p> |
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| <p>9/19</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aldon Morris, <i>The Scholar Denied</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapters 4, 5, and 7. ▪ Du Bois, “Of the Dawn of Freedom” (1903). ▪ Du Bois, “The Sorrow Songs” (1903). ▪ Du Bois, “The Souls of White Folk” (1920?). ▪ Nikole Hannah-Jones, <i>New York Times Magazine</i>. “Our Democracy’s Founding Ideals Were False When They Were Written” (2019). (Opening essay for the magazine’s “1619 Project.”) <p><i>*Reading Reflections #2 due</i></p> |
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| <p>RESISTING THE COLOR LINE: <i>THE CRISIS AND PROPAGANDA</i></p> |
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| <p>9/26</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Du Bois’s audio interview with Moses Asch, “The Crisis.” ▪ Amy Kirschke and Phillip Luke Sinitiere, <i>Protest and Propaganda</i> (2014). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “W. E. B. Du Bois as Print Propagandist.” ○ “Art in <i>Crisis</i> During the Du Bois Years.” ▪ Du Bois, <i>The Crisis</i>. “The White Christ” (1915). ▪ Possible additional reading provided by Chantal. <p><i>*Reading Reflections #3 due</i></p> <p>*Meet at the Koppelman Gallery with Chantal Zakari’s class.</p> <p>*Virtual visit from Dr. Phillip Luke Sinitiere, College of Biblical Studies</p> |
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**HUMANIZING THE COLOR LINE:
REACHING WIDER AUDIENCES**

10/3

- Du Bois, “The Criteria of Negro Art.”
- Whitney Battle-Baptiste and Britt Rusert, *W. E. B. Du Bois’s Data Portraits* (2018).
 - Introduction.
 - Various infographics.
- Katharine Capshaw Smith, “*The Crisis* Children’s Page, *The Brownie’s Book*, and the Fantastic” (2014).
- You will each be assigned a different issue of *The Brownies’ Book* (1920-1921) to read and analyze with Du Bois’s writings in mind.

**Reading Reflections #4 due*

***Meet at the Koppelman Gallery**

***Virtual visit from Dr. Whitney Battle-Baptiste, UMass-Amherst**

**AURAL HISTORIES:
SOUNDS OF THE COLOR LINE**

10/10

- Du Bois, “Of the Faith of the Fathers” (1903).
- Jennifer Stoeber, *The Sonic Color Line* (2016).
 - Introduction and Chapter 5.
- Tennille Allen and Antonia Randolph, “Listening for the Interior in Hip-Hop and R&B Music” (2019).

**Reading Reflections #5 due*

**NEXT TO THE COLOR LINE:
DU BOIS AND GENDER**

10/17

- Du Bois, “The Talented Tenth” (1903).
- Du Bois, “The Damnation of Women” (1920).

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Du Bois, “The Comet” (1920). ▪ Joy James, “Profeminism and Gender Elites” (2007). ▪ Farah Jasmine Griffin, “Black Feminists and Du Bois: Respectability, Protection, and Beyond” (2000). |
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| <p>THE COLOR LINE IN CONTEMPORARY FOCUS: CREATING <i>THE CRISIS</i></p> |
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| <p>10/24</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-class presentations on your contributions to our class’s special issue of <i>The Crisis</i>. ▪ Chantal Zakari of the SMFA will lead us in creating a physical copy of the issue with a Risograph printer. <p>*Meet at the Koppelman Gallery</p> |
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| <p>THE COLOR LINE IN SCHOOLS: DU BOIS ON EDUCATION</p> |
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| <p>10/31</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peer reflections on the first half of the seminar. What’s one big conclusion you’ve reached in class so far? What’s one big question that’s on your mind? |
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| <p>SLAVERY’S AFTERLIVES: DU BOIS, MARXISM, AND CAPITALISM</p> |
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| <p>11/7</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Du Bois, <i>The Crisis</i>. “Marxism and the Negro Problem” (1931). ▪ Du Bois, <i>Black Reconstruction</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Propaganda of History.” ▪ Moon-Kie Jung, “The Enslaved, the Worker, and Du Bois’s <i>Black Reconstruction</i>” (2019). ▪ Brian Kelly, “W. E. B. Du Bois, Black Agency, and the Slaves’ Civil War” (2016). ▪ Matthew Desmond, “American Capitalism is Brutal” (2019). <p><i>Group presentation #1</i></p> |
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**LEFT OF THE COLOR LINE:
DU BOIS AND COMMUNISM**

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| 11/14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Du Bois, “Social Planning for the Negro, Past and Present” (1936). ▪ Du Bois, “Socialism and the American Negro” (1960). ▪ Du Bois, Letter of application to join the Communist Party USA, with a reply from Gus Hall, the party’s general secretary (1961). ▪ Manning Marable, <i>W. E. B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat</i> (1986). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Stern Prophet, Flaming Angel.” |
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Group presentation #2

**WORLD REVOLUTION:
THE GLOBAL COLOR LINE, ASIA, AND PAN-AFRICANISM**

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| 11/21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Du Bois, “Address at All African Peoples’ Conference, Accra, Ghana” (1958) ▪ Du Bois, “Ghana Calls” (1963). ▪ Du Bois, “China and Africa” (1959). ▪ Du Bois, “I Sing to China” (1959). ▪ Bill Mullen, <i>Afro-Orientalism</i> (2004). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “W. E. B. Du Bois’s Afro-Asian Fantasia.” |
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Group presentation #3

***11/28: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**

**LAST CALL:
REFLECTIONS ON DU BOIS’S SOCIOLOGICAL DREAM... AND YOURS**

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| 12/5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Workshop final paper ideas.▪ Last call. |
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***FINAL PAPER DUE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17 AT 12PM**