Section 1C, 1D, 1L Syllabus

This section syllabus complements the main course syllabus which is available on the course webpage. In section we will be discussing the readings assigned for the course, which expand on themes Prof. Thompson will introduce in lecture. It will also be an opportunity for you to ask questions about any course concepts that require clarification. Section is not optional; the readings will help you to understand the major ideas of the course, and will be important for the midterm and final exams.

Section Grading

Your grade in this course is based on a take-home midterm (35%), an in-class final (45%), section participation/attendance (10%), and two in-section presentations (10%).

Participation/attendance grades for section will be determined by your active attendance in section. This means not simply showing up, but showing up prepared to discuss the readings for the day. If you need to miss a section (due to illness or personal reasons), you can "make up" your absence by participating more actively in the rest of the sections.

You are required to give two presentations: (1) one presenting the readings for the week, and (2) one in which you serve as a "discussant" for the readings. On the day of your presentations, you will be expected to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of your assigned readings. These presentations are described in more detail below:

1) For this presentation you will prepare a 5-10 minute presentation on the readings for your assigned slot (see presentation sign-up sheets online for your assigned slot). If you are presenting on the same day as another student, then your presentation should ideally be closer to 5 minutes long. If you are the only presenter, it can be closer to 10 minutes. Most importantly, make sure that you adequately present your assigned readings. This includes summarizing the main ideas of the readings and discussing how the readings are related to each other and the main ideas of the course. Your grade will be determined by how well you address these elements of the assignment, as well as the overall quality/impression of your presentation.

2) As a discussant, you will primarily be responsible for critiquing the readings you are assigned. The presenter will have already summarized the readings, so in this presentation you should focus on critiquing the authors' arguments. Do two of the authors have conflicting opinions? Which one makes a stronger case? Why? What kinds of evidence do the authors use to support their arguments? Is the evidence
sufficient for you to believe the authors' conclusions? How might the arguments or past events described in the readings relate to current events? How might an article be relevant to an article we discussed in a previous week? In this presentation, you will also be expected to propose some questions for the class to discuss. Your grade for this presentation will be determined by the quality of your critique and the questions you raise, as well as the overall quality/impression of your presentation.

Students will sign up for section presentations on the first day of section, and the list of assigned presentations will be posted on our section webpage. Once you are assigned a presentation, you must present on your assigned day or you will receive a zero for that assignment.

General Grading Guidelines
As described in the main syllabus, we will not offer make-up exams, and any work (i.e., midterm) submitted late will suffer a penalty. To determine your grades on the midterm and final, all the TAs and Prof. Thompson agree on general standards and then apply them. If you feel that your midterm was not graded properly, you need to submit the exam to me with a typed explanation of why you think you were not awarded appropriate credit within 72 hours. This explanation should be a response to margin comments on the midterm. I will re-read the entire midterm, and will determine whether your grade should be higher, lower, or remain the same. If you are not satisfied with this re-grade, you can then take your exam to Prof. Thompson, who will read the entire exam and give it a new grade. The final grade you receive may be higher, lower, or the same as the original grade.

Office Hours
I am always available during office hours if you need extra assistance with the course material. As a TA, I have generally found that office hours are sparsely attended, but I encourage you to take advantage of those opportunities to ask questions and get extra help.