American Mourning

How does the way in which a democratic polity mourns its losses shape its political outcomes? How might it shape those outcomes? American Mourning: Tragedy, Democracy, Resilience answers these questions with a critical study of American public mourning. Employing mourning as a lens through which to view the shortcomings of American democracy and as a tool for addressing the same, it offers an argument for a tragic, complex, and critical mode of mourning that it contrasts with the nationalist, romantic, and nostalgic responses to loss that currently dominate and damage the polity. Offering new readings of key texts in Ancient and contemporary political thought, as well as in American politics and history, it engages debates central to recent democratic theory concerned with agonism, acknowledgment, hope, humanism, patriotism, and political resilience. The book outlines new ways of thinking about and responding to terrorism, racial conflict, and the problems of democratic military return.

Simon Stow is an associate professor of government at the College of William and Mary, where he teaches classes in the history of and topics in political thought. He is the author of Republic of Readers? The Literary Turn in Political Thought and Analysis (2007), a Choice Outstanding Academic Title. He coedited A Political Companion to John Steinbeck (2013) and has published articles in the American Political Science Review, American Political Thought, Perspectives of Politics, and Theory & Event.
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Tragedy, Democracy, Resilience

SIMON STOW

The College of William and Mary
For Caroline and Thea,
You may rejoice, I must mourn.
– Frederick Douglass
# Acknowledgments

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