

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO
Department of African American Studies
AAST103/POLS112 ▪ Spring 2007
T/R 12:30-1:45 ▪ BSB 389

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICS

Professor: Michelle R. Boyd, Ph.D.
Office: 1219 University Hall
Email: mrboyd@uic.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

From hip hop artists to college students to university scholars, contemporary observers consistently express concern over the supposed decline of racial unity among blacks. In particular, these analysts claim that today's black middle class lacks the racial solidarity it had during the period of segregation. Racial unity, they claim, was the key to addressing black subordination in the past, and the missing ingredient in black politics today.

In this course, you will evaluate this claim by studying the activism of African Americans over time. Specifically, we will examine the political and economic status of blacks from slavery to the civil rights era, analyzing the ideologies and strategies blacks used in order to fight racial subordination. In doing so, we will ask what, if any, divisions existed among blacks prior to the civil rights movement? Under what circumstances do blacks "overcome" those differences? What are the costs and benefits of black unity? What are the costs and benefits of black political diversity? And what resources have been most effective in addressing inter- and intraracial inequality? By the end of the semester, you will have developed a well-supported *argument* about the important question of black political unity.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- define and recognize the primary forms of inter and intraracial marginalization;
- describe and evaluate the major political ideologies developed by black activists.
- describe and evaluate the effectiveness of the major political strategies used to change the distribution of racial power;
- recognize, analyze, and construct arguments in written and oral form.

Course Methods

To reach these goals, you will:

- read and discuss historical descriptions of black social, political and economic life;
- write essays analyzing the history of black politics;
- write a paper explaining and defending a contemporary political strategy; and
- use your paper to engage in a team debate on a contemporary political issue

Basic Expectations

You can expect me (the professor) to:

- arrive on time and be prepared for class;
- follow the syllabus and alert you in advance of any changes;
- respond as quickly and as thoroughly as possible to your work and concerns; and
- evaluate your work fairly according to clearly communicated expectations.

I expect you (the student) to:

- be both prompt and prepared for class;
- read and follow the written syllabus and ask any clarifying questions in advance;
- take the initiative in communicating with me *before* problems get out of control; and
- evaluate your own work according to the expectations of the course.

I'm happy to talk with you about problems, questions, confusions or concerns you have about the course and **strongly encourage you to meet with me outside of class**. Students who require accommodations for access to or participation in the course should register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 312-413-2103 (voice) or 312-413-0123 (TTY) and come and see me immediately.

Policies & Procedures

- Cell phones must be set so that they are completely inaudible. Students whose cell phones disturb class will lose their participation points for the day. Those whose cell phones ring repeatedly throughout the semester will be asked to leave class.
- Neither extra credit nor make-up assignments will be offered in this course.
- Assignments may only be submitted electronically with the express permission of the professor. Hard copies not submitted directly to the professor should be taken to the main office in the African American Studies department, located

at 1223 University Hall. These assignments must be labeled with my name and signed in by a faculty or staff person.

- Students are strongly urged to familiarize themselves with the definition of plagiarism (www.uic.edu/depts/sja/integrit.htm) and avoid it at all costs. Penalties for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty can include expulsion from the university.

Required Texts

All the readings for this course are included in the coursepack, which will be available for purchase during the first week of class. **Students who do not purchase the reader at this time are responsible for contacting the printer (Hill Brodsky at printer@printerhill.com) and obtaining the reader on their own.**

Evaluation

There are no in-class exams in this course. Your grade will be based on the following:

ATTENDANCE (10%)

I expect everyone to attend all classes. However, since life does sometime intervene, you may miss a full week (2 class periods) for whatever reason, without penalty. There is no distinction between "excused" or "unexcused" absences, and you don't need to tell me when or why you'll be absent. **For every additional absence over the two allowed, your participation grade will drop one letter grade.**

Students who are not in class when attendance is taken are late, and late arrivals create an unwanted and unnecessary disruption. Three late arrivals count as an absence, which will affect your grade in the manner described above.

Whether late or absent, you are expected to obtain any missed material from other students. I will not provide a summary of the class during my office hours.

PARTICIPATION (15%)

The purpose of class time is to help you make sense of the day's reading and understand its relationship to material we have already covered. We'll do that through lectures, in-class writing assignments, small group projects, class discussions and media presentations. Your participation grade will be based on your attentiveness, involvement, attitude and contribution to group work. Think quality over quantity.

ANALYTICAL ESSAYS (50%)

Assignment You will write two 5-7 page essays for this course. The essay question will be handed out one week before it is due and will address the major themes from the previous unit(s). Hard copies of the analytical essays must be submitted at the beginning of class. Electronic copies may only be submitted with my express permission and must have a time-date stamp prior to the beginning of class. **Late papers will not be accepted.**

Rewriting Papers receiving a grade of C- or below may be Revised and Resubmitted for a second grading. If you choose to do an R&R, you must schedule an appointment with me within two days of receiving your original grade, and submit your revised paper within a week of receiving your original grade.

DEBATE PAPER (25%)

Your final assignment will be to write an argumentative essay, in which you take and defend a position on a topic assigned to you. This paper is due on Tuesday, April 15th. **Late papers will not be accepted.** This *individually* written essay will be

the basis for a *group* assignment that you will complete during the last two weeks of class meetings. Working with other students assigned to your topic and position, you will combine your findings and prepare for a debate against class members assigned to the opposing view. More detailed instructions will be distributed mid-semester.

Unit I: Theorizing Black Politics

Wk Jan **Course Overview**
1 15

Jan **Theoretical Perspectives on Black Politics: Pluralist & Elite Theory**
17 Rodney Hero, "Theoretical Perspectives and Latino Politics" in *Latinos in the U.S. Political System: Two-Tiered Pluralism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 11-30.

Wk Jan **Theoretical Perspectives on Black Politics: Marginalization & Privilege**
2 22 Cathy Cohen, "Marginalization: Power, Identity and Members" in *The Boundaries of Blackness: Aids and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 33-54.

Jan **Black Political Ideologies & Strategies: An Overview**
24 Michael Dawson, "The Contours of Black Political Thought" in *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1-23.

Unit II: Gaining Citizenship Rights

Wk Jan **Slavery's Racial Order**
3 29 Philip Morgan, "Slave Property as Property Owners" in Thomas C. Holt and Elsa Barkley Brown, eds., *Major Problems in African American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 234-244.

Jan **Resistance & Revolt, 1640-1831**
31 Deborah Gray White, "The Nature of Female Slavery" in *Ar'n't I A Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1985), 62-90.

Wk Feb **Moral Suasion in Abolitionist America, 1830-1860**
4 5 "Henry Highland Garnet Urges Slaves to Resist, August 1843" and "Frederick Douglass Opposes Free Black Emigration, September 1851" in Thomas C. Holt and Elsa Barkley Brown, eds., *Major Problems in African American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 295-300.

Feb **Race Uplift I: Self Help in the post-Emancipation Period**
7 James Anderson, "Ex-Slaves and the Rise of Universal Education in the South, 1860-1880" in *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 4-32.

Wk Feb **Electoral Politics in the Reconstruction Era**
5 12 Michael Fitzgerald, "The Most Influential People: Suffrage, Class and Factionalism" in *Urban Emancipation: Popular Politics in Reconstruction Mobile, 1860-1890* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 86-131.

Feb **Southern Redemption & the Consolidation of White Supremacy, 1876-1900**
14 Eric Foner and Olivia Mahoney "The Ending of Reconstruction" in *America's Reconstruction* (NY: HarperPerennial 1995), 119-138.
Richard Wright "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow" in Paula S. Rothenberg, ed., *Race, Class and Gender in the U.S.: An Integrated Study* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 36-45.

Wk Feb **Accomodationism, 1877-1920**
6 19 Booker T. Washington, "The Atlanta Exposition Address, September 1895" in *Up From Slavery* (NY: Doubleday & Co., 1901), 145-150.

Feb **Redemption Era Protest, 1877-1930**
21 In Class Film: *Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice*
1ST ESSAY DUE

Unit III: The Development of Protest Politics

Wk Feb **Migration and the Development of the Black Class Structure, 1890-1930**
7 26 Allan Spear, "The Physical Ghetto" and "Jim Crow's Triumph" in *Black Chicago*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1967), 1-49.

Feb **Client-Patron Politics, 1915-1940**
28 Beth Tompkins-Bates, "The Politics of Paternalism & Patronage" in *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 40-62.

Wk Mar **Racial Uplift In the Migration Era, 1915-1930**
8 4 Beverly Jones, "Mary Church Terrell and the National Association of Colored Women, 1896 to 1901" *Journal of Negro History* 67:1 (1982), 20-33.

Mar **Garveyite Pan Africanism, 1914-1930**
6 "Objectives of the UNIA" and "Garvey Must Go" in Amy Jacques-Garvey, ed. *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*. (New York: Antheneum, 1969).

- Wk 9 Mar 11 **Black Unionism: A. Philip Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters**
 Paula Pfeffer, "The Women Behind the Union" *Labor History* 36:4 (Fall 1995), 557-73.
- Mar 13 **Legal Action & Boycotts, 1940-1960**
 Aldon Morris, "The Baton Rouge Bus Boycott" in Jonathan Birnbaum and Clarence Taylor, eds., *Civil Rights Since 1787* (NY: New York University Press 2000), 435-442.
- Wk 10 Mar 18 **Non-Violent Direct Action, 1960-1963**
 In-Class Film: *Eyes On the Prize*: Episode 3, "Ain't Scared of Your Jails."
- Mar 20 **Mass Action, 1963-1967**
 Adam Fairclough, "The SCLC and Chicago" in Jonathan Birnbaum and Clarence Taylor, eds., *Civil Rights Since 1787* (NY: New York University Press, 2000), 565-573.
 Nicolaus Mills, "What Really Happened at the March on Washington?" in Jonathan Birnbaum and Clarence Taylor, eds., *Civil Rights Since 1787* (NY: New York University Press, 2000), 493-500.
- Wk 11 Mar 24-8 **NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK**
- Wk 12 Apr 1 **Black Power and Community Control,**
 Robert Self, "'To Plan our Liberation': Black Power and the Politics of Place in Oakland California, 1965-1977" *Journal of Urban History* 26 (6), 759-792.
- Apr 3 **The Outcomes of the Civil Rights Movement**
 Earl and Merle Black, "The Limited Leverage of a Franchised Minority" in *Politics and Society in the South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 126-151

Unit IV: Addressing Racial Privilege in the Post Civil Rights Era
--

- Wk 13 Apr 8 **Contemporary Interactional Marginalization**
 In-class Film: *Two Towns of Jasper*
2ND ESSAY DUE
- Apr **Contemporary Ideological/Institutional Marginalization**

10 Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Amanda Lewis and David Embrick, " "I Did Not Get That Job Because of a Black Man...": The Story Lines and Testimonies of Color-Blind Racism" *Sociological Forum* v. 19, (December 2004), 555-581.

Wk Apr **Debate Preparation**
14 15 *DEBATE PAPER DUE*

Apr **Debate Preparation**
17

Wk Apr **Debate—Fighting Interactional Marginalization: Legal Action or Violence?**
15 22

Apr *NO CLASS—Urban Affairs Association Meeting*
24

Wk Apr **Debate—Fighting Ideological Marginalization: Accommodationism or Moral**
16 29 **Suasion?**

May **Debate, Fighting Institutional Marginalization: Direct Action or Community**
1 **Control?**