

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO
Department of African American Studies
AAST103/POLS112 ▪ Fall 2006
T/R 12:30-1:45 ▪ BSB 289

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICS

Professor: Michelle R. Boyd, Ph.D.
Class Meeting: T/R, 12:30-1:45, BSB 289
Office: 1221 University Hall
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11-12

Course Description

Since the end of legal segregation, scholars and political pundits have been questioning why racial inequities and racial hierarchies still exist *despite* the accomplishments of the civil rights movement. In this course, we will explore that question by examining racial privilege and the black political response to it, from slavery through the contemporary period. How have racial subordination and racial politics changed over time? What has African American activism accomplished? And what forms of racial subordination remain? To answer these questions, we will analyze the social processes that have constrained African Americans over time, as well as the strategies blacks employ to combat racial subordination.

Course Objectives

Everyone has *opinions* about race politics—beliefs or impressions that are often based on narrow personal experience and prejudice. The purpose of this course is to move you away from *opining* and improve your *analysis* and *evaluation* of contemporary racial politics using evidence and reason. By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Explain how the U.S. racial order has been maintained over time;
- analyze the major political strategies used to combat American racial ordering;
- evaluate the relative effectiveness of various strategies in disrupting contemporary racial ordering.

Course Methods

To reach these goals, you will:

- read and discuss historical and contemporary descriptions of black social, political and economic life;
- write essays analyzing the history of black politics; and
- complete a group project examining contemporary political issues.

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 meet, talk, or email with you about problems, questions, confusions or concerns about the class, and **hope you will take advantage of my office hours (Tuesdays 11:00-12:00)**. 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 who cannot keep their cell phones off will be asked to leave the 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 exams in this class. Your grade will be based on the following:

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION (20%)

The purpose of class is to help you make sense of the day's readings and understand their relationship to material that 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 attendance, attentiveness, involvement, attitude and contribution to group work.

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 an "excused" or "unexcused" absence, and you don't need to tell me when or why you'll be absent. **Students who are not in the classroom when attendance is taken will be marked absent.** For every additional absence over the two allowed, your participation grade will drop one letter grade. You are expected to obtain any missed material from other students in the class. I will not provide you with a summary of the class during my office hours.

ANALYTICAL ESSAYS (60%)

You will write one 5-7 page essay for each of the first four units in the course. The essay question will be handed out one week before it is due and will address the major themes from the unit. A strong essay will clearly and explicitly articulate an argument; make correct use of relevant concepts; support arguments with evidence; draw upon multiple, pertinent class sources; and of course, be carefully and elegantly formatted, edited, organized and composed.

Hard copies of the analytical essays must be submitted at the beginning of class. Electronic copies may only be submitted with the express permission of the professor and must have a time-date stamp prior to the beginning of class. **Late papers will not be accepted.** Papers receiving a grade of D or below may be revised and resubmitted for a second grading. If you choose to do an R&R, you must schedule an appointment within two days, and submit your revised paper within a week of receiving your original grade.

POLITICAL MOBILIZATION CAMPAIGN (20%)

Your final assignment will be to work in small teams to run a political mobilization campaign. Each team will choose one issue, and will design a campaign to convince your constituents to engage in the political strategy that you feel best addresses this issue. You will gain support for your strategy in two ways: First, you will write a 10-12 page "press briefing," one section of which will be written by each member of the group. Second, you will create a political "commercial" in the form of a power point presentation that will aim to raise voter awareness among your targeted "constituency" and build support for your strategy. Because it's election year, your commercials will be a bit longer than normal—30 minutes, and must involve each member of the group. At the end of each class, your constituency will "vote" for the team they found to be most persuasive.

READING SCHEDULE

Unit I: Theorizing Black Politics

- Wk 1** Aug 29 **Introduction—Why Black Politics?**
- Aug 31 **Contemporary Racial Dilemmas**
Jennifer Hochschild, “Rich and Poor African Americans” in *Facing up to the American Dream* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 39-51.
- Wk 2** Sep 5 **Theories of Power Distribution: Pluralism**
Jennifer Hochschild, “What is the American Dream?” and “What’s all the Fuss About?” in *Facing up to the American Dream* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1995), 15-38; 55-71.
- Sept 7 **Theories of Power Distribution: Conflict Theory**
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.
- Wk 3** Sept 12 **Theories of Power Distribution: Secondary Marginalization**
Cathy Cohen, “Marginalization: Power, Identity and Members” in *The Boundaries of Blackness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 54-77.
- Sept 14 **Review/Project Prep**
No Reading

Unit II: From Slave to Subordinate—Gaining Citizenship

- Wk 4** Sept 19 **Slavery’s Racial Order**
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.
- Essay 1 Due** Sept 21 **Resisting the Slave Order**
“A Slave Man Resists, 1845” and “A Slave Woman Resists, 1861” in Thomas Holt and Elsa Barkley Brown, eds., *Major Problems in African-American History Vol. I* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 208-214.
- Wk 5** Sept 26 **Race Uplift I: Self Help in the post-Emancipation Period**
James Anderson, Ch 1, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 4-32.
- Sept 28 **Electoral Politics in the Reconstruction Era**
Eric Foner and Olivia Mahoney “The Politics of Reconstruction...” and “Reconstruction Government in the South” in *America’s Reconstruction* (NY: HarperPerennial 1995), 73-119.

- Wk 6** Oct 3 **Southern Redemption & the Consolidation of White Supremacy, 1876-1900**
 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* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 36-45.
- Oct 5 **Black Accommodation to White Supremacy, 1870-1900**
 Booker T. Washington, “The Atlanta Exposition Address, September 1895” in *Up From Slavery* (NY: Doubleday & Co., 1901).
 W.E.B. Dubois, “Of Booker T. Washington & Others,” in *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903).
- Wk 7** Oct **Review/Project Prep**
 10 No Reading

Unit III: From Brokerage to Collective Politics
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- Oct **Jim Crow’s Racial Order**
 12 Allan Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1967), 1-49.
- Wk 8** Oct **Racial Uplift II: The Politics of Social Adjustment**
 Essay 17 Beverly Jones, “Mary Church Terrell and the National Association of Colored Women, 1896 to 1901” *Journal of Negro History* 67:1 (1982): 20-33.
 2 Due
- Oct **Brokerage Politics: Client Patron Relationships**
 19 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 9** Oct **Protest Politics: Unionism**
 24 Paula F. Pfeffer, “The Women Behind the Union” *Labor History* 36:4, (Fall 1995), 557-573.
- Oct **Protest Politics: Coalition Building & Economic Boycotts**
 26 Cheryl Greenberg, “Don’t Buy Where you Can’t Work” in “*Or does it explode?*”: *Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, 114-139).
- Wk** Oct **Review/Project Prep**
10 31 No Reading

Unit IV: From Subordinate to Equal— Black Collective Mobilization
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Nov 2 **Challenges to the Jim Crow Racial Order**
William Chafe et al, “Resistance and Political Struggles” in *Remembering Jim Crow* (NY: New Press, 2001), 268-303.

Wk 11 Nov 7 **Mass Politics: Coalition Building & Provocation, 1955-1964**
Aldon Morris, “The Baton Rouge Bus Boycott,” in Jonathan Birnbaum and Clarence Taylor, eds., *Civil Rights Since 1787* (New York: New York University Press 2000), 435-442.
Essay 3 Due

Nov 9 **Community Control: The Black Power Movement, 1968-70**
Kwame Toure and Charles Hamilton, “Black Power: Its Need and Substance” in *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967 [1992]), 34-56.

Wk 12 Nov 14 **Incorporation: Black Elected Officials, 1970-**
Larry Bennett, “Harold Washington and the Black Urban Regime” *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 28:3 (March 1993), 423-440.

Nov 16 **The Continuing Significance of Race in the Post Civil Rights Era**
Laura Pulido, “Rethinking Environmental Racism” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90 (1), 2000, 12-40.

Wk 13 Nov 21 **Review/Project Prep**
No Reading

Nov 23 **Thanksgiving Holiday—No Class**

Unit V: Addressing Racial Privilege in the Post Civil Rights Era

Wk 14 Nov 28 **Political Commercials**
Essay 4 Due

Nov 30 **Political Commercials**

Wk 15 Dec 5 **Political Commercials**

Dec 7 **Conclusion**