Political Science 111
Race, Gender, and American Democracy

Spring 2010

Time: MWF; 1:00PM -1:50PM
Location: 335 2BSB
Professor Michael Fortner
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11:00AM-1:00PM

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Course Descriptions
Politics is about difference—a contest between different interests, ideologies, and identities. Without difference this is no politics. Difference is also a natural element of the human condition. We are born different—with different genes, into different families, in different places. Yet it does not stop there. Historical and social processes add layers of difference onto the ones we receive at birth: individuals become enmeshed in webs of difference where they and others similarly entangled struggle to find meaning and morality in their differences. Some forms of difference, however, pose particular problems for democratic theory and practice. This course will explore these tensions and examine the various challenges diversity creates for American democracy.

The course begins by providing students with a broad but thorough introduction to democratic theory. Next, the course examines theoretical approaches to the study of race, gender, and sexuality. This section also reviews theoretical and empirical work that investigates the intersection of these social differences in society and politics. Finally, this course will investigate how the tensions between diversity and democracy manifest themselves in contemporary political controversies.

Course Organization and Requirements
The class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. The lectures will not only cover the themes addressed in assigned readings but will also provide a broad overview of those topics. I will reserve time at the end of each class for questions and brief discussions. Occasionally, entire classes will be discussion-based.

Evaluation
Grades will be determined as follows:

Participation (50%)
Midterm Paper (25%)
Final exam (25%)

Grading
Letter grades will be assigned according to the following scoring scheme.

A 90-100%
B 80-89%
C 70-79%
D 60-69%
F below 60

Participation/presentations
Attendance is mandatory. A sign-in sheet will be passed around at the beginning of each class. All students must come to class prepared, having completed all assigned readings prior to class. Students should be ready to respond questions and engage in serious discussion. We will also use Blackboard to continue class discussions or start new ones. Feel free to post questions about the readings or offer your initial thoughts. Blackboard will provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their engagement with course materials and boost their participation grade. Your attendance/discussion grade represents 50% of your participation grade.

There will be five debates. Depending on the size of the class, students will participate in at least one debate. Each team will receive a grade, and these grades will be based on the quality of the presentation, the strength and sophistication of the arguments, and the quality and appropriateness of the evidence. Your individual grade will be based on your team grade and your individual effort. Your individual debate grade represents 50% of your participation grade.

Midterm Paper
A paper (7-9) is due March 5. Your midterm papers will explore the philosophical origins of the American constitutional system. They will assess the extent to which the American constitutional system exhibits democratic, republican or liberal ideals. You will conduct a close reading of the Constitution and its 27 Amendments. Of course, you do not have to discuss each element of the Constitution. Instead, you must offer an argument regarding the philosophical orientation of these documents, and draw upon various sections of the Constitutions and/or specific Amendments to support your argument. You should also address those areas that might contradict your argument. You will receive a memo detailing the specifics of this assignment on February 1. A paper proposal is due on February 15. These proposals should identify your argument and include a detailed outline of your paper.

Exams
The final exam will feature a combination of short-answer and essay questions. The final exam is cumulative. It will encompass themes and topics addressed in course readings, class lectures, and debates. I will hold a review session outside of class before the exam to make sure that you are as prepared as possible.

Late Work
There will be no make-up exams offered. If you miss an exam, you receive a zero. I will make exceptions for medical emergencies and deaths in the family, both of which require documentation. If you know in advance that you absolutely have to miss an exam, notify me at least one week in advance and you will be able to take the test before the scheduled test date, but not after.
Your midterm paper is due March 5, and will be collected in class. Extensions will not be granted for this assignment unless I receive a notification of the medical and family emergencies noted above. In the absence of such notification, students will lose one letter grade (e.g. A to B, C to D) for each day that the assignment is late.

**Academic Honesty**
Students should follow the university’s regulations regarding academic integrity as laid out in the Student Handbook. Students are strongly advised to read and familiarize themselves with these regulations. If students violate standards of academic honesty they will receive a failing grade in the class and may face expulsion from the University.

**Required Books:**
**ISBN-13:** 978-0804754729

**ISBN-13:** 978-0415412544

**ISBN-13:** 978-0385479837

**ISBN-13:** 978-0465030651

**ISBN-13:** 978-0807009727

**ISBN-13:** 978-1400078660

**Recommended Reading:**
**ISBN-13:** 978-0205309023

**Jan 11**  
Introduction

**Democratic Theory**

**Jan 13**  
**Classical Democracy**

**Jan 15**  
**Republicanism**
Jan 18  
No Class

Jan 20  Liberal Democracy

Jan 22  Liberal Democracy

Jan 25  Liberalism

Jan 27  Pluralism

Recommended Reading:

Jan 29  Philosophy and the American Political System

Feb 1  Philosophy and the American Political System

Race, Gender, and Sexuality

Feb 3  Race


*Recommended Reading:*

**Feb 5**  
**Race**  


**Feb 8**  
**Gender**  

**Feb 10**  
**Gender**  


**Feb 12**  
**Sexuality**  

**Feb 15**  
**Sexuality**  


**Feb 17**  
**Intersectionality**  

**Feb 19**  
**Intersectionality**  


**Feb 22**  
**Intersectionality**  


*Recommended Reading:*  

**Feb 24**  
**Intersectionality**  


*Recommended Reading:*  

**Feb 26**  
**Race and the Politics of Gender**  


*Recommended Reading:*

Mar 1  Race and the Politics of Gender


Mar 3  Race and Queer Politics

Mar 5  Race and Queer Politics

*Midterm Paper Due*

**American Political Controversies**

Mar 8  AIDS Crisis

Mar 10  AIDS Crisis

Mar 12  Racial Redistricting

Mar 15 Racial Redistricting

Mar 17 Racial Redistricting


Debate: Is racial redistricting consistent with American democratic principles?

Recommended Reading:


Mar 19 The Census

Mar 22 No Class
Mar 24 No Class
Mar 26 No Class
Mar 29 The Census


Recommended Reading:

Mar 31 The Census

Debate: Should the census include racial and ethnic categories?

Recommended Reading:

Apr 2 Abortion


Apr 5 Abortion

Apr 7 Abortion


Debate: Are restrictions on abortion consistent with American democratic principles?
Recommended Reading:

**Apr 9**

**Same Sex Marriage**

**Apr 12**

**Same Sex Marriage**


**Apr 14**

**Same Sex Marriage**
Excerpt from: *Bowers v. Hardwick*
Excerpt from: *Lawrence v. Texas*
Excerpt from: *Baker v. Vermont*
Excerpt from: *Goodridge & Others v. Department of Public Health*

Jon Kyl, “Judicial Activism Forces Same-Sex Marriage on the Nation,” in *Defense of Marriage: Does it Need Defending?*, 71-77 *(On Reserve)*

**Debate: Are state constitutional restrictions on same-sex marriage consistent with American democratic principles?**

Recommended Reading:
Excerpt from *Katherine Varnum v. Timothy J. Brien*
Excerpt from *Hernandez v. Robles*
Excerpt from *Kerrigan and Mock v. Connecticut Department of Public Health*

**Apr 16**

**Immigration**


**Apr 19**

**Immigration**


Apr 21  Immigration

Debate: Should English be the official language of the United States?

Apr 23  Post-Ethnic America?

Apr 26  Post-Ethnic America?

Apr 28  Race Matters?

Apr 30  Race Matters?

Final Exam