

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO
Department of African American Studies
AAST103/POLS112 ▪ Fall 2007
T/R 12:30-1:45 ▪ BSB 367

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICS

Professor: Michelle R. Boyd, Ph.D.
Office: 1219 University Hall
Email: mrboyd@uic.edu
Office Hours: T/R, 2:00-3:00

Course Description

Popular descriptions of the U.S. portray it as having an open, inclusive political system. This interpretation is supported by traditional political science theory, which contends that power in America is distributed widely among competing interest groups. Theories of racial politics disagree, arguing that certain privileges have been, and continue to be, concentrated within white populations. Which view is more accurate?

In this course, you will evaluate those competing theories by examining the political status and activism of African Americans over time. Specifically, you will analyze how political and economic power has been distributed between racial groups from the slave period to the civil rights era. In addition, you will explore the consequences of blacks' efforts to enhance their political power. Has the U.S. political system opened up to African Americans? Or has it helped maintain white supremacy? This class will help you develop and defend your own answer to this question.

Course Objectives

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

- describe, differentiate between and evaluate the major theoretical frameworks used to analyze black politics;
- explain how power has been distributed among and between racial groups in the U.S.;
- describe the content and 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 meet, talk, or email with you about problems, questions, confusions or concerns you have about the class. I strongly encourage you to **take advantage of my office hours (T/R 2:00-3:00)**. 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 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 & PARTICIPATION (20%)

Participation 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.

Attendance 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. 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.

Lateness When you arrive late to class, you create an unwanted disruption. Students who are not in class when attendance is taken will lose half their participation points for the day.

ANALYTICAL ESSAYS (60%)

Assignment You will write two 5-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 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 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 (20%)

Your final assignment will be to write a short argumentative essay, in which you take and defend a position on a topic assigned to you. Your responsibility is to argue your position using both material from class and outside research. This paper is due on Tuesday, November 27th. **Late papers will not be accepted.** This individually written essay will be the basis for an assignment that you will complete during class meetings in the last two weeks of the course. 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. The debates will take place during class on Tuesday and Thursday, December 4th and 6th. Class members not involved in that day's competition will serve as questioners and judges, and will have sole responsibility for determining the winner in the debate.

Unit I: Theorizing Black Politics
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Wk 1	Aug 28	Course Overview
	Aug 30	What is Black Politics? Greg Haskins, “A Practical Guide to Critical Thinking” August 15, 2006. http://www.skeptdic.com/essays/haskins.pdf . last accessed, August 6, 2007.
Wk 2	Sept 4	Pluralist Theory Huey L. Perry, “Pluralist Theory & National Black Politics in the United States” <i>Polity</i> 23:4 (Summer 1991), 549-565.
	Sept 6	Elite Theory John Gaventa, “Power and Participation” in <i>Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley</i> (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 3-32.
Wk 3	Sept 11	Racial Marginalization Theory Cathy Cohen, “Marginalization: Power, Identity and Members” in <i>The Boundaries of Blackness: Aids and the Breakdown of Black Politics</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 33-54.
	Sept 13	Intraracial Marginalization Cathy Cohen, “Marginalization: Power, Identity and Members” in <i>The Boundaries of Blackness: Aids and the Breakdown of Black Politics</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 54-77.

Unit II: From Slave to Subordinate—Gaining Citizenship Status
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Wk 4	Sept 18	Slavery’s Racial Order Michael Goldfield, “Early History of the United States: The Colonial Era” in <i>The Color of Politics: Race, Class, and the Mainsprings of American Politics</i> (New York: New Press, 1997), 36-49.
	Sept 20	Resistance, Revolt and Rebellion Deborah Gray White, “The Nature of Female Slavery” in <i>Ar’n’t I A Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South</i> (NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1985), 62-90.
Wk 5	Sept 25	Race Uplift I: Self Help in the post-Emancipation Period James Anderson, “Ex-Slaves and the Rise of Universal Education in the South, 1860-1880” in <i>The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935</i> (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 4-32.

- Sept 27 **Electoral Politics in the Reconstruction Era**
Eric Foner & Olivia Mahoney “The Politics of Reconstruction...” and “Reconstruction Government in the South” in *America’s Reconstruction* (NY: HarperPerennial 1995), 73-119.
- Wk 6** Oct 2 **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* (NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 36-45.
- Oct 4 **Exam Prep Day**
No Reading
- Wk 7** Oct 9 **No Class**
Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora Conference
- Oct 11 **No Class**
Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora Conference
1st Essay Due

Unit III: From Subordinate to Challenger—Developing Collective Politics
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- Wk 8** Oct 16 **Migration and the Development of the Black Class Structure**
Allan Spear, “The Physical Ghetto” and “Jim Crow’s Triumph” in *Black Chicago*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1967), 1-49.
- Oct 18 **Racial Ordering and Client-Patron Politics**
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 23 **Racial Uplift II: Gilding the Ghetto & the Politics of Social Adjustment**
Booker T. Washington, “The Atlanta Exposition Address, September 1895” in *Up From Slavery* (NY: Doubleday & Co., 1901), 145-150.
Beverly Jones, “Mary Church Terrell and the National Association of Colored Women, 1896 to 1901” *Journal of Negro History* 67:1 (1982), 20-33.
- Oct 25 **Garveyite Black Nationalism**
Judith Stein, “The Black Star Line” in *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press 1986), 61-88.
- Wk 10** Oct 30 **The BSCP and the Black Labor Movement**
Paula Pfeffer, “The Women Behind the Union” *Labor History* 36:4 (Fall 1995), 557-73.

- Nov **The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement**
 1 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** Nov **Civil Rights and Community Control: The Black Power Movement**
11 6 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.
- Nov **Outcomes of the Civil Rights Movement**
 8 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
- Wk** Nov **Exam Prep Day**
12 13 No Reading

Unit IV: Addressing Racial Privilege in the Post Civil Rights Era
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- Nov **What is Affirmative Action?**
 15 Barbara Reskin, "The Development of Affirmative Action in Employment" in *The Realities of Affirmative Action in Employment* (Washington, D.C., American Sociological Association, 1998), 5-18.
 James Amirkhan et al, "Reflections of Affirmative Action Goals in Psychology Admissions" in Scott Plous, ed., *Understanding Prejudice & Discrimination* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2003), 197-202.
- Wk** Nov **What is Reparations?**
13 20 Robert L. Allen, "Past Due: The African American Quest for Reparations," *Black Scholar* v28 n2 (Summer 1998): 2-17.
2nd Essay Due
- Nov **Thanksgiving—No Class**
 22
- Wk** Nov **Debate Preparation**
14 27 *Debate Paper Due*
- Nov **Debate Preparation**
 29
- Wk** Dec **Affirmative Action Debate**
15 4
- Dec **Reparations Debate**
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