

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO  
Department of African American Studies  
AAST306/POLS311 ▪ Spring 2007  
T/R 3:30-4:45 ▪ BSB 367

## **BLACK POLITICS IN THE U.S.**

Professor: Michelle R. Boyd, Ph.D.  
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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30

### **Course Description**

For most of this country's history, African Americans have been struggling to win the basic rights and privileges of citizenship. Now that blacks have formally been incorporated into the political system, students of politics are asking themselves: how much does race matter in contemporary American politics? Is it a resource that blacks can and should draw on in their struggle for representation and influence? Or is it a disadvantage that limits African Americans' chances for empowerment? In this class, we will review the recent literature on leadership, participation, policy making, and campaigning to analyze how race and racism operate in the contemporary political environment.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- identify the key features of the contemporary black political landscape,
- explain whether political incorporation has led to racial group empowerment,
- explain how racial identity and consciousness shape participation and public opinion,
- explain how ideas about race influence electoral and policy-making processes,
- synthesize empirical arguments and use them to evaluate your own thinking

### **Course Methods**

To accomplish these objectives you will:

- read and discuss the literature on contemporary race politics,
- write reflective essays analyzing your own assumptions and learning

## Course 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;
- Take your interests and experiences into consideration when preparing for class;
- Respond as quickly and as thoroughly as possible to your work;
- Be available to you as needed outside of class; and
- Evaluate your work fairly according to clearly communicated expectations.

I expect all students to:

- Be both prompt and prepared for class;
- Read and follow the written syllabus and ask any clarifying questions in advance;
- Consider other class members' interests and experiences when participating in class;
- 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 (Wed 1:30-2:30)**. If you require special accommodations, come and see me immediately. You must be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 312-413-2103 (voice) or 312-413-0123 (TTY).

## Policies & Procedures

- Cell phones must be set so that they are completely inaudible. Students whose cell phones disturb class will lose half 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 prior permission of the instructor. 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 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](http://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.

## Course Readings

All the readings for this course are on e-reserve at the Daley Library. I expect you to read and think about the assignment *prior* to coming to class, and bring a hard copy of the reading with you.

## 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.

### REFLECTIVE ESSAYS (80%)

You will write a reflective essay for each of the four units in the course. Each reflective essay consists of two parts: the first is a *prewriting* assignment, in which you explain your assumptions and opinions about the material to be covered in the upcoming unit. This assignment is turned in before we begin the unit in question. The second part is a *post-writing* assignment, in which you synthesize the empirical evidence covered in class and use it to analyze and evaluate what you wrote in the prewriting assignment. This assignment is due after we have finished the unit.

Please do not make the mistake of thinking that this is an "easy" assignment that only requires you to express your opinion. It is not. Rather, it is particularly challenging, both because it is untraditional and because it requires you to integrate what you have learned into your own thinking. The main audience for this paper is you. You will therefore be graded on your ability to conscientiously complete both assignments, honestly explore your political values, be open to new information, understand and analyze the course material, and use that material to assess your own political beliefs.

I encourage you to schedule an appointment with me well before the due dates to discuss any ideas or concerns you have about the assignment. Late papers will not be accepted under any circumstances. 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.

<b>The Political Landscape of the Post-Civil Rights Era: The Pursuit and Abandonment of Racial Justice</b>
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<b>Wk 1</b>	Jan 16	<b>Course Overview</b>
	Jan 18	<b>Defining Race</b> —No Reading: In Class Film
<b>Wk 2</b>	Jan 23	<b>Studying Racial Politics</b>
	<i>Essay 1 Pre-writing Due</i>	Paul Frymer, Dara Strolovitch & Dorian Warren, “New Orleans is Not the Exception: Re-Politicizing the Study of Racial Inequality” <i>DuBois Review</i> 3:1 (2006), 37-57.
	Jan 25	<b>The Civil Rights Movement: Gains and Limitations</b> James Button, <i>Blacks and Social Change: Impact of the Civil Rights Movement in Southern Communities</i> . (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1989), 206-241.
<b>Wk 3</b>	Jan 30	<b>Ideological Retrenchment: The Liberal Retreat from Racial Justice</b> Philip Klinkner and Rogers Smith, “Benign Neglect” in <i>The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 288-316.
	Feb 1	<b>Ideological Retrenchment: Black Accommodation to the Liberal Retreat</b> Preston H. Smith, “‘Self-Help,’ Black Conservatives, and the Reemergence of Black Privatism” in Adolph Reed, ed., <i>Without Justice for All: The New Liberalism and our Retreat from Racial Equality</i> (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1999), 257-289.
<b>Wk 4</b>	Feb 6	<b>Intraracial Polarization</b> Steven Gregory “The Changing Significance of Race and Class in an African American Community” <i>American Ethnologist</i> 19:2 (May 1992), 255-274.
	Feb 8	<b>Immigration &amp; Multicultural Discourse</b> Claire Jean Kim, “Imagining Race and Nation in Multiculturalist America” <i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i> 27:6 (November 2004), 987-1005.
<b>Wk 5</b>	Feb 13	<b>No Reading:</b> In Class Film
	<i>Essay 2 Pre-writing Due</i>	

<b>The Road to Racial Empowerment I: The State of Black Leadership</b>
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Feb 15	<b>Race, Gender, and Descriptive Representation</b>
<i>Essay 1 Due</i>	Jane Mansbridge, “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent ‘Yes.’” <i>Journal of Politics</i> 61:3 (Aug 1999), 628-57.

- Wk6** Feb 20 **Race, Normativity and Black Legislators**  
Cathy Cohen, “Women, Children and Funding” in *The Boundaries of Blackness: Aids and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 293-338.
- Feb 22 **African American Mayors and The Limitations of Political Economy**  
Adolph Reed, “The Black Urban Regime: Structural Origins and Constraints” in *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 79-115.
- Wk 7** Feb 27 **Civil Rights Organizations**  
Charles E. Jones, “From Protest to Black Conservatism: The Demise of the Congress of Racial Equality” in Ollie Johnson, ed., *Black Political Organizations in the Post Civil Rights Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press 2003), 80-98.
- Mar 1 **Race, Class, and Community Organizing**  
Patricia Wright, “Community Resistance to CHA Transformation: The Coalition to Protect Public Housing” in *Where are Poor People to Live? Transforming Public Housing Communities* (M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 125-167

**Wk8** Mar 6 **No Reading: In Class Film**  
*Essay 3*  
*Pre-writing*  
*Due*

<b>The Road to Racial Empowerment II: Identity, Participation &amp; Preference</b>
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- Mar 8 **Identity, Consciousness, and Solidarity**  
*Essay2*  
*Due*  
Dennis Chong and Reuel Rogers, “Racial Solidarity and Political Participation” *Political Behavior* 27:4 (December 2005), 347-374.
- Wk 9** Mar 13 **Group Interest, and Inter-Minority Coalitions**  
Reuel Rogers “Race Based Coalitions Among Minority Groups: Afro-Caribbean Immigrants and African Americans in New York City” *Urban Affairs Review* 39: 3 (January 2004), 283-317.
- Mar 15 **Race and Stereotype**  
Claudine Gay, “Seeing Difference: The Effect of Economic Disparity on Black Attitudes toward Latinos” *American Journal of Political Science* 50:4 (October 2006), 982-997.
- Wk 10** Mar 20 **Class Conflict and the Politics of Authenticity**  
Monique Taylor, “Racial Bonds” and “Home Ownership” in *Harlem: Between Heaven and Hell* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 129-169.

Mar 22 **No Class: National Conference of Black Political Scientists**

**Wk** Mar **SPRING BREAK**  
**11** 27-29

**Wk** Apr 3 **Symbolic Racism & Individual White Animus**  
**12** David O. Sears, "Symbolic Racism" in Phyllis Katz and Dalmas Taylor, eds.,  
*Eliminating Racism: Profiles in Controversy* (NY: Plenum, 1997), 53-84.

Apr 5 **Laissez-Faire Racism and Group Conflict**  
Larry Bobo et al, "Laissez-Faire Racism: The Crystallization of a Kinder, Gentler,  
Antiblack Ideology" in Steven Tuch and Jack Martin eds., *Racial Attitudes  
in the 1990s: Continuity and Change* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 53-84.

<b>Racial Discourse, Racism and the Political/Policy Process</b>
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**Wk** Apr 10 **Race and Social Policy**  
**13** *Essay 4*  
*Pre-*  
*writing*  
*Due* Linda Faye Williams, "Racially Charged Policy-Making" *The Constraint of Race:  
The Legacies of White Skin Privilege in America* (University Park, PA:  
Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 219-277.

Apr 12 **Jim Crow Nostalgia and Urban Economic Development**  
*Essay 3*  
*Due* Michelle Boyd, "Reconstructing Bronzeville: Racial Nostalgia and Neighborhood  
Redevelopment" *Journal of Urban Affairs* 22:2 (2000), 107-122.

**Wk** Apr 17 **Racial Apathy and Relief: Katrina and The Role of Color Blind Racism**  
**14** Tyrone Forman and Amanda Lewis "Racial Apathy and Hurricane Katrina"  
*DuBois Review* 3:1 (March 2006), 175-202.

Apr 19 **Implicit Racial Messages**  
Tali Mendelberg, "The Political Psychology of Implicit Communication" *The  
Race Card: Campaign Strategy, Implicit Messages, and the Norm of Equality*  
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 111-133.

**Wk** Apr 24 **Racialized Campaign Strategies**  
**15** Mendelberg 2001, "Crafting, Conveying and Challenging Implicit Racial  
Appeals," 134-168.

Apr 26 **The Implications of Racialized Discourses**  
Mendelberg 2001, "Implicit Communication Beyond Race" and "Political  
Communication & Equality," 239-275.

## The Future of Race Politics

- Wk 16**    May 1    **The Post-Civil Rights Era: The Second Redemption?**  
*Essay 4 Due*    Philip Klinkner and Rogers Smith, "Shall We Overcome?" in *The Unsteady March* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 288-316.
- May 3    **Black Leadership and Politics, Looking Forward**  
Robert Smith, "From Incorporation toward Irrelevance: The Afro-American Freedom Struggle in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" in *We Have No Leaders: African Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 277-281.