

Political Science 198: Race and Politics **Drew University, Spring 2009**

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Class Times: Tuesdays, 1:15-3:45pm
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Office Hours: Mon and Wed 2-4:00

Course Description:

Many of the most enduring social divisions, political conflicts, and public policy debates in the United States revolve around the issue of race. This course will examine the role of race in American politics and its contemporary significance to the nation's citizens, politicians, and governmental institutions. It will focus on the experiences and activities of African-Americans and Latinos—America's two largest minority groups—but will also explore the experiences of Asian-Americans and Native Americans in the political realm.

The following questions will guide our study of the role of race in American politics: What have been the historical experiences of racial groups in the United States and how do these experiences shape contemporary attitudes? What is the nature of racial inequality in America today? What are the primary intra- and inter-group dynamics that shape contemporary minority politics? How does the politics of race intersect with the politics of class and gender? What opportunities and challenges exist in mobilizing the members of minority groups for political action in the U.S.? What role has racial issues and attitudes played in the electoral strategies of political parties and candidates and in the electoral choices of voters? What is the nature of minority group representation—both descriptive and substantive—in American politics today? How do the structures and processes of American political institutions affect the efforts of minority groups to secure political influence? How has the rise to power of minority politicians—particularly in many urban areas—affected politics and policymaking? How successful have minority groups been in their quest to use government to provide expanded economic and educational opportunity? How are demographic forces likely to reshape the politics of race—and American politics more generally—in the 21st century? To what extent does Obama's election as president indicate that America has entered a "post-racial" political era?

Course Objectives:

This course is designed to provide students with a broad overview of the salience of race in American politics and how it structures black, Latino, Asian-American, and white attitudes on a number of political and policy dimensions. It is hoped that students will gain an increased understanding of the cultural, economic, and ideological contexts of racial politics in the United States and the ways in which these contexts have evolved over time. The course also seeks to provide students with an enhanced appreciation of the diversity of America and the unique histories and challenges which have faced the country's racial minority groups and their quest for political influence and economic advancement.

Required Texts:

Donald Kinder and Lynn Sanders, *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (1997)
Paula McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along? Racial & Ethnic Minorities in Amer. Politics* (2005)
Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom, ed. *Beyond the Color Line* (2002)
Wolbrecht, Tillery, and Hero, ed. *The Politics of Democratic Inclusion* (2005)

**Note: All other assigned readings will be posted in the class folder on the Drew k drive

Attendance and Participation:

This seminar is intended to be a forum for discussion and analysis—I firmly believe that the kind of material we will be addressing is learned best through sustained discourse and examination. It is expected that students will attend all classes, come having read and thought about all assigned material, contribute to the class discussion, and be prepared to answer inquiries from the professor and their classmates. Class participation will be graded according to student attendance, student preparation, the value of student contributions to class discussion, and the caliber of student questions. *Showing up is necessary but not sufficient for earning a good participation grade!!*

The study of politics and policymaking is made much more interesting and relevant through reference to the “real world.” It is thus strongly recommended that students follow current events by reading a major daily newspaper such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. I will often begin class with a discussion of recent political and policy developments surrounding race—please bring in stories that you come across as well.

I welcome your ideas, opinions, and questions at any time, and encourage you to speak freely during the class. The discussion of political issues inevitably generates controversy and disagreement among students—indeed that is what makes the study of politics interesting—and I will regularly play devil’s advocate in order to press you to consider alternative perspectives. But it is important that students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas, so please express your opinions in a respectful manner.

Communication and Feedback:

Please be sure to communicate with me about your progress throughout the semester, particularly if you will have to miss class or are struggling with the course material or assignments. I am happy to work one on one with students on your writing and I encourage you to come see me during my office hours or to make other appointments when necessary. Also please let me know if you have any comments or suggestions about how the class is being run—I want it to be as informative and engaging as possible for you.

Course Requirements and Grade Breakdown:

- 1) Class participation (10%)
- 2) Presentation (10%)
- 3) Weekly response papers (50%)
- 4) Final exam (30%)

Note: All assignments must be completed in order to receive credit for this course.

Provocateur Presentations:

To spice up our discussions and ensure full participation in them, each week will feature a 20 minute student presentation to the class on an aspect of the day’s topic. (Each student will be responsible for only a single presentation during the semester however.) The idea here is for students to go out and find an interesting article, academic study, real world example, interview (anything really) which you can use to illuminate the topic for the day and stimulate discussion among your classmates. I encourage you to be controversial, to take a strong stand on an issue and to try to push and prod your classmates into thinking differently or more deeply about race and politics. Be sure to discuss your topic with me in advance to ensure that your presentation does NOT merely summarize the class readings or survey the week’s topic but rather provides an in-depth look at something different. You must create (and make copies of) a handout that summarizes the key points of your presentation and has discussion questions for your classmates.

Weekly Response Papers

These are 1½ to 2 page (single-spaced) papers in which you respond to the week's topic and readings. The papers should include explicit references to that week's topic and readings. They should be analytical as well as descriptive—don't just summarize the readings! Expressing your opinion is fine—even encouraged!—but be sure to provide evidence to support your claims. Parenthetical citations [i.e. (Smith: 162)] are fine.

****NOTE:** Each student must complete 10 response papers (for 10 of the 13 weeks of the course).

Late papers: In order to be fair to all students, paper extensions will only be granted under extreme circumstances (documented illness, etc.) and late papers will be penalized five (5) points per day.

Academic Accommodations:

Should you require academic accommodations, you must file a request with the Office of Educational Affairs (BC 114, extension 3327). It is your responsibility to self-identify with the Office of Educational Affairs and to provide me with the appropriate documentation from that office at least one week prior to any request for specific course accommodations. There are no retroactive accommodations.

COURSE TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Part I: The Theoretical and Historical Contexts of Race in U.S. Politics

January 27: Introduction: Katrina, Obama, and Race in America

What role did race play in the destruction caused in New Orleans & in the government response?

How do you know this to be true?

What does the disaster—and the perception of it—say about race in the U.S. today?

To what extent does Obama's election as president indicate that America has entered a "post-racial" political era?

What are the political implications of these events?

Reading: Katrina and Obama articles on k drive

Video: Obama speech on race

February 3: Studying Race and Politics—Foundations and Approaches

The Founding, the Constitution, slavery and segregation

Theoretical approaches to studying race and politics

Multiple traditions in America's political culture

The current state of political science research on race

Reading: McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along?* Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 (p.67-71)

Wolbrecht, et al, *Politics of Democratic Inclusion*, Chapter 1

Vincent Hutchings and Valentino, "Centrality of Race in American Politics"

Rogers Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Hartz: Multiple Traditions"

February 4: (7:00pm) Bill Gray speech "MLK & the Challenge of the 21st Century" (Must Register)

February 10: The Historical Roots of Contemporary Racial Politics

The civil rights movement

Case study of Detroit (Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*)

Newark, the 1960s Riots and the Kerner Commission Report

Reading: McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along?* Skim timelines (p.230-255)

Michael Barone, "Race, Ethnicity, and Politics in American History" (Thernstrom)

Thomas Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights and the Urban North"

Kerner Commission report summary and recommendations

Video: *Revolution '67*

Part II: Race and Politics

February 17: The Political Demography of Race

Population distribution and patterns

Racial subgroups and identity

Group consciousness

Reading: McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along?* Chapter 2 (p.31-57)

Wolbrecht, et al, *Politics of Democratic Inclusion*, Chapters 2 and 3

Stephan Thernstrom, “The Demography of Racial & Ethnic Groups” (Thernstrom)

Video clip: Stephen Colbert on Obama’s “blackness”

February 24: Public Opinion and Ideology

The racial divide in public opinion

Interpreting the causes and consequences of racial opinions

Elite influences on mass opinion

Racial politics and democratic ideals

Reading: McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along?* Chapter 3 (p.71-80)

Kinder and Sanders, *Divided by Color*, chapters 1-6

Everett Ladd, “What Americans Think About Race and Ethnicity” (Thernstrom)

March 3: Parties, Social Movements, Elections, and Participation

Partisanship vs. ideology

Race and presidential elections

Barriers to political participation for minorities

Reading: McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along?* Chap. 2 (p. 57-63) & Chap.3 (p.80-123)

Wolbrecht, et al, *Politics of Democratic Inclusion*, Chapters 5 and 6

Kinder and Sanders, *Divided by Color*, chapters 7-10

Drew Spring Break (March 7-15)

March 17: Race and Representation: The State and Local Levels

Substantive vs. descriptive representation

Inter-racial coalitions

Urban politics: a case study of L.A. and the Bradley coalition

Reading: McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along?* Chapter 4 (p.151-157) & Chapter 5

Wolbrecht, et al, *Politics of Democratic Inclusion*, Chapters 8 and 10

Tamar Jacoby, “From Protest to Politics for Black Leadership” (Thernstorm)

Guest speaker: Adam Alonso (Executive Director, Nuestra America, Drew ’06)

March 24: Race and Representation: The Federal Level

Congress

The Presidency

The Courts

The Voting Rights Act

Redistricting and minority-majority districts

Reading: McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along?* Chapter 4 (p.127-151)

Wolbrecht, et al, *Politics of Democratic Inclusion*, Chapters 12, 13, and 14

Part III: Race and Public Policy

March 31: Minorities and the Policymaking Process

Socioeconomic information on racial minorities

How should we define, promote, and measure equality?

From representation to policy—minority activism in a majoritarian system

What are the policy objectives of racial minority groups?

The local, state, and federal contexts

The intersection of race and class

Interest groups

Reading: Lucius Barker, “Limits of Political Strategy”

“Changing America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being by Race “

2 articles on future of NAACP

Video: “Beyond the Color Line” segment

April 7: Poverty and Welfare

The pros and cons of decentralization in a federal system

The racialization of crime, poverty and welfare

The debate over welfare reform and AFDC/TANF

Reading: William A. V. Clark, “Residential Segregation Trends” (Thernstrom)

Finis Welch, “Half Full or Half Empty?” (Thernstrom)

Lieberman & Lapinski, “American Federalism, Race and the Administration of Welfare”

Martin Gilens, “Racial Attitudes and Opposition to Welfare”

April 14: Education

Race and school reform

Brown vs. Board of Education and School Integration

School choice and vouchers

No Child Left Behind and the racial achievement gap

Reading: McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along?* Chapter 4 (p.158-171)

Wolbrecht, et al, *Politics of Democratic Inclusion*, Chapter 11

Armor and Rossell, “Desegregation & Resegregation in Public Schools” (Thernstrom)

Abigail Thernstrom, “The Racial Gap in Academic Achievement” (Thernstrom)

Clint Bolick, “Schools that Work for Minority Students” (Thernstrom)

Lance Fusarelli, “No Child Left Behind, Diversity, and Equity”

Video: “Beyond Brown: Pursuing the Promise”

April 21: Affirmative Action

How should the country—and Drew—define “diversity” and “equal opportunity”?

How should we pursue these goals?

Higher education admissions and faculty hiring

Employment and government contracting

Reading: McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along?* Chapter 4 (p.171-177)

Martin Trow, “Preferential Admissions in Higher Education” (Thernstrom)

David Brady, “The Politics of Racial Preferences” (Thernstrom)

Ward Connerly, “One Nation Indivisible” (Thernstrom)

Grutter v. Bollinger

Immigration and Citizenship

Who and what is a “citizen”? What are “American values” and who has them?

The melting pot or the salad bowl? The debate over assimilation

A guest worker program?

Morristown's immigration enforcement initiative

Reading: Wolbrecht, et al, *Politics of Democratic Inclusion*, Chapters 4 and 9

Reed Ueda, "Immigration and Group Relations" (Thernstrom)

Linda Chavez, "The New Politics of Hispanic Assimilation" (Thernstrom)

Part IV: The Future of Race in American Politics

April 28: Bringing it all Together

The prospects for governmental activism on behalf of racial minorities

Minority groups and political power—the key swing voters?

Demographic trends in America

Latinos as the largest racial minority group

The end of racism? The end of race?

Reading: McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along?* Chapter 6

Future of race in America articles 1-3

Phillip Klinkner, "Shall We Overcome?" from *The Unsteady March*

FINAL EXAM (Date TBA)