

**African-American Politics**  
GOV 370K/AFR 374D  
Unique Number 38825/30230  
Fall 2011  
MWF 11:00am to 12:00pm  
PAR 101

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Office Hours: Mondays 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

**Description**

This course focuses upon the evolution, nature, and role of African-American politics within the American Political System. The concern is with African Americans as actors, creators and initiators in the political process. Specifically, this course will examine various political controversies that surround the role of race in American society and how these controversies affect public opinion, political institutions, political behavior, and salient public policy debates. This course will assess and evaluate the contemporary influence of race in each of these domains while also exploring their historical antecedents.

**Prerequisites**

Six semester hours of lower-division coursework in government.

**Required Text Books**

There are two required text books for this course, which are available at the University Co-op:

Walton, Hanes, Jr. and Robert C. Smith. 2010. *American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Philpot, Tasha S., and Ismail K. White, eds. 2010. *African-American Political Psychology: Identity, Opinion, and Action in the Post-Civil Rights Era*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

**Supplementary Readings**

Readings not found in the required texts can be accessed through Blackboard (courses.utexas.edu).

**Grading**

Your grade will be based on two exams, one 10-page paper, and several pop quizzes/in-class assignments. The format for the two exams will be a combination of short answer and essays and

will cover the lectures, films, and readings. Exams will **NOT** be cumulative. Quizzes will be given at random and at any time during lecture. Frequently, I give quizzes at the beginning of class so be on time. If you miss a quiz because of tardiness, you **CANNOT** make it up. Each quiz/in-class assignment will be worth 5 points each. You will receive one point for just handing in a quiz/in-class assignment. Credit for the remaining 4 points is determined by the quality of your work. Your quiz/in-class assignment grade will be calculated by taking the total number of points that you have earned divided by the total number of points available minus one quiz. In other words, each student can miss one quiz without it counting against his/her grade. Your quiz grade is a weighted average (see below), with a maximum of 25 points. In the case of a conflict, please notify me ahead of time so that we can make alternative arrangements. Without prior notification and proper documentation, missed quizzes, assignments and exams cannot be made up. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** The weight of each assignment in determining your final grade is as follows:

Exam 1 (October 21)	25%
Term Paper (due November 23)	25%
Exam 2 (December 2)	25%
Quizzes and in-class assignments	25%

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	0-59

### **Term Paper**

The topic of your term paper will be based on one of the pre-selected topics outlined below. Each topic is based on an issue that is relevant to contemporary Black politics. Your paper should demonstrate that you have some familiarity with your issue and that you can critically analyze the various sides of the issue. Your papers are not designed merely to summarize someone else's ideas. What I expect you to do is to explore and critique the relevant arguments and reach a conclusion as to which one is most persuasive. In order to craft a persuasive argument you must not only present evidence supportive of your position, but you must also address the *strongest* evidence presented by the other side(s). If you simply ignore the arguments of the other side I assume you are not able to refute their case. Consequently, your argument appears that much weaker. All assignments must be typed in a 12-point font and have margins no bigger than 1.25 inches. While the use of course readings is permissible, 'A' quality papers rely on scholarly sources not covered over the course of the semester. All assignments are due in class. No assignment is to be e-mailed to me. Assignments not handed in during class will **NOT** be accepted.

## Term Paper Topics

1. Racial Attitudes: At least since the 1960s, scholars in public opinion have noted the dramatic decline in levels of support for overt racism among White Americans. Paradoxically, however, there has not been a corresponding increase in levels of support for measures designed to alleviate racial inequality (e.g. affirmative action, busing, etc.). A number of theories (e.g. symbolic racism or racial resentment, group conflict, principled conservatism, social dominance orientation, etc.) have been developed to explain this apparent puzzle. Examine and critically assess (some of) these theories. What relevance do these theories hold for Black America? Which theory strikes you as the most persuasive and why?
2. Race and Representation: Although Blacks have made tremendous gains since the 1960s in terms of the number of elected office holders (at the local, state, and national level), they continue to fall short of proportional representation. Some argue that the best way to address this problem is to draw political jurisdictions such that African Americans make up a numerical majority thereby ensuring the election of more Black politicians. Clearly, this is a controversial strategy and the courts have been hesitant to approve it. Is this the best strategy to pursue? What are the relevant arguments on this question? Does maximizing the number of Black office holder necessarily benefit Black Americans? Why or why not?
3. Race and Political Coalitions: Blacks only represent about 13% of the US population, and as we have discussed, are underrepresented in elective office. It seems likely, therefore, that if Blacks are to achieve their political objectives they must form effective political coalitions. What strategy seems likely to bring the greatest results? Should they reassess their traditional allegiance to the Democratic Party? Should they consider third party movements? Additionally, Latinos and not Blacks now represent the largest racial/ethnic minority group in America. How likely is it that Blacks and Latinos will form an effective and stable political coalition in the future?

### **Citation**

All papers require proper citation. All sources must be cited; not citing sources will result in a grade penalty. The complete lack of citation will result in a zero grade for the assignment. This course will use the American Political Science Association citation style. The use of other citations styles will result in a grade penalty. Examples of the American Political Science Association citation style are available on Blackboard.

### **Website**

For class information and assignments please see the Blackboard site at [courses.utexas.edu](http://courses.utexas.edu). Class notes **WILL NOT** be on Blackboard.

### **E-mail**

No assignment is to be e-mailed to me. Also, I regularly check my e-mail, but sometimes I am unable to respond quickly. Please allow one to two days for an e-mail response. In addition, please limit your e-mails to questions about class topics. Any grievances involving the class must be handled during my office hours. Please exercise proper e-mail etiquette (for etiquette tips see <http://www.101emailtippetips.com/101-email-etiquette-tips.pdf>). Finally, make sure to check the syllabus or Blackboard first before sending an e-mail. In many cases they will answer your question.

### **Excused Absences**

An absence from class will only be excused if proper documentation is presented. In the case of an illness you will need to produce a note from the doctor stating that you could not attend class that day. Generic UHS slips will not be accepted. In all other cases you will need to provide documentation from the university. In the case of planned activities, the documentation must be presented to me at least a week before your scheduled absence. I will not accept a planned activity as a valid excuse for an absence after the fact. In the case of unexpected circumstances, the documentation must be turned in within a week of your return.

### **Q-Drop Policy**

If a student wishes to Q-drop this class before 40% of the class has been completed, the student may do so. After 40% of the class has been completed whether or not the student receives a Q or an F will be based upon the student's grade at that point. This grade will include attendance.

### **Expectations**

Meeting the goals of the class requires three things—attendance, preparation and professionalism.

Attendance—Although attendance is not mandatory, it is expected. Therefore, I find it unnecessary to formally take attendance. Nevertheless, missing class will greatly affect your grade. First, I frequently give pop quizzes and in-class assignments. Students that miss a quiz will receive a zero. Second, exams are based on a combination of the course readings, class lectures, and supplementary media presentations. Thus, missing class will greatly affect your grade.

Preparation—Doing well in this class necessitates that students are informed and prepared. Therefore, you will be expected to complete the readings prior to when class meets. This course covers a large amount of material in a short amount of time. If you do not keep up with the readings, your grade will reflect it.

Professionalism—Remember that this is an academic environment. Therefore, I ask that you minimize unnecessary disruptions. This includes (but it is not limited to) side conversations, cell phone calls and the consumption of tobacco

products. I also ask that you be proactive if any conflict occurs. This means notifying me ahead of time if you are unable to meet the requirements of the course.

## **Ground Rules**

Because this course will sometimes deal with sensitive material, it is imperative that we set a series of ground rules.

1. Respect others. There will be times when you disagree with an idea that has been presented to the class. Although you have the right to disagree with someone, you must remember to challenge the idea and not the person.
2. Listen attentively. The purpose of this course is to present and discuss different ideas. In order to reap the benefits of such an exchange, you must be willing to pay attention to what others have to say.
3. Think before you speak. Refrain from making broad, general, and/or unsubstantiated comments. Make sure that you use evidence and provide a rationale for your statements.
4. Maintain the dignity of the academic environment. Your ideas should be presented using Standard English.
5. Raise your hand. This helps to maintain order in the classroom and helps to ensure that everyone has a chance to talk.
6. Be courteous. Refrain from interrupting or engaging in private conversation while others are speaking. Also, limit disruptive behavior, such as newspaper reading, personal grooming, etc.

## **Procedures for Dealing with Grade/Evaluation Concerns**

Grade/evaluation concerns will only be considered if the following procedure is followed:

All grade complaints must be **TYPED** and must clearly express the student's specific concerns. These written statements must be accompanied by citations of support from course materials, i.e. readings, textbook, and/or lecture notes, in order to ensure accuracy.

Written statements will not be considered until one week **AFTER** the assignment is returned to students. This allows the student time to reread his/her answers and think carefully about what improvements could have been made.

Grievances will not be considered once two weeks have passed. For example, if I return a graded assignment on Monday, the student must submit a complaint **BEFORE** the Friday of the following week. Once class is over on that Friday, no complaints will be considered for that assignment.

Since class time is limited, I will only deal with questions or concerns during scheduled office hours.

Finally, submitting a grade grievance will result in a complete re-grade of the assignment.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

According to the Institutional Rules, scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and falsifying academic records. In the event that a student violates the University policy on scholastic dishonesty, he or she will be subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Judicial Services web site at [www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/](http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/).

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

## **Religious Holy Day Observance**

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

## **Emergency Evacuation Policy**

In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Faculty members must then provide this information to the Fire Prevention Services office by fax (512-232-2759), with "Attn. Mr. Roosevelt Easley" written in the subject line. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

## **Outline of Course Topics and Readings**

### ***I. America's Dilemma: Introduction to Race in the United States***

Reading: Obama, Barack. 2008. "A More Perfect Union."

King, Martin Luther, Jr. 1963. "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

Myrdal, Gunnar. 1944. *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. New York: Harper & Bros. Introduction.

Video: *The Matrix* (excerpt)

## **II. *An Experiment in Democracy: The American Political System***

Reading: Walton and Smith, Chapters 1, 2; Appendices I, II

Madison, James. 1787. "The Same Subject Continued: The Union as a Safeguard against Domestic Faction and Insurrection."

Madison, James. 1788. "The Apportionment of Members among the States."

Madison, James. 1788. "The Particular Structure of the New Government and the Distribution of Power among Its Different Parts."

## **III. *One Nation, Two Realities: Black Political Socialization***

Reading: Walton and Smith, Chapters 4, 6

Philpot and White, Chapters 8, 9

Harris-Lacewell, Melissa V. 2004. *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday Talk and Black Political Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter One.

Video: *Barbershop* (excerpt)

## **IV. *Say It Loud...: The Origins and Maintenance of Black Identity***

Reading: Walton and Smith, Chapter 3

Ture, Kwame and Charles Hamilton. 1992 (1967). *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. New York: Vintage Books. Chapter Two.

Dawson, Michael C. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*. Princeton University Press, Chapter One.

Herring, Mary, Thomas B. Jankowski and Ronald E. Brown. 1999. "Pro-Black Doesn't Mean Anti-White: The Structure of African-American Group Identity." *Journal of Politics* 61 (2): 363-386.

## **V. *We Shall Overcome: Social Movements and Coalition Politics***

Reading: Walton and Smith, Chapters 7, 8

Ture, Kwame and Charles Hamilton. 1992 (1967). *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. New York: Vintage Books. Chapter Three.

Kaufmann, Karen M. 2003. "Cracks in the Rainbow: Group Commonality as a Basis for Latino and African-American Political Coalitions." *Political Research Quarterly* 56 (2): 199-210.

## **VI. Linking the People to the Politics: Race and Political Parties**

Reading: Walton and Smith, Chapter 9

Philpot, Tasha S. 2007. *Race, Republicans, and the Return of the Party of Lincoln*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. Introduction, Chapters 2 and 5.

## **VII. The Black/White Divide: Race and Public Opinion**

Reading: Walton and Smith, Chapter 5

Philpot and White, Chapters 4, 5, 10

Kinder, Donald R., and Lynn M. Sanders. 1996. *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters Two and Five.

## **VIII. Who Will Lead?: Elections and Participation**

Reading: Walton and Smith, Chapter 10

Philpot and White, Chapters 6, 11

Philpot, Tasha S., Daron R. Shaw and Ernest B. McGowen. 2009. "Winning the Race: Black Voter Turnout in the 2008 Presidential Election." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73 (5): 995-1022.

Video: *Eyes on the Prize* #9

## **IX. Having Our Say: Race and Representation**

Readings: Walton and Smith, Chapter 11

Swain, Carol M. 1993. *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters One and Ten.

Tate, Katherine. 2001. "The Political Representation of Blacks in Congress: Does Race Matter?" *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 26 (4): 623-638.

Video: *Fahrenheit 9/11* (excerpt)

#### **X. *A Matter of Justice: Race, Crime and the Criminal Justice System***

Reading: Walton and Smith, Chapter 13

Gryski, Gerard S., Gary Zuk, and Deborah J. Barrow. 1994. "A Bench that Looks Like America? Representation of African Americans and Latinos on the Federal Courts." *Journal of Politics* 56 (4): 1076-1086.

Peffley, Mark and Jon Hurwitz. 2007. "Persuasion and Resistance: Race and the Death Penalty in America." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 996-1012.

Video: *Ku Klux Klan: A Secret History*

#### **XI. *Hail to the Chief: Race and the Executive***

Reading: Walton and Smith, Chapters 12, 14

Naff, Katherine C. and John Crum. 2000. "The President and Representative Bureaucracy: Rhetoric and Reality." *Public Administration Review* 60 (2): 98-110.

Winant, Howard. 2009. "Just Do It: Notes on Politics and Race at the Dawn of the Obama Presidency." *Du Bois Review* 6 (1): 49-70.

Video: *Head of State* (excerpt)

#### **XII. *The Dream Actualized: Race and Public Policy***

Reading: Walton and Smith, Chapters 15, 16

Dawson, Michael C., and Rovana Popoff. 2004. "Reparations: Justice and Greed in Black and White." *Du Bois Review* 1(1):47-91.

Payne, Richard J. and Eddie Ganaway. 1980. "The Influence of Black Americans on US Policy towards Southern Africa." *African Affairs* 79 (317): 585-598.

#### **XIII. *Where Do We Go From Here?: Race and the 21st Century***

Reading: Klinkner, Philip A. and Rogers M. Smith. 1999. *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Conclusion.

Williams, Linda Faye. 2003. *The Constraint of Race: Legacies of White Skin Privilege in America*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press. Chapter 8.

### Course Schedule at a Glance

August 24	Welcome and Introductions
August 26 – September 2	America’s Dilemma
September 4	Professor Philpot’s Birthday
September 5	Labor Day—No Class
September 7 – September 9	An Experiment in Democracy
September 12 – September 16	One Nation, Two Realities
September 19 – September 23	Say It Loud...
September 26 – September 30	We Shall Overcome
October 3 – October 10	Linking the People to the Politics
October 12 – October 19	The Black/White Divide
October 21	Exam 1
October 24 – October 28	Who Will Lead?
October 31 – November 4	Having Our Say
November 7 – November 16	A Matter of Justice
November 18	Hail to the Chief
November 21-23	The Dream Actualized
November 23	Term Paper Due
November 25	Thanksgiving—No Class
November 28 - November 30	Where Do We Go From Here?
December 2	Exam 2