

# Political Science 326

## African American Politics

### Spring 2015

Department of Political Science  
Southern Illinois University

## 1 Instructor Information

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Office Hours: 1:00-3:30 M,F or by Apt  
Class Location: Lawson 131  
Class Time: 12:00-12:50

## 2 Course Description

The United States was founded on the principles of liberty, justice, and equality for all. In spite of the noble goals of our founding fathers, for most of American history African Americans were excluded from the American political system. The United States long socio-historical legacy of segregation continues to play a strong role in the representation and political behavior of all Americans and in particular blacks. Thus, to gain a comprehensive understanding of American politics, students need to examine how race shapes the American electorate, its political institutions, and electoral outcomes.

To accomplish this goal, the course will examine several facets of black politics in the United States. The course will be divided into four sections. The first section will examine African Americans politics before the Voting Rights Act. In the second segment of this course, we will discuss black political behavior in terms of group identification, partisanship, and political participation. In the third section, we will explore black political representation through an analysis of black candidates and black elected officials. We conclude the class by examining social science research on specialized topics in black politics.

In addition to learning more about black politics, students in this class will learn skills that transcend the courses topic and can be used in their future careers. In particular, students in this course will learn how to think critically about social science research, learn how to formulate and analyze a research question, and improve their public speaking abilities.

## 3 Course Readings

Unfortunately, there is not one textbook that covers all of the topics in our course. To circumvent this problem, students will be required to purchase three books. The first book is Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930-1970 by Doug McAdam. The second book that is required for this course is American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom by Hanes Walton Jr. and Robert Smith. The final book for the course is Bringing Race Back In: Black Politicians, Deracialization, and Voting Behavior in the Age of Obama by Christopher Stout.

In addition to the books, the course readings will be supplemented with several popular and academic articles which will be posted on the courses website. These readings will supplement the topics covered in lecture and in the required books.

## 4 Course Structure

Recent research has demonstrated both the strengths and limitations of a strict lecture format. While students learn a significant amount of information through hearing the analysis of professors, a combination of lecture, discussion, active learning exercises, videos and student participation generally yields better learning outcomes for students. To ensure that students get the most out of this course, we will use a multi-faceted approach to learning.

In five courses students will engage in cooperative learning (see Ming Tsui's (2010) article in *Teaching Sociology* for more details). This pedagogical format requires students to divide into small groups (2-3 students). Each member within the group is then required to teach their group mates a section of the assigned reading. Through the act of teaching, students generally learn more about the topic and gain invaluable teaching and presentation skills.

Students will gain a better perspective of several important issues in black politics through debates which will occur in the final week of school. Students will be randomly assigned into a group which supports or opposes a pressing issue which concerns African Americans.

Finally, students will gain a hands-on experience applying the lessons learned in this course into a final report which will either design a campaign strategy for an African American candidate or produce a policy proposal for an issue which disproportionately affects the black community.

## 5 Assessment

### Cooperative Learning (15%)

To receive full credit for this portion of the class, you are required to fill out and teach a chapter/reading outline to your classmates. In total there will be five cooperative learning assignments that must be completed. Students are allowed to miss one cooperative learning opportunity without penalty if they submit three questions over the course of the semester connecting the readings to some real world political issue/debate. Other than that, students will lose 5% of their total grade for every missed cooperative learning assignment.

### Midterm (30%)

The midterm will test your knowledge of the first half of the course. This test will include 20 multiple choice questions and 10 short answers (5 from lecture and 5 from the readings) you will be required to answer 4 of the 5 from each section. I reserve the right to change the format of the midterm if necessary.

### Course Debates (20%)

After the Midterm, students will be randomly assigned a position and a topic that pertains to an important issue in black politics. In groups of four to five, students will prepare a three to five minute opening statement which will provide an outline of the topic, items in support of their position, and critiques of the opposition. The students will then as a group give two five minute constructive and rebuttal speeches.

Finally, the students will answer questions about their topic and their position from the audience. Each group will also be required to submit a five to seven page paper detailing their argument at the end of the debate. More details about the course debates will be provided after the Midterm.

### Final Research Paper (35%)

One of the primary goals of this course is to train students to think like social scientists. To assess student's progress in this area, students in a groups of 2-3 will either write a campaign plan for a hypothetical black presidential candidate or write a policy proposal to address an issue which disproportionately affects the black community.

These proposals should about between 12-15 pages in length and should draw from the course readings, information from classroom discussions and empirical data. Students will receive more information about the project and how to structure the proposals after the midterm.

### A Note on Academic Integrity

I find it unfortunate that instructors must include this section on the syllabus, but with a rise of electronic resources, academic dishonesty is a part of the reality in which we now function. Thus, I include a very short reminder here on the importance of maintaining academic integrity. Cheating in any form is prohibited and will result in an automatic fail for the course.

## 6 Course Schedule and Assigned Readings

### Wednesday-January 21- Introduction and Syllabus

- *NO READING*

*The Origins of the Civil Right Movements and Its' Consequences*

### Friday-January 23-Black Politics In Early American History

- Walton and Smith: Chapter 1

### Monday-January 26- Black Politics and Limited Opportunities during the Age of Jim Crow

- McAdam 86-116

**Wednesday-January 28-Social Movements and the Beginning of the Black Insurgency**

- McAdam Chapter 6

**Friday-January 30-Video: Freedom Riders Part 1**

- *NO READING*

**Monday-February 2-Black Politics during the Civil Rights Movement**

- McAdam Chapter 7

**Wednesday-February 4-The Implications of the 1965 Voting Rights Act**

- McAdam 86-116

**Friday-February 6-Video: Freedom Riders Part 2**

- *NO READING*

**Monday-February 9-The Decline of the Civil Rights Movement**

- McAdam Chapter 8

**Wednesday-February 11- Cooperative Learning Assignment 1- Competing Visions About Transition from protest to Politics**

- Student 1: Rustin, Bayard *From Protest to Politics* (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)
- Student 2: Ture, Kwame and Charles Hamilton *Black Power* Chapter 3 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Friday-February 13-Ships and Shoes In Class Exercise-Part 1**

- Wilson, William Julius. *The Truly Disadvantaged* Chapter 7 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

***Black Politics in Contemporary America*****Monday-February 16-The Declining Significance of Race? Will Race Continue to Be Important for African Americans**

- Wilson, William Julius. *The Declining Significance of Race* Chapter 8 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Wednesday-February 18- Linked Fate in the Black Community**

- Dawson, Michael. *Behind the Mule* Chapter 3 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Friday-February 20-Ships and Shoes In Class Exercise-Part 2**

- Valls, Andrew "The Libertarian Case for Affirmative Action." (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Monday-February 23-Black Political Partisanship in Contemporary America**

- Walton and Smith: Chapter 9

**Wednesday-February 25- Is a Return to the Party of Lincoln Possible? Blacks and the Republican Party**

- Philpot, Tasha. *Race, Republicans, and the Return of the Party of Lincoln* Chapter 7 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Friday-February 27-Cooperative Learning Assignment 2: Black Political Partisanship**

- Student 1: Hajnal, Zoltan L. and Taeku Lee *Why Americans Dont Join the Party: Race, Immigration, and the Failure (of Political Parties) to Engage the Electorate.* Chapter 4 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)
- Student 2: Stout, Christopher and Jennifer R. Garcia *The Big Tent Effect: Descriptive Candidates and Minority Partisanship* (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Monday-March 2-Who Votes: Black Political Participation in the Modern Era**

- Harris, Frederic, Valeria Sinclair-Chapman and Brian McKenzie. *Macro dynamics of Black Political Participation in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Wednesday-March 4- Midterm Review**

- *NO READING*

**Friday-March 6-Midterm**

- *NO READING*

***March 9 Through March 13 Spring Break*****Monday-March-16-Black Public Opinion**

- Walton and Smith: Chapter 5

**Wednesday-March 18-What's Going On? The Moderation of Black Public Opinion in the Modern Era**

- Tate, Katherine. *What's Going On* Chapter 9 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Friday-March 20-How Public Opinion is Racialized**

- Walton and Smith: Chapter 6

***Black Candidates and Public Officials*****Monday-March-23-Does Race Matter in Elections? Part 1**

- Walton and Smith: Chapter 11

**Wednesday-March 25-Does Race Matter in Elections? Racial Voting in the 2008 and 2012 Election**

- Lewis-Beck, Michael, Charles Tien, and Richard Nadeau. *Obama's Missed Landslide: A Racial Cost* (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Friday-March 27-Cooperative Learning 3- Does Race Matter in Elections?**

- Student 1: Hajnal, Zoltan *Changing White Attitudes toward Black Political Leadership* Chapter 3 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)
- Student 2: Williams, Linda *White/Black Perceptions of the Electability of Black Political Candidates* (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Monday-March-30-Transcending Race: Are Some Blacks More Electable than Others? Part 1**

- Stout Chapter 1

**Wednesday-April 1-Transcending Race: Are Some Blacks More Electable than Others? Part 2**

- Stout Chapter 2

**Friday-April 3-Video: Street Fight Part 1**

- *NO READING*

**Monday-April 6-Black Presidential Politics-Obama and Jackson**

- Stout Chapters 5 & 6

**Wednesday-April 8- Blacks in Elected Office: Do Blacks Legislate Differently From Whites**

- Tate, Katherine. *Black Faces in the Mirror* Chapter 4

**Friday-April 10-Cooperative Learning 4-Should Blacks Represent Blacks?**

- Student 1: Swain, Carol *Black Faces, Black Interests* Chapter 9 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)
- Student 2: Tate, Katherine *Black Faces in the Mirror* Chapter 5 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Monday-April 13-View From the Voters: Do Black Voters Prefer Black Representatives**

- Tate, Katherine *The Political Representation of Blacks in Congress: Does Race Matter?* (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Wednesday-April 15- Black Political Empowerment**

- Bobo, Lawrence and Frank Gilliam *Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment* (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Friday-April 17-No Class-Midwest Political Science Conference**

- *NO READING*

***Special Topics in Black Politics*****Monday-April 20-Intersectionality: Do Black Men and Women Have a Different Political Perspective?**

- Gay, Claudine and Katherine Tate. *Doubly Bound: The Impact of Gender and Race on the Politics of Black Women* (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Wednesday-April 22- Music and Black Politics.**

- Spence, Lester. *Stare in the Darkness: The Limits of Hip-hop and Black Politics* Chapter 3 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Friday-April 24-Conflict or Cooperation: Blacks and the Growing Latino Community**

- Walton and Smith: Chapter 7

**Monday-April 27-Black Politics in the Age of Obama**

- Hutchings, Vincent. Change or More of the Same? Evaluating Racial Attitudes in the Obama Era (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Wednesday-April 29- Religion and Black Politics**

- Wilcox, Clyde and Leopoldo Gomez. Religion, Group Identification, and Politics among American Blacks (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Friday-May 1-Black Nationalism**

- Dawson, Michael *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African American Political Ideologies* Chapter 3 (Posted on Desire 2 Learn)

**Monday-May 4-Cooperative Learning Assignment 5: Debate Preparation**

- Students Must Bring and Present an Academic Article or 3 Popular Articles about Their Topic and Summarize/Teach the Main Ideas of These Articles to Their Debate Group Members.

**Wednesday-May 6- Debate #1: Is Obama Good for Black Politics?**

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- NO READING

Friday-May 8-

Debate #2: Will Race Continue to Be Important for African Americans?

Debate #3: Can the Republican Party Garner More of the Black Vote?

- *NO READING*

Final Project Due Thursday May 14 at 5pm