

Black Politics, Fall '23, PSCI 213/AAAS 296

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Office hours: M, 9:30-10:30 and 4:30-5:30; W, 1-2:00
By appointment, in person and zoom

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This course is about the politics of racial subordination and emancipation in the United States. We begin by thinking about different explanations of the rise, dynamics, and persistence of racial domination in the United States and of the cultural and political challenges to it. We will pay special attention to the Great Migration, the subsequent emergence of blacks as an important constituency of the Democratic Party, the Civil Rights Movement, and the role of race in structuring current party divisions. Next, we will examine the politics of black communities. Topics include the legacy of demobilization of the Civil Rights Movement and the channeling of political activity into electoral institutions; the politics of urban regimes; the challenge to political solidarity posed by increasing social economic and social inequality within the black community; the Black Lives Matter movement; and debates about the effectiveness of identity-based, class based, and coalitional strategies of political mobilization. In conclusion we will reflect upon the differences between the nature and dynamics of racial subordination today compared with the past and what, if any, prospects for change there are.

Grades are based on:

Two three-page papers, 10% for the first, and 20% for the second
Midterm, 10%
Final, 30%
Perusall, 20% (I'll explain what this is in class)
Participation, 10%

Papers:

Some points about your papers:

1. Establish a focus. A good paper has a thesis, a central idea or claim that it is making, and it presents an argument supporting that thesis. You should be able to make an outline of your paper, which will at the same time be the skeleton of the argument you are making. It is often helpful to write out the outline – in sentence form, not simply as a list of topics – before writing the paper or, at least, the final draft. A good way to think about your paper is to ask yourself, “What do I want my readers to believe after they have read my paper? What reasons can I offer them to think that?” If you can answer these questions succinctly, you’re off to an excellent start.
2. Title. The title should express the main idea or focus of your paper, preparing your reader to see immediately what you’re going to say, and why it’s interesting.
3. Structure and organization. The paper should have a clear structure, with an introduction presenting the central question or problem you are addressing, a body that sets out a logical development of the reasons and evidence you are offering, and a ^{oo} conclusion that ties the paper together. In the longer paper it is often useful to provide section headings. The intr`g the ce

Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, offers a helpful discussion of how to develop (and express) an argument in a tight, logical way.

6. **Grading.** “B” papers will fulfill the foregoing criteria adequately. “A” papers will do more. They will not only be clearly and forcefully written, but they will show evidence of deep engagement with the issues. They will argue something interesting, and thought-provoking.

Readings:

I expect students to come to class, to have read the material assigned for that day, and to be ready to discuss it. Most of what you will get out of this, or any course, depends on this. I will supply all of the readings for this class. They will all be posted on a social e-reader called Perusall. There is a link to Perusall at the bottom of the course homepage on Blackboard. Once in Perusall, you will see a list of the reading assignments for the course. Most of the work for this course will involve reading the assignments, reflecting upon them, and discussing them with your classmates (on Perusall and in class). I’ve given more details about how Perusall works below.

How Perusall Works

I have not placed any book orders with the bookstore. I will be supplying the books for this course (with a few exceptions – in some courses, there will be one or two books you need to buy) through an online reading software package called “Perusall.” All of the reading assignments for the semester must be completed through this online software package, which you can access by clicking on the Perusall link on the bottom of the course’s Blackboard homepage.

Reasons I am doing this: *Perusall* helps you master readings faster, understand the material better, and get more out of the class. To achieve this goal, you will be collaboratively annotating the readings with others in the class. The help you’ll get and provide your classmates (even if you don’t know anyone personally) will get you past confusions quickly and will make the process more fun. While you read, you’ll receive rapid answers to your questions, help others resolve their questions (which also helps you learn), and advise me, the instructor, how to make class time most productive. You can start a new annotation thread in *Perusall* by highlighting text, asking a question, or posting a comment; you can also add a reply or comment to an existing thread. Each thread is like a chat with one or more members of your class, and it happens in real time. Your **goals** in annotating each reading assignment are 1. to stimulate discussion by posting good questions or comments, 2. to help others by answering their questions, and 3. to identify and evaluate the main claims in the piece.

Rubric: Research shows that by annotating thoughtfully, you’ll learn more and get better grades, so here’s what “annotating thoughtfully” means: *Effective annotations deeply engage points/arguments in the readings, stimulate discussion, offer informative questions or comments, and help others by addressing their questions or confusions.* To help you connect with classmates, you can “mention” a classmate in a comment or question to have them notified by email (they’ll also see a notification immediately if online), and you’ll also be notified when your classmates respond to your questions. For each assignment I will evaluate the annotations you submit on time (see below). Based on the overall body of your annotations, you will receive a score for each assignment as follows

10 = demonstrates **exceptionally thoughtful and thorough reading of the entire** assignment; student has engaged with others, asked questions others want answered, answers questions, and made important insights.

7-9 = **demonstrates thoughtful and thorough reading of the entire assignment**; occasionally engages with others, asks questions, and so forth. Some comments state the obvious or are the equivalent of saying “amen” or just free associating, as when someone says, “based off of what he said, I think” and then goes on to talk about something only tangentially related to the question or issue at hand.

4-6 = demonstrates superficial reading of the entire assignment Or thoughtful reading of only part of the assignment; comments state the obvious, are trivial, often irrelevant.

<4 = demonstrates superficial reading of only part of the assignment; comments state the obvious, are

trivial, often irrelevant.

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Aug 30

Introduction

Foundations of Racial Classification

Explaining existence and persistence of ethnic, racial, and other sorts of classification. Instrumentalists, Social Psychologists, and Constructivists. Variables influencing ethnic identity form

Sep 1

Sep 6

Sep 8

Sep 13

Sep 15

Sep 20

Sep 22

Sep 27

Sep 29

Oct 4

Oct 6

Melissa Harris-Lacewell, *Barber*

Oct 11

Oct 13

Oct 16-17

Oct 18

Oct 20

Oct 25

Oct 27

Nov 1

Nov 3

Nov 8

Nov 10

Nov 15

Nov 17