

AFAM152/PS124E: African American Politics

Purpose of Course

The story of the African-American struggle for true equality is a distinctly American one. Not simply because it features a distinct set of American actors interacting within the unique confines of the U.S. political system; but more so because this story is one that highlights and challenges the ideas at the heart of America. Are all people truly created equal? Can the rules and institutions of American democracy safeguard the liberty of its most marginalized denizens? Can the American dream be more than a dream deferred for a people simultaneously essential to American advancement and subjugated by it? Special emphasis will be placed on: (1) the goals of political advancement articulated by various black leaders, and the strategies employed to achieve those goals, and (2) the manner in which these goals and strategies are shaped and constrained by U.S. political institutions such as the two party system, federalism, the ideology of American liberalism, the criminal justice system, etc.

This course will feature a mix of lecture, small and large group discussion, in-class written exercises, and viewing of media clips. Students are expected to be active participants in both small and large group discussions.

Objectives

1. To immerse students in a range of relevant historical and contemporary discourses on black political objectives, strategies, movements and ideologies
2. To improve students' ability to interrogate and analyze the dominant institutions and ideas at the heart of American politics—particularly how those institutions and ideas shape the political development of African Americans
3. To familiarize students with political science-informed perspectives on the instrumental role of race in shaping politics in the U.S.

Course Requirements¹

Attendance & Participation 15%

In-class group exercises 25%

Application papers (30%)

Final policy memo project (30%)

¹ More detailed information on all of the assignments will be provided in class.

Attendance and participation

Full participation points will be awarded only to students who attend all classes AND are active participants in both small and large group discussion. You are allowed ONE unexcused absence that will not affect your score. BUT, you are NOT able to make up any in-class exercises on the day that you missed with an unexcused absence. In sum, attendance can be very important to your grade. Absences will only be excused if they're cleared with me BEFORE the class session you miss. Email me if you anticipate missing a class for a valid reason, and I will respond to confirm whether or not the absence is excused. If you have an excused absence on a day during which an in-class exercise is assigned, you will have a chance to complete it for full credit. NOTE: Class attendance will NOT be recorded before Week 2. Students enrolling after the beginning of the term will not be penalized for classes missed before they were enrolled in the course.

In-class written exercises

Regularly in class I will provide written exercises to be completed either individually or in groups. I will collect these assignments at the end of class, and points will be distributed for completion. I will not announce these assignments ahead of time. And again, there is no way to make up an in-class exercise if you have an unexcused absence on the day it is given. These exercises will often require you to think critically about how the course concepts relate to your own experiences, or to place yourselves in the shoes of policymakers or issue advocates.

Application papers

Over the course of the term, you must submit two short papers (3-4 pages, double spaced) written outside of class and submitted to the Canvas course page. In the papers you will respond to specific prompts that will be announced in class. You will have one week to complete them from the day they are announced. Three prompts will be provided throughout the course. You choose the two to which you respond. Each paper will be worth 15 points, with the two altogether totaling 30% of your grade.

Research Based Policy Memo (Due during exam week)

You will write a 5-6 page policy memo in which you advance a solution to the problem you think is the most pressing to the African-American community in the 21st century. This memo must rely on the scholarly sources both covered in class and read on your own. You must cite these sources to provide compelling evidence for the policy solution you propose. Do not write an opinion piece! The strongest papers will utilize relevant written works and statistics to build their case.

The memo must be addressed to an actual figure or institution that has jurisdiction or influence over the issue area you've chosen. You do not lead to limit the audience to an elected official or conventional political figure. You can address the memo to leaders of social or political movements, community or religious leaders, business elites, etc.

Required Texts

There are two required books for this course. They are available for purchase online and at the campus bookstores. They will also be available for course reserve in the Langson Library. All other assigned readings will be accessible via hyperlinks in the syllabus, or available on the Canvas course page under "Assigned Readings."

- Smith, Robert C. 1996. *We Have No Leaders: African-Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era*.
- Ture, Kwame and Charles V. Hamilton. 1992. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*.

CLASS POLICIES

You are strongly encouraged to visit me in person, primarily during my office hours. If your schedule prevents you from meeting during my office hours, we can try to arrange to meet at another time.

I am generally very responsive to emails, but please note that emails sent late at night may take longer for me to respond to. Before you email me with questions or concerns, *please check the syllabus and the course site* to ensure the answer you’re looking for isn’t already available in one of these resources. **Please include “PS124” OR “AFAM 152” in the subject line of all emails sent to me.**

Students with disabilities who need accommodations are encouraged to contact me. The UCI Disability Services Center is available to accommodate students. You can learn more about programs and support by visiting the UCI Disability Services Center website at www.disability.uci.edu, by phone: 949-824-7494 and by TDD: 949-824-6272.

Policy on Plagiarism and Grade Grievances

There is a strictly enforced, zero-tolerance policy regarding both cheating and plagiarism. An overview and resources for UC Irvine’s policies related to academic honesty is located at: <http://honesty.uci.edu>

In the event that you disagree with a grade handed down on an assignment, you must follow a specific procedure to contest the grade. Within one week after the assignment is returned to you, you must provide me with a written explanation of why you believe your grade is incorrect. This explanation must cite relevant sources from the texts or lecture in support of your grievance. I will review your complaint, if determined necessary, I will re-grade your assignment. Please be aware that the new grade may be lower than your original grade.

Grading Scale

I use the standard UCI grading scale for assignments and final course scores. I will not accommodate any grading related requests after the deadline to send grades to the registrar, which is **Thursday June 20**.

A+	≥	96.5	>	A	≥	93.5	>	A-	≥	90
B+	≥	86.5	>	B	≥	83.5	>	B-	≥	80
C+	≥	76.5	>	C	≥	73.5	>	C-	≥	70
D+	≥	66.5	>	D	≥	63.5	>	D-	≥	60

Expectations of Students	Expectations of Instructor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive on time • Be prepared to participate • Respect others • Give best effort on assignments • Adhere to rules of academic integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive on time • Be prepared to facilitate • Respect all students • Make every effort to facilitate student’s learning • Grade assignments objectively

If warranted, this syllabus is subject to change.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Apr 2-4) Laying the Foundation

- Ta-nehisi Coates, "[The Case for Reparations](#)" *The Atlantic* June 2014
- Michael Omi, and Howard Winant *Racial Formations in the United States*. Routledge, 2014. Ch. 1

Week 2 (Apr 9-11): Disentangling Race & Class Identities and their Impacts on Black Politics

- *Black Power*, Chapter 7
- Adam Harris, "[White College Graduates Are Doing Great With Their Parents' Money](#)" *The Atlantic*, Jul 20, 2018
- William J. Wilson, "The Black Community in the 1980s: Questions of Race, Class, and Public Policy" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1981
- Gillian B. White, "[How Black Middle-Class Kids Become Poor Adults](#)," *The Atlantic*, Jan 19, 2015
- David R. Williams, and Chiquita Collins. "Racial Residential Segregation: A Fundamental Cause of Racial Disparities in Health." *Public Health Reports* 116.5 (2001): 404.

****Optional****

- Jason Parham, "[The Curious Case of the 'New Black': A Conversation](#)" *Gawker*, Oct 24, 2014

Week 3 (Apr 16-18) The Great Divide in Racial Attitudes & the Development of Black Ideologies

- Michael C. Dawson. *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies*. U. Chicago Press, 2001 (Read Chapter One)
- Paula D. McClain, Johnson Carew, J. D., Walton Jr, E., & Watts, C. S. (2009). "Group Membership, Group Identity, and Group Consciousness: Measures of Racial Identity in American Politics?" *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12: 471-485.
- Vincent Hutchings, "Change or More of the Same: Evaluating Racial Attitudes in the Era of Obama" *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 73, No 5.
- Robert P. Jones, "[Self-Segregation: Why It's So Hard for Whites to Understand Ferguson.](#)" *The Atlantic* Aug 21, 2014
- Dan Balz & Scott Clement, "[On Racial Issues, America is Divided Both Black and White and Red and Blue](#)" *The Washington Post*, Dec 27, 2014
- Lynn Vavreck. "[Measuring Donald Trump's Supporters for Intolerance](#)" *The New York Times*. Feb 23, 2016.

****Optional****

- Leah Wright Rigueur, "[What explains Ben Carson? The long tradition of black conservatism](#)" *Washington Post*, Sept 10, 2015

- Martin Gilens. "Race and Poverty in America: Public Misperceptions and the American News Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60.4 (1996): 515-541.
- Tali Mendelberg. "Executing Hortons: Racial Crime in the 1988 Presidential Campaign." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61.1 (1997): 134-157.

Week 4 (Apr 23-25) Power and Party Politics—Opportunities and Limitations

- *Black Power*, Ch. 6
- *We Have No Leaders*, Chs. 10
- Linda Faye Williams. *The Constraint of Race: Legacies of White Skin Privilege in America*. 2003. Ch. 5
- Lorrie Frasure-Yokley, "Choosing the Velvet Glove: Women Voters, Ambivalent Sexism, and Vote Choice in 2016." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and Politics* 3, no. 1 (2018): 3-25.
- Ta-nehisi Coates, "[Color-Blind Policy, Color-Conscious Morality](#)," *The Atlantic*, June 6, 2013
- Frederick C. Harris, *The Price of the Ticket*, Conclusion
- Zoltan L. Hajnal and Jeremy D. Horowitz. "Racial Winners and Losers in American Party Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 12.01 (2014): 100-118. [SKIM]
- Terrell J. Starr, "[The Progressive Revolution is being Led by a Black Woman](#)" *The Root*, June 4, 2018

*****Optional*****

- Karen Grigsby Bates, "[Why Did Black Voters Flee the Republican Party in the 1960s?](#)" *NPR*, Jul 14, 2014.

Week 5 (Apr 30-May 2) Actions Speak Louder Part 1: Black Electoral Behavior

- *Black Power*, Ch. 4
- Katherine Tate, "Black Political Participation in the 1984 and 1988 Presidential Elections" *American Political Science Review*, Vol 85, Issue 4 1991
- J. E. Leighley, and Arnold Vedlitz. (1999). "Race, ethnicity, and political participation: Competing models and contrasting explanations." *The Journal of Politics* 61.04: 1092-1114. [SKIM]
- Sarah Childress, "[Why Voter ID Laws Aren't Really about Fraud](#)," *PBS Frontline* Oct 20, 2014
- Vanessa Williams, "[Black Women — Hillary Clinton's Most Reliable Voting Bloc—Look Beyond Defeat](#)." *Washington Post*. Nov 2, 2016.
- Vanessa Williams, "[Abrams looks at her options after the narrow loss in a Georgia election marred by disputes over voting irregularities](#)," *Washington Post*. Jan 20, 2019

Week 6 (May 7-9) Actions Speak Louder Part 2: Black Insurgent Behavior

- *Black Power*, Ch. 2
- Robert A. Brown, and Todd C. Shaw. "Separate nations: Two Attitudinal Dimensions of Black Nationalism." *Journal of Politics* 64.1 (2002): 22-44.
- Dennis J Urban. "The Women of SNCC: Struggle, Sexism, and the Emergence of Feminist Consciousness, 1960-66." *International Social Science Review* 77.3/4 (2002): 185-190.

- Robin Dearmon Muhammad. "[Garveyism Looks Toward the Pacific: The UNIA and Black Workers in the American West](#)" *www.blackpast.org*
- Alicia Garza. "[A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement](#)" *The Feminist Wire*, Oct. 7 2014
- Maneesh Arora, Archie Delshad & Davin L. Phoenix, "Framing police and protesters: assessing volume and framing of news coverage post-Ferguson, and corresponding impacts on legislative activity" *Politics, Groups and Identities*, 7:1 (2019)

****Optional****

- Adam Fairclough "Martin Luther King Jr. and the Quest for Nonviolent Change" *Phylon*, Spring 1986
- Malcolm X: "The Ballot or the Bullet" *Speech Transcript*, April 3, 1964

Week 7 (May 14-16) Black Political Incorporation—Promises Unfulfilled?

- *We Have No Leaders*, Ch. 4
- Pete Saunders, "[The Three Generations of Black Mayors in America](#)," *New Geography*, Nov 29, 2014
- Nicholas Stephanopoulos, "[The False Promise of Black Political Representation](#)," *The Atlantic*, Jun 11, 2015
- Neil Kraus and Todd Swanstrom. "Minority Mayors and the Hollow Prize Problem." *Political Science & Politics* 34.01 (2001): 99-105.
- Nadia E. Brown, "Negotiating the insider/outsider status: Black feminist ethnography and legislative studies." *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* 3, no. 3 (2012): 3.
- Jamiles Lartey, "[A revolutionary, not a liberal: Can a radical black mayor bring change to Mississippi?](#)" *The Guardian*, Sep 11, 2017.

****Optional****

- Lawrence Bobo, and Franklin D. Gilliam. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment." *American Political Science Review* 84.02 (1990): 377-393.

Week 8 (May 21-23): Multi-racial/ethnic alliances—Strength in Numbers or Broken Bonds?

- Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall and David H. Tabb, *Protest is Not Enough: The Struggle of Blacks and Hispanics for Equality in Urban Politics* (1984) Ch. 2
- Kenneth J. Meier, Paula D. McClain, J. L. Polinard, & Robert D. Wrinkle. "Divided or Together? Conflict and Cooperation between African Americans and Latinos" *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 3.
- *Black Power*, Chapter 3
- Lisa C. Ikemoto (2000) "Traces of the master narrative in the story of African American/Korean American conflict: How we constructed "Los Angeles". In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds). *Critical race theory: The cutting edge* (3rd ed.) (pp. 399-407). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

****Optional****

- Karen Grigsby Bates, "Black Support of Villaraigosa and Cross-Racial Politics," *NPR* May 16, 2005

- Susy Buchanan, “Tensions Mounting between Blacks and Latinos Nationwide,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, Jul 27, 2005

Week 9 (May 28-30) Intersecting Identities: Race, Gender and Sexuality

- Claudine Gay and Katherine Tate. Doubly Bound: The Impact of Gender and Race on the Politics of Black Women. *Political Psychology*, Vol. 19, No. 1. (Mar., 1998), pp. 169-184.
- Kimberle Williams Crenshaw. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” in *Critical Race Theory: Key Writings that Formed the Movement*. Crenshaw, Peller, Thomas (editors) Free Press: 1995. pp. 357-383
- Cathy Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*. Chs. 1&2

Week 10 (Dec 5-7): Course Wrap-up & Concluding Thoughts

- Readings TBD