Race and Public Policy

PPAI 1701
Fall 2014
Tuesday, 4-6:30
Wilson Hall 204
Instructor: Steven White
Office: Taubman 003
Office Hours: Monday, 3-4 (and by appointment)
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Course Description

This seminar examines race and public policy in the United States. The course begins with conceptual and historical background: What are different ways of thinking about race and political representation in America? How has race been intertwined with public policy development in the 20th century? And how does the United States compare to other countries in this regard? We will then turn to case-by-case examinations of several contemporary public policy areas like policing and incarceration, labor organizing, and voting rights. This course draws primarily from political science, but also incorporates historical, sociological, and legal scholarship to critically assess race and public policy.

Assessment Criteria

50%: Final research paper (15-20 pages)
40%: Four response papers (2-3 pages each)
10%: Participation

This seminar requires you to write an original research paper, which constitutes 50 percent of your final grade. The topic is up to you, as long as it is related to race and public policy. We will discuss this in more detail in class. I encourage you to start thinking about your topic as early as possible and meet with me to discuss it. An ungraded, informal research proposal will be due midway through the semester to make sure you are on track. The final paper is due December 16 by 5 pm.

Another 40 percent of the grade comes from a a series of short response papers. You will each be assigned four weeks where you will write a 2-3 page paper highlighting key themes from the readings and raising points for discussion. These will be due Monday night via email so they can help inform our discussions the next day. While not nearly as detailed as the research paper, simply summarizing the readings is not sufficient. You must go beyond this and assess the claims the readings are making: Do you buy the arguments? What do they get right? What do they get wrong? Are there other perspectives that would be a useful complement?

Finally, class participation is a critical part of the seminar experience, and will account for 10 percent of your grade. I encourage you to come to class with questions about the readings and ideas for
discussion. I am genuinely interested in hearing your thoughts on the material! For those who feel uncomfortable or nervous speaking up in class, you will not be penalized for shyness and I encourage you to communicate your thoughts and questions on the readings to me via email and in office hours.

Books

This course requires you to purchase (or read in the library reserves) five books:


All other readings will be available online.

In general, the reading load is heavier in the first half of the class, then somewhat lighter in the second half of the class as you go about finishing your research papers. In some cases, it is essential that you pay attention to the detail of a particular reading (e.g., the empirical debate about the death penalty's efficacy and racial bias: Why exactly do different authors reach different conclusions?). In other cases, you should focus more on taking in the larger points, rather than getting lost in the historical specifics (e.g., Hirsch's history of race and housing in Chicago: this is not a history class, although historical perspective is an important part of thinking about public policy today). I will talk about this each week and help you learn to read different texts in different ways.

Academic Integrity

This class is focused on the development of research and writing skills. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated. Further information about the academic code at Brown can be found at:

[http://brown.edu/academics/college/degree/policies/academic-code](http://brown.edu/academics/college/degree/policies/academic-code)
Accommodations

Please get in touch if you need additional accommodations. More information about Student and Employee Accessibility Services can be found at:

http://www.brown.edu/campus-life/support/accessibility-services/students-disabilities

Schedule

September 9: Introduction

• Read the syllabus

September 16: Political Representation

• James Madison, Federalist 10


• Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens,” forthcoming in Perspectives on Politics (pp. 2-24)


September 23: Race and Political Representation

• Paul Frymer, Uneasy Alliances (pp. 3-48; 87-206)

September 30: 20th Century Social Policy Development

• Ira Katznelson, When Affirmative Action Was White

October 7: Race and Public Policy in Comparative Perspective

- Robert Lieberman, *Shaping Race Policy* (pp. 1-26; 99-173)

October 14: Housing


October 21: Policing

- Amy Lerman and Vesla Weaver, *Arresting Citizenship* (pp. 1-156; 231-260)

October 28: Death Penalty (*PAPER PROPOSALS ARE DUE IN CLASS*)


November 4: Voting and Political Participation

- Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote* (pp. 256-324)

- Voting Rights Act legislation text


- *Shelby County v. Holder* decision
November 11: Labor Unions

- *At the River I Stand* (documentary)

November 18: Affirmative Action

- Robert Lieberman, *Shaping Race Policy* (pp. 174-201)

November 25: Race and the Affordable Care Act

December 2: Reparations


December 9: Conclusion

- Robert Lieberman, *Shaping Race Policy* (pp. 202-224)

*FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE DECEMBER 16 BY 5 PM*