Racial and Ethnic Minorities in American Politics

GOVT 207
Fall 2016
MFW 1:10-2:00
Kirby Hall of Civil Rights 106
Instructor: Steven White
Office: Kirby Hall of Civil Rights 110
Office Hours: Monday 3-4, Wednesday 3-4, and by appointment
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Course Description

This course examines racial and ethnic minorities in American politics. We will examine struggles against racial violence, in the past and today, through a comparison of the NAACP campaign against lynching to the contemporary Black Lives Matter movement; the historical development of pan-ethnic categories like “Latino” and “Asian American,” and their significance in the 2016 election; how immigration from the Caribbean and Africa is complicating the meaning of black politics in the 21st century; how policy history informs present-day debates about affirmative action and reparations; and controversies over policing practices and their implications for American democracy.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

• Describe how issues of race and ethnicity have shaped American institutions, laws, and practices over time

• Understand and apply social scientific frameworks about race and ethnicity

• Describe the contours of recent American political history with attention to race and ethnicity

• Assess claims about race, ethnicity, and American politics using appropriate evidence
Assessment Criteria

The final grade will be a weighted average of the following:

10%: Attendance and class participation
10%: Weekly reflective Moodle posts (or emails, if you prefer)
15%: Essay #1 (3-5 pages)
20%: Essay #2 (5-7 pages)
20%: Essay #3 (5-7 pages)
25%: Research Paper (8-10 pages)

The class consists of four central writing assignments: three essays in response to prompts and one relatively short research paper on a topic of interest to you. The first essay is due September 23, the second is due November 4, and the third is due November 30. Students will also write a 8-10 page research paper, which is due December 16 via email.

Another 10 percent of your grade comes from a series of weekly reflective/analytical Moodle posts (or emails). These will be due the night before class via email so they can help inform our discussions the next day (since this class meets MWF, you can choose each week whether to submit your posts Sunday night, Tuesday night, or Thursday night). You should not merely summarize the readings. The goal of these posts is to raise topics or questions for discussion the next day. The best posts will be the ones that help us think about the topics in new and interesting ways.

Finally, attendance and class participation 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) the following books:

- Cristina Beltrán, *The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity*
- Megan Ming Francis, *Civil Rights and the Making of the Modern American State*
- Christina Greer, *Black Ethnics: Race, Immigration, and the Pursuit of the American Dream*
- Amy Lerman and Vesla Weaver, *Arresting Citizenship: The Democratic Consequences of American Crime Control*
- Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*

All other readings will be available on Moodle.
Academic Integrity

Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated. Further information about the academic code at Lafayette can be found at: https://facultyadvising.lafayette.edu/policies/academic-integrity/

Accommodations

Please get in touch with me within the first two weeks of the class if you need additional accommodations. More information can be found online at: http://attic.lafayette.edu/disability-services/

Federal Credit Hour Compliance Statement

The student work in this course is in full compliance with the federal definition of a four credit hour course. Please see the Registrar’s Office web site (http://registrar.lafayette.edu/additional-resources/cep-course-proposal/) for the full policy and practice statement.

Schedule

August 29: Introduction
   Read the syllabus

August 31: No class

September 2: No class

From the NAACP Anti-Lynching Campaign to Black Lives Matter

September 5: The Struggle Against Racial Violence: Introduction
   Francis, Ch. 1

September 7: The Struggle Against Racial Violence: Public Opinion
   Francis, Ch. 2

September 9: The Struggle Against Racial Violence: The Presidency
   Francis, Ch. 3

September 12: The Struggle Against Racial Violence: Congress
   Francis, Ch. 4
September 14: The Struggle Against Racial Violence: The Courts
Francis, Ch. 5

September 16: The Struggle Against Racial Violence: Conclusion
Francis, Ch. 6

Paper # 1 assigned

**Latino Identity and Politics**

September 19: The Meaning of “Latino Politics”
Beltrán, 3-20

September 21: The Chicano and Puerto Rican Movements
Beltrán, 21-55

September 23: Latinidad and Democratic Theory
Beltrán, 56-74

Paper #1 due

September 26: Latino Identification
Beltrán, 75-98

September 28: Making the “Latino Vote”
Beltrán, 76-99

September 30: Latinos and the Future of American Politics
• Selections from Matt Barreto and Gary Segura (Eds.), *Latino America: How America's Most Dynamic Population is Poised to Transform the Politics of the Nation*

**Asian American Politics**

October 3: Asian Americans and America's Racial Order
Wu, 1-9

October 5: Japanese Americans During World War II
Wu, 16-42
October 7: Chinese Americans During World War II
Wu, 43-71

October 10: No class, Fall break

October 12: Japanese Americans and the Politics of Military Service
Wu, 72-110

October 14: Japanese Americans Postwar
Wu, 150-180

October 17: Chinese Americans Postwar
Wu, 181-209

October 19: The Case of Hawai'i
Wu, 210-241

October 21: Asian Americans and Contemporary Electoral Politics
APIA Vote, "Inclusion, Not Exclusion: Spring 2016 Asian American Voter Survey"
Karthick Ramakrishnan, "How Asian Americans Became Democrats," The American Prospect

Immigration, Black Politics, and Unions

October 24: Theorizing “Black Elevated Minority Status”
Greer, 1-37

October 26: Black Immigrants and the Role of Unions
Greer, 38-79

October 28: Attitudes Towards Government Spending
Greer, 113-136

Paper #2 assigned

October 31: Labor Unions Then and Now
At the River We Stand (documentary)
November 2: Labor Unions Then and Now

*At the River We Stand* (documentary)


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**The 2016 Elections**

November 4: Voting Rights

*Shelby County v. Holder*

Paper #2 due

November 7: Election Discussion

November 9: Election Discussion

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**Policy History, Affirmative Action, and Reparations**

November 11: Race and Policy History

Katznelson, 1-52

November 14: Race and Policy History

Katznelson, 53-112

November 16: Race and Policy History

Katznelson, 113-171

November 18: Reparations?

Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic*

Paper # 3 assigned
Policing and Incarceration

November 21: Policing and Incarceration
   Lerman and Weaver, 1-57

November 23: No class, Thanksgiving break

November 25: No class, Thanksgiving break

November 28: Policing and Incarceration
   Lerman and Weaver, 58-111

November 30: Policing and Incarceration
   Lerman and Weaver, 112-156

   Paper #3 due

Topic(s) TBD Based on Student Interests

December 2
   Readings TBD

December 5
   Readings TBD

December 7
   Readings TBD

December 9
   Readings TBD

Research papers due December 16 (via email)