Syllabus for Race and American Politics

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Syllabus for Racial Minorities and American Politics

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Race is fundamental to American political life. Even in the era of our first African-American president, race (and attitudes about race) remains a potent predictor of political behavior. Issues involving race are central to political discourse, even when many Americans would like to deny this. As the non-white segment of the American population grows, with a particular increase in the numbers of Hispanic and Asian-American voters, race plays a greater role than ever before in our common life.

We will begin our course by examining the political context in which racial minority groups must operate within the United States. We will then examine the different (and shared) experiences of African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans. We will conclude by examining issues relevant to racial politics in the United States, such as immigration, affirmative action, education, and the presidency of Barack Obama.

READINGS:


Grading System:

Participation 10%

Discussion Papers 10%

Midterm Exam 20%
Final Exam 30%
Research Essay 30%
   Bibliography 5%
   Rough draft 10%
   Final draft 15%

Students will be required to submit four discussion papers (2-5 pages each) responding to a week’s readings. They will also be required to complete a 15-20 page research essay on a subject involving race in American life.

SCHEDULE FOR RESEARCH ESSAY:

Topic due: Week 1
One-page prospectus: Week 2
Annotated bibliography due: Week 3
Rough draft due: Week 9
Final draft due: Week 13
Readings

I. Racial and Ethnic Groups in the American Political System (Weeks 1-2)
   McClain and Stewart, chs. 1-3
   Tesler and Sears, chs. 1-4
   Garcia and Sanchez, ch. 1

II. African-Americans (Weeks 3-5)
   Historic Roots
   Walton and Smith, chs. 1-2
   Political Culture and Socialization
   Walton and Smith, chs. 3-4
   Political Parties, Social Movements and Interest Groups
   Walton and Smith, chs. 7-9
   Political Behavior and Public Opinion
   Walton and Smith, chs. 5-6, 10
   Tesler and Sears, ch. 5

MIDTERM: Week 6

III. Hispanics (Weeks 6-7)
   Historic Roots
   Garcia and Sanchez, chs. 2-3
   Political Culture and Socialization
   Garcia and Sanchez, chs. 4-5
   Political Parties, Social Movements and Interest Groups
   Garcia and Sanchez, ch. 8
   Political Behavior
   Garcia and Sanchez. 6-7

IV. Asian-Americans (Week 8)
   Historic Roots
   Aoki and Takeda, chs. 1-2
   Political Culture and Socialization
   Aoki and Takeda, chs. 5-9
   Political Parties, Social Movements and Interest Groups
   Aoki and Takeda, ch. 4
   Political Behavior and Public Opinion
   Aoki and Takeda, ch. 3

V. Political Institutions and Issues (Weeks 9-12)
   McClain and Stewart, ch. 4
   Aoki and Takeda, chs. 8-9
   Walton and Smith, chs. 11-14, 15
   Garcia and Sanchez, ch. 9-12
   Tesler and Sears, chs. 6-8

VI. Conclusion (Week 13)
   McClain and Stewart, ch. 5
   Garcia and Sanchez, chs. 13