

POLSCI 427 Race and the Shaping of American Politics
University of Michigan
Fall 2019

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Wednesdays, 1:00-4:00pm
2114 MLB

Race has surged powerfully through American politics, shaping the unfolding of politics over time. In this course, will examine race as an evolving ideology and system of power, exploring the ways in which race has infused the politics of labor, immigration, housing, welfare, crime, drugs, and policing. The course is organized (roughly) chronologically and we will begin with slavery, the dispossession of Native lands, and the racial dimensions of nation-building in the nineteenth century. The course continues with units on immigration and the “illegal alien”; the rise of the modern Republican Party and the use of race, welfare, and taxes as mechanisms of political realignment; the formation of concentrated poverty and the “underclass” as myth and symbol; the “war on drugs” and mass incarceration; and crime and policing.

Over the course of the semester, we will consider the following questions: How have racial categories been imbued with social meaning and how have those meanings changed over time? What is the relationship between racial meanings and political institutions? What is a “racial order” and how are allocations of resources and power shaped within racial orders? How have racial orders interacted with systems of class and gender? How does the examination of race in American politics yield insights about political behavior, party politics, and disputes over American identity?

Readings are drawn from multiple disciplines (political science, history, sociology, and law) and address theories of inequality, state-building, and American citizenship. The course is anchored by conceptual material in Week Two, and our discussion each week will return to that material.

Materials:

Joseph Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

All other materials are available on Canvas.

Please do the readings in the order listed on the syllabus!

Schedule:

Week 1 **Introduction**
Sept. 4

Week 2 **Conceptual Introduction to “Race” and Racism**
Sept. 11

“Do Races Differ? Not Really, Genes Show,” *New York Times*, August 22, 2000.

“Statement on Race” (1996), American Association of Physical Anthropologists, in Hammonds and Herzig, eds., *The Nature of Difference* (MIT Press, 2008), 319-321.

George Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2002), 1-13.

Ian Hacking, “Why Race Still Matters,” *Daedalus* 134 (2005), 102-116.

Barbara Fields, “Of Rogues and Geldings,” *American Historical Review* 108 (2003), 1397-1405.

Michael Dawson and Cathy Cohen, “Problems in the Study of the Politics of Race,” in Katznelson & Milner, eds., *Political Science: State of the Discipline* (2002), 488-510.

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (NY: Spiegel & Grau, 2015), 5-33.

Week 3 **Race and Slavery**
Sept. 18

“The Barbaric History of Sugar in America,” *New York Times*, August 19, 2019.

George Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind* (Wesleyan, 1971), 1-129.

Week 4 **“Free Soil,” Territorial Expansion, and Jim Crow**
Sept. 25

Fredrickson, *Black Image in the White Mind*, 130-164, 256-282 [optional: 228-255]

“A Freed Slave Became a Spy. Then She Took Down the Confederate White House,” *Washington Post*, March 24, 2019.

Paul Frymer, *Building an American Empire: The Era of Territorial and Political Expansion* (Princeton, 2017), 1-31.

“History of Lynching in the South Documents Nearly 4,000 Names,” *NY Times*, Feb. 10, 2015.

“Racist Origins of Felon Disenfranchisement,” *New York Times*, Nov. 18, 2014.

Week 5 **Race and Immigration**
Oct. 2

Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 1-90, 127-166.

“When Americans Lynched Mexicans,” *New York Times*, Feb. 20, 2015.

“The Time the U.S. Illegally Deported 1 Million Mexican Americans,” *Washington Post*, August 13, 2018.

Week 6 **Race and Immigration, continued.**

Oct. 9

Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 202-270.

Karan Mahajan, “The Two Asian Americas,” *New Yorker*, October 21, 2015.

“8 Million People are Working Illegally in the U.S. Here’s Why that’s Unlikely to Change,” *New York Times*, December 11, 2018.

“Is There a Connection Between Undocumented Immigrants and Crime?” *NY Times*, May 13, 2019.

Week 7 **Electoral Realignment and the “Racial Backlash” Thesis**

Oct. 16

Thomas Edsall and Mary Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics*. (New York: Norton, 1991), 3-31, 47-98, 137-153, 172-214.

Pete Hamill, “Revolt of the White, Lower Middle Class,” *New York Magazine*, April 4, 1969.

Week 8 **The “Backlash Thesis” critiqued.**

Oct. 23

Daniel Kryder and Robert Mickey, “The Politics of Backlash: The Consequences of a Metaphor” (draft manuscript, 2013), 1-7.

Thomas J. Sugrue, “Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964,” *Journal of American History* 82 (1995): 551-578.

Anthony Chen, “The Party of Lincoln and the Politics of State Fair Employment Practices Litigation in the North, 1945-1964,” *American Journal of Sociology* 112 (2007): 1713-37, only!

Week 9 **Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism?**

Oct. 30

Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 1-139, 155-162.

William Rusher, “Crossroads for the GOP,” *National Review*, February 12, 1963.

David Sears and P. J. Henry, “The Origins of Symbolic Racism,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 85 (2003): 259-275.

Week 10 **James Baldwin vs. William F. Buckley at Cambridge University (1965)**
Nov. 6

In-Class Video & discussion of the famous 1965 Baldwin-Buckley exchange.

A transcript is available on Canvas (Baldwin-Buckley Debate, *NY Times*, March 7, 1965).

Week 11 **Concentrated Poverty and the “Underclass”**
Nov. 13

William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Vintage, 1996), Introduction, 3-86.

Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, “The Contemporary Relief Debate,” in Fred Block et al, *The Mean Season: The Attack on the Welfare State* (New York, Pantheon, 1987), 45-84.

Adolph Reed Jr., “The ‘Underclass’ as Myth and Symbol: The Poverty of Discourse About Poverty” in *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Age* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 179-196.

“The Outsized Hold of the Word ‘Welfare’ on the Public Imagination,” *NY Times*, August 6, 2018.

“Overcoming Poverty’s Damage to Learning,” *New York Times*, April 18, 2015.

Week 12 **Mass Incarceration**
Nov. 20

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 1-19, 40-94, 180-208.

James Forman, Jr., “Racial Critiques of Mass Incarceration: Beyond the New Jim Crow,” 87 *New York University Law Review* 21 (2012).

Note: Two versions of the Forman article are on Canvas: The first version is shorter if you don’t want to print out the footnotes, which begin on p. 16. The second version is a page layout of the law review article; it’s easier to read on a screen but it’s longer.

Michael Javen Fortner, “The Real Roots of 1970s Drug Laws,” *New York Times*, Sept. 28, 2015.

Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Review of Michael Javen Fortner’s “Black Silent Majority”, *NY Times*, September 21, 2015.

Week 13 **No Class; Happy Thanksgiving!**
Nov. 27

Week 14 **Crime and Policing**
Dec. 4

“The Black Panthers, Revisited,” (video) *New York Times*, Jan. 22, 2015.

Kerner Commission Report (1968), 1, 5-13.

Jonathan Simon, *Governing Through Crime: How the War on Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear* (Oxford, 2007), 3-12, 89-110.

“Twelve Reasons to Worry About our Criminal Justice System from a Prominent Conservative Judge,” *Washington Post*, July 14, 2015.

“Police Killings Reveal Chasms Between Races,” *New York Times*, Dec. 5, 2014.

“The Videos That Are Putting Race and Policing into Sharp Relief,” NYT, April 19, 2018.

“How the Central Park Five Expose Fundamental Injustice in Our Legal System,” *Washington Post*, June 12, 2019.

Folder: Ferguson

“What Happened in Ferguson?” *New York Times*, August 10, 2015.

Fact Sheet on Ferguson (grand jury process, relevant law).

“Ferguson Police Tainted by Bias, Justice Department Says,” *NYTimes*, March 4, 2015.

“Ferguson Police, Newly Militarized,” *The Guardian*, Aug. 14, 2014.

Michelle Alexander, “Telling My Son about Ferguson,” *NYTimes*, Nov. 26 2014.

Folder: Eric Garner

Fact Sheet on Eric Garner (grand jury process, relevant law).

“Staten Island Man Died from Chokehold During Arrest, Autopsy Finds,” *NYT*, Aug. 1 2014.

“Officer Who Held Eric Garner in Chokehold is Fired,” *NYTimes*, August 19, 2019.

Folder: Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Laquan McDonald

“Police Gave Boy No Aid after Shooting in Cleveland,” *NYT* Jan. 8, 2015.

“Cleveland Police Cited for Abuse by Justice Department,” *NYT*, Dec. 5, 2014.

“Timeline of Freddie Gray’s Arrest and Charges Filed,” *NYT*, May 21, 2015.

“Chicago Officials Release Video in Shooting of Black Teenager,” *NYT*, Nov. 24, 2015.

Week 15 **Contemporary Issues**
Dec. 11

“15 Charts That Prove We’re Far from Post-Racial,” *Huffington Post*, July 2, 2014.

“Is Everyone a Little Bit Racist?” (interactive) *New York Times*, Aug. 27, 2014.

“Did Blacks Really Endorse the 1994 Crime Bill?” *New York Times*, April 13, 2016.

“Police Body Cameras: What Do You See?” (interactive) *New York Times*, April 2, 2016.

“The Disproportionate Risks of Driving While Black,” *New York Times*, Oct. 24 2015.

“Police Digitally Alter Mug Shot,” *Washington Post*, August 19, 2019.

“To Reform Police, Target Their Union Contracts,” *New York Times*, April 8, 2019.

“Echoes of the Superpredator,” *New York Times*, April 13, 2014.

“How America Tolerates Racism in Jury Selection,” *New York Times*, Oct. 30, 2015.
 Edsall, “Ferguson, Watts, and a Dream Deferred,” *New York Times*, August 19, 2014.
 “As Heroin Use by Whites Soars, Parents Urge Gentler Drug War,” *NYTimes*, Oct. 30, 2015.

 “\$15 Minimum Wage Saves Lives,” *New York Times*, Feb. 24, 2019
 “The Democrats’ Next Job: Bury Supply-Side Economics,” *NYTimes*, Nov. 2, 2018.
 “Debt and the Racial Wealth Gap,” *New York Times*, Dec. 31, 2015.
 “Redlining Home Loan Discrimination Re-Emerges as Concern,” *NYTimes*, Oct. 30, 2015.

 “Donald Trump and the Politics of Panic,” *Economist*, Dec. 12, 2015.
 “The Geography of Trumpism,” *New York Times*, March 12, 2016.
 “George Wallace and Trump Rallies,” *New York Times*, July 28, 2019.
 “Trump Says the U.S. is ‘Full,’” *New York Times*, April 9, 2019.
 Rubin, “Just How Bad Was Trump’s ‘Public Charge’ Move,” *Washington Post*, August 16, 2019.
 “There are Really Two White Working Classes,” *New York Times*, June 26, 2019.
 Gerson, “Ignoring Trump’s Racism Betrays Our Country’s Victims,” *Washington Post*, Aug. 1, 2019
 King, “I Used to Think America Would Age Out of Racism” *Washington Post*, May 10, 2019.
 “Liberal Blind Spots are Hiding the Truth about ‘Trump Country,’” *NYTimes*, July 19, 2018.
 “Many Suburban Men Stand With Trump,” *New York Times*, Oct. 13, 2018.
 “Obama-Trump Counties,” *Washington Post*, Nov. 9, 2016.
 “Why are Asian-Americans Such Loyal Democrats?” *New York Times*, Nov. 4, 2015.

 “Immigration and a Pennsylvania Coal Town,” *NYTimes*, March 31, 2013.
 “In Immigration Reform, Path to Citizenship Divides and Confuses,” *NYTimes*, April 3, 2013.
 Brooks, “A Little Reality on Immigration,” *NYTimes*, Feb. 19, 2016.
 “How America Got to ‘Zero Tolerance’ on Immigration,” *New York Times*, July 16, 2019.
 “How Stephen Miller Rode an Anti-Immigrant Wave to the White House,” *NYTimes*, Aug. 17, 2019
 Lieu, “I Have Served in the Air Force and in Congress, People Still Tell Me to ‘Go Back’ to China,”
Washington Post, July 16, 2019

Final Paper Due: Wednesday, Dec. 18, 1:00pm. Prompt: To Be Distributed

Course Policies (Read them!)

1. *Attendance*: Attendance at seminar sessions is **mandatory** and all students are expected to come to seminar sessions having completed the reading, i.e., prepared to be active participants.
2. *Absences*: Absences must be excused. Each unexcused absence will result in a 1/3 grade reduction of your final grade.
3. *Electronics*: Laptops and tablets are not permitted; phones must be silenced and put away.
4. *Late Policy*: Papers will reduced 1/3 of a grade for every 24 hours the paper is late.
5. *Requests for Extensions*: Requests for extensions must be made **48 hours** in advance of the due date/time.
6. Once a paper assignment *that you have signed up for* has been released, you are not permitted to request a change of weeks.

Grading

- Two essays (20%, 25%), ~6 pages each (1800-2000 words) on the weeks of your choosing; ONE of these choices must come from Weeks 3 through 6. Back-to-back weeks may not be chosen. Week 15 (Contemporary Issues) is ineligible.
 - Topics will be distributed the Friday before the chosen week.
 - Papers are due on the **Monday (at 12noon)** that follows the chosen week.
 - Submit your papers on Canvas.
 - Sources from outside the course are not permitted.
- Students may choose to re-write ONE of the two response papers using the comments provided. The rewrite is due Monday, Dec. 16 @ 10:00am on Canvas.
- One final paper (30%) ~7-8 pages (2600-2800 words), due Wednesday, Dec. 18 @ 1:00pm. The topic will be distributed, and it will involve applying the concept of a “racial order” to material from Weeks 7-15.
- Weekly responses to the readings and two unannounced quizzes (10%)

Each week, students will submit a written response paper (one page; double spaced) that engages some aspect of the week’s readings. These responses should not be summaries. The response paper should draw some kind of analytical connection between two readings: for example, the response paper might draw a connection between two of that week’s readings, or it might draw an analytical connection between a reading from that week and any previous week. Responses are graded on an 8-point scale. Eleven (11) responses will be submitted during the semester and the lowest score will be dropped. (Total points available: $10 \times 8 = 80$)

Note: You must submit a response paper on the weeks you’ve chosen for your essays. The content of your response paper must not track content in your essay!

There will be two (2) short, unannounced reading quizzes. These True/False quizzes are designed to test for basic comprehension of the articles. You may use reading notes for the quizzes, but not the readings themselves. Quizzes are graded on a 10-point scale. (Total points available: $2 \times 10 = 20$)

- Class participation (15%)

Here is where the quality of your contributions to class discussion counts. Contributions come in many forms: responsiveness to instructor queries; drawing connections between readings; and asking questions. Especially important is responsiveness to others (elaborating on the comments of others; seeking clarification, question-posing, etc.).

Papers are graded on a 100-point scale.

The Grades-to-Points Conversion is as follows:

A+	97	B+	87	C+	77	D+	67
A	93	B	83	C	73	D	63
A-	90	B-	80	C-	70	D-	60

The following sketch offers the rough principles on which papers will be graded:

A/A- Paper offers a clearly stated, interesting thesis that is supported with a sound argument and valid evidence. The paper shows that the writer has thought about the assignment and developed his/her ideas about it, instead of just offering minimal responses to the different components of the assignment. Extensive evidence is provided. Organization and writing are clear; grammar is flawless.

B/B+ Paper offers a clearly stated thesis that is supported, for the most part, with a sound argument and valid evidence. The paper stays on topic, considering all the relevant aspects of the assignment. Multiple sources of evidence are provided. Organization and writing are clear; grammar is solid.

B- Paper offers a thesis and attempts to support it with argument and evidence. However, the thesis is simplistic and/or the argument and evidence are weak. Paper uses only one source of evidence. Organization and writing are weak.

C-range Paper offers a minimal thesis and argument. Little evidence is provided. Organization and writing are seriously flawed.

D-range No Thesis, no argument, and/or no evidence. Organization is lacking; writing is very awkward, bordering on incoherent.

E Paper displays a fundamental lack of understanding of the material or a basic failure to address the assignment.

A Word on Grammar: Students often ask whether they will be “graded on grammar.” The answer is both no and yes. “No” in the sense that grammar alone is not a grading criterion. But “yes” in the sense that bad grammar and awkward style detract from the argument and presentation. Errors in grammar make it difficult for a reader to follow an argument and go through the text. You are responsible for understanding the rules governing Standard Written English.

Academic Integrity

All forms of scholastic dishonesty, which include plagiarism and cheating, are violations of academic integrity and the LSA Academic Conduct Code. Such acts will *automatically result in failure in the course*. The LSA Academic Judiciary Manual of Procedures specifies that a student may be expelled from the university for academic misconduct.

Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, the submission of a piece of work that is, in part or whole, not one’s own, and the submission of work in one course that you have submitted in another course. In addition, when writing papers, sources must be cited! Quotation marks must be used! Plagiarism – from the web or from any other source – and all other acts of scholastic dishonesty will be reported to the university. [Examples of academic misconduct](#)

Papers submitted in this course will be randomly submitted to plagiarism software, which serves as a check on the originality of work by searching both the web and internal databases.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with what counts as plagiarism and academic dishonesty. To learn more about U-M policies regarding scholarly dishonesty and its consequences, go to <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity>. Students with any questions or concerns are encouraged to contact the professor.

Student Health and Wellbeing

University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** at (734) 764-8312 and <https://caps.umich.edu/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult **University Health Service (UHS)** at (734) 764-8320 and <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs>, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources. For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; <http://ssd.umich.edu>) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Religious and Academic Conflicts

Although the University of Michigan, as an institution, does not observe religious holidays, it has long been the University's policy that every reasonable effort should be made to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities.

It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent. Such notice must be given by the drop/add deadline of the given term. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments shall be offered an opportunity to make up the work, without penalty, unless it can be demonstrated that a make-up opportunity would interfere unreasonably with the delivery of the course. Should disagreement arise over any aspect of this policy, the parties involved should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Final appeals will be resolved by the Provost.

Students Representing the University of Michigan

There may be instances when students must miss class due to their commitment to officially represent the University. These students may be involved in the performing arts, scientific or artistic endeavors, or intercollegiate athletics. Absence from classes while representing the University does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course missed during the period of absence. Students should provide reasonable notice for dates of anticipated absences and submit [an individualized class excuse form](#).