



Political Science 481; Spring, 2020
Race and Politics in the United States
Professor David Canon
M 3:30-5:25 p.m., Ingraham 223

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Course Description:

Racial politics is one of United States’ most enduring issues. With a history that is rooted in slavery and then the Civil War, race relations have never been entirely “normalized” despite the tremendous progress of the past two generations. Well-publicized public opinion surveys provided ample evidence of the racial divide in the early 21st century. For example, racially divergent assessments of the fairness and legitimacy of law enforcement and the judicial system routinely produce polls showing that African Americans are much more likely to believe that a black suspect is innocent, while whites are more likely to believe he or she is guilty. Barack Obama’s presidency raised many more questions about race and politics, prompting some to note an “end to black politics” while others argue that race is still very central to American politics. Donald Trump’s presidency has indicated that the racial and ethnic divide is alive and well. Appeals to “build the wall,” deport millions of Mexican Americans, keep Muslims out of the country, references to “inner city people” stealing elections, and his responses to white supremacists have deepened racial divisions.

This course examines the sources and policy implications of the racial divide by analyzing a range of issues. We will examine the historical background of race relations and the current policy debates, with a focus on trying to find common-ground solutions. We will examine issues such as affirmative action in the workplace and in higher education, differences in public opinion between white and black respondents, and issues concerning multi-racial and ethnic tensions, immigration, criminal justice, and health care. The goal of this seminar is to stimulate critical thinking on this important issue and get you think about race and politics in new ways.

Course Format

This class is offered for 3 credits with one two-hour seminar each week. It also carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities for about two hours out of classroom for each credit hour (that is, six additional hours a week).

Course Evaluation:

The grades for the course will be based on seminar attendance and participation (25%), five short (2-

page) reaction papers (5% each for 25%) a paper (25%), and a final exam (25%). The format of the exam will be a take-home exam of short essays. All reading material and seminar discussions will be fair game on the exam. I will pass out a handout on the paper assignment in a few weeks. Briefly, it will be a 10-12 page paper on a topic that interests you from the seminar.

Student Responsibilities

The class participation grade will be based on the following expectations:

- (1) That you will attend each seminar.
- (2) That you read the assigned readings before coming to seminar. I expect a critical reading of the material. You certainly will not agree with everything you are presented with in this class – indeed, I always try to present contrasting points of view on every topic.
- (3) That you come to class prepared to make a meaningful contribution to seminar discussion.
- (4) Each of you will be responsible for one class presentation of five minutes in length that will highlight a current event that is relevant for the topic we are discussing that week (if you can't find something on the specific topic, something generally related to race and politics would be fine).

The reaction papers should be critiques rather than summaries of the readings for that week. You will not be able to discuss all of the issues raised in a given week's readings, so pick three or four topics for each two-page paper. Challenge a claim made by an author, question their use of evidence, integrate and synthesize the various arguments presented by the authors and show how they relate to one another. These papers are good preparation for the seminar discussion, because this is the type of critical discussion we will be engaging in.

Learning Outcomes

Courses like this one that meet the Ethnic Studies Requirement (ESR) are expected to emphasize at least one of the following goals:

- Awareness of history's impact on the present
- Ability to recognize and question assumptions
- A consciousness of self and other

These learning outcomes are all intended to help students achieve a final outcome articulated by the faculty, to participate effectively in a multicultural society. Our class aims to help you achieve each of those learning outcomes.

Other Considerations

Your success in this class is important to us. All students are strongly encouraged to visit office hours if only to introduce yourself and share how the course is working for you. We expect the classroom to be an inclusive and welcoming environment where each student has the potential to learn. For more information on diversity and inclusion the University of Wisconsin see: <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>.

If you have a disability or circumstance that could affect your performance in class, please contact me early in the semester so that I can identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. The McBurney Center for Disability Services can provide official documentation of disabilities (for more

information see <https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>).

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes using someone else's words or ideas without proper attribution. I will report any cases of academic dishonesty to the Assistant Dean for Academic Integrity. Please make sure you are familiar with the policies outlined by the Dean of Students (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>).

Finally, electronic devices (laptops, phones, etc.) will not be allowed in class except for legitimate academic purposes. I will talk more about this on the first day of class.

Seminar Schedule and Reading Assignments (readings are available on the course Canvas site):

Part 1 – The Context of Race and Politics

January 27– Identity, Discrimination, and Privilege

We begin the examination of race and politics with some basic questions concerning racial identity and racial bias. To what extent are racial categories objective and to what extent are they historically and socially contingent? What is "implicit bias" and how can it be measured?

Introduction in *Whitewashing Race: The Myth of a Colorblind Society*.

Hua Hsu, "The End of White America," *The Atlantic*, January/February, 2009.

Emma Daly, "Are You Who You Think You Are?," *New York Times*, Dec. 12, 2005.

Huston Diehl, "We're All Colored," *The Massachusetts Review*, Summer, 2006.

Katy Waldman, "A Sociologist Examines the 'White Fragility' That Prevents White Americans from Confronting Racism," *The New Yorker*, July 23, 2018.

Theodore Kupfer, "What's the Matter with White Liberals?," *National Review*, November 29, 2018.

Nicholas Kristoff, "Our Racist, Sexist Selves," *New York Times*, April 6, 2008.

Keith Payne, Laura Niemi, John M. Doris, "How to Think about 'Implicit Bias'," *Scientific American*, March 27, 2018.

Brendan O'Neill, "College Codes Make 'Color Blindness' a Microaggression," *Reason*, August 5, 2015.

February 3 – Civil rights and the law

This discussion will focus on theories of racism, how the U.S. Census defines race, an overview of civil rights law, the idea of the "melting pot," and racial redistricting.

John F. Dovidio, Samuel L. Gaertner, and Adam R. Pearson, "Aversive Racism and Contemporary Bias," 2017, pp.267-76, 286-76.

Sowmiya Ashok, "The Rise of American Others," *The Atlantic*. August 27, 2016.

Richard Alba, "There's a big problem with how the census measures race," *Washington Post*, February 6, 2018.

Chapter 1 in *Whitewashing Race: The Myth of a Colorblind Society*.

Stephen Steinberg, "The Melting Pot and the Color Line," in *Rethinking the Color Line*, edited by Charles Gallagher, 5th ed., 2012, 321-26.

David Canon, "Racial Redistricting and Descriptive Representation," *The Oxford Handbook of Racial and Ethnic Politics in the United States*, Edited by David L. Leal, Taeku Lee, and Mark Sawyer, 2014.

Adam Liptak, "Justices Struggle with Role of Race in Redistricting," *New York Times*, December 5, 2016.
Kimberly Hermann, "Court provides clarification of redistricting challenges, but conflict on use of race remains," SCOTUSblog, May 23, 2017.

We won't discuss these readings, but I include them this week as resource/background reading:
V.O. Key, Chapter 25, "Southern Suffrage Restrictions," in *Southern Politics* (1949).
Abraham Lincoln, "The Perpetuation of our Political Institutions."
Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from the Birmingham Jail."
Congressional Research Service, "Federal Civil Rights Statutes: A Primer," November 21, 2012.
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Defining Discrimination" (2011).

February 10 – Affirmative action and Racial Discrimination

What is the nature of racial discrimination today? Does affirmative action provide a necessary remedy for past discrimination and help produce a path out of poverty? Or does affirmative action constitute unfair reverse discrimination while producing no real benefits for (or even harming) racial minorities? These questions continue to be debated on our nation's campuses as affirmative action in college admissions has been upheld by the Supreme Court. We also will discuss discrimination toward Arab Americans and President Trump's travel ban.

Marianee Bertrand and Senhil Mullainathan, "Are Emily and Brendan More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination," 2004.

Tanzina Vega, "Working while brown: What discrimination looks like now." CNN.com, November 25, 2015.

Moustafa Bayoumi, "How Does it Feel to Be a Problem? Being Young and Arab in America," in *Rethinking the Color Line*, edited by Charles Gallagher, 5th ed., 2012, 134-38.

Moustafa Bayoumi, "The Muslim ban ruling legitimates Trump's bigotry," *The Guardian*, June 27, 2018.

Deroy Murdock, "The Left's Response to SCOTUS Travel-Ban Ruling Is Typically Baseless," *National Review*, June 30, 2018.

Gail Heriot, "A 'Dubious Expediency': How Race-Preferential Admissions Policies on Campus Hurt Minority Students," Heritage Foundation, August 31, 2015.

Racial Justice Project, Amicus brief in *Fisher v. University of Texas, Austin*, October, 2015.

Casey Quinlan, "Why We Still Need Affirmative Action Policies In College Admissions," ThinkProgress, July 1, 2015.

Part 2 – Race and Politics at the Individual Level

February 17 – Public opinion and race

What is the nature of the racial divide in public opinion? How did racial considerations playing a role in Obama's 2008 campaign and how do perceptions of Obama influence one's opinions on other issues? How is racial resentment measured and what does it reveal about the racial divide? Is "color blindness" a legitimate ideal, or does it ignore the problem of racial bias?

Cindy D. Kam and Camille D. Burge, "Uncovering Reactions to the Racial Resentment Scale across the Racial Divide," *Journal of Politics*, 80:1 (September, 2017).

Lawrence Bobo, "Obama and the Burden of Race," Joint Center for Economic and Political Studies, 2009.
 Sasha Issenberg, "It All Comes Down to Race," *Slate.com*, June 1, 2012.
 Michael Tesler, "The Spillover of Racialization into Health Care: How President Obama Polarized Public Opinion by Racial Attitudes and Race," *American Journal of Political Science* 56:3 (July 2012): 690–704.
 Denise C. McAllister, "Conservatives' 'Racism' isn't What You Think it is," *The Federalist.com*, August 25, 2016.
 Conor Friedersdorf, "The Left's Attack on Color-Blindness Goes Too Far," *The Atlantic*, September, 2015.
 Adia Harvey Wingfield, "Color-Blindness Is Counterproductive," *The Atlantic*, September, 2015.
 Michael I. Norton and Evan Apfelbaum, "The Costs of Racial 'Color Blindness'," *Harvard Business Review*, July–August 2013.

February 24 – Elections, political parties, and race

This seminar will examine the racial divide in public opinion discussed in the previous week and examine how these differences play out in partisan politics. We will examine the basic contours of the racial divide in electoral politics, whether the Democratic party is an adequate vehicle for representing racial interests, the prevalence of racism, and various issues concerning race and the 2016 presidential election.

Paul Frymer, "Race, Parties and Democratic Inclusion," in *The Politics of Democratic Inclusion* (2005).
 Michael Tesler, "The Return of Old-Fashioned Racism to White Americans' Partisan Preferences in the Early Obama Era," *Journal of Politics*, January 2013.
 Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, "How Racist Are We? Ask Google," *New York Times*, June 9, 2012.
 Gene Dattel, "Beyond Black and White in the Mississippi Delta," *New York Times*, December 1, 2012.
 Kevin O'Leary, "Trump and the Racial Politics of the South," June 27, 2016, *American Prospect*.
 Karthick Ramakrishnan, "How Asian Americans Became Democrats" July 26, 2016, *American Prospect*.
 John Sides, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck, "How Trump Lost and Won," *Journal of Democracy*, 28:2 (April 2017).
 Marc Hooghe and Ruth Dassonneville, "Explaining the Trump Vote: The Effect of Racist Resentment and Anti-Immigrant Sentiments," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, July, 2018.
 Nazita Lajevardi and Marisa Abrajano, "How Negative Sentiment toward Muslim Americans Predicts Support for Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election," *Journal of Politics*, 81:1 (December, 2018).

Part 3 – Race and Politics in Institutions

March 2 – The Obama Presidency

The election of Barack Obama as president in 2008 was a historical moment. But what does it mean for race and politics in the U.S.? An end to black politics, as Matt Bai suggests? How did Obama fare in attempting to pursue various racial issues while not alienating whites? What is the critique of Obama from the left and from the right? What does the Trump presidency mean for Obama's legacy?

Matt Bai, "Is Obama the End of Black Politics?" *New York Times*, August 10, 2008.
 Victor Davis Hanson, "Obama's Racial Politics," *National Review*, January 18, 2012.
 Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Fear of a Black President," *The Atlantic*, September, 2012.

Charles C. W. Cooke, "Obama's Schizophrenic Politics," *National Review*, January 13, 2017.
Michael D. Shear and Yamiche Alcindor, "Jolted by Deaths, Obama Found His Voice on Race: Tensions across the country prompted the president to abandon his early reticence on race again and again." *New York Times*, January 14, 2017.
Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, "Barack Obama's original sin: America's post-racial illusion," *The Guardian*, January 13, 2017.
David Remnick, "Obama Reckons with a Trump Presidency," *New Yorker*, November 28, 2016.

March 9 – Voting Rights

Changes in the laws concerning the administration of elections has become a area of partisan battles. To what extent have these "voting wars" limited the ability of people to vote? Are these laws a legitimate concern with voter fraud, or attempts at voter suppression? What is the racial motivation of these efforts? Should former felons be allowed to vote?

Carl Bialik, "Counting Voter Fraud," *Wall Street Journal*, September 1, 2012.
Jack Kelly, "Why Americans Support Voter ID Laws," *RealClearPolitics.com*, December 27, 2011.
Heritage Foundation, "Does Your Vote Count?", 2016.
Nico Lang, "The real reason black voters didn't turn out for Hillary Clinton — and how to fix it," *Salon.com*, November 10, 2016.
Alice Miranda Ollstein, "Republicans were wildly successful at suppressing voters in 2016," *Think Progress*, November 15, 2016.
Vann R. Newkirk II, "Voter-Fraud Laws Are All About Race," *The Atlantic*, August 2, 2016.
Zoltan Hajnal, John Kuk, and Nazita Lajevardi, "We All Agree: Strict Voter ID Laws Disproportionately Burden Minorities," *Journal of Politics*, 80:3 (April, 2018).
The Sentencing Project, "Felony Disenfranchisement: A Primer," July, 2018.
David Canon, "Testimony before the Senate Judiciary committee on the renewal of the Voting Rights Act, June 2006.
Jaime Fuller, "How has voting changed since *Shelby County v. Holder?*," *Washington Post*, July 7, 2014.

No class on March 16 -- have a great spring break!

Part 4 – Race and Politics in Policy

March 23 – Immigration and Latino Politics

Immigration reform has been one of the hot issues of the past several years (and figured prominently in the 2016 presidential election). From the perspective of broader issues of race and politics, the issue raises some of the fundamental questions addressed in the class concerning discrimination and racial identity. It also raises difficult issues of cross-racial coalitions and tensions. We will discuss President Obama's plan for comprehensive immigration reform, which was not taken up by the U.S. House and President Trump's plan.

Michael Jones-Correa, "Bringing Outsiders In: Questions of Immigration Incorporation," in *The Politics of Democratic Inclusion*, edited by Christina Wolbrecht and Rodney Hero, 2005, pp. 75-101.
Samuel Huntington, "One Nation, Out Of Many," *The American Enterprise*, Sep 2004.
Louis Menand, "Patriot Games" (book review), *The New Yorker*, May 17, 2004.
Barack Obama, "Building a 21st Century Immigration System," May, 2011.

FAIR, “Seven Principles of True Comprehensive Immigration Reform,” fairus.org.
Donald Trump, “Immigration Reform that will Make American Great Again,” DonaldJTrump.com, 2016.
Lawrence B Lindsey, “Can Immigration Reform Work?,” *The Weekly Standard*, May 22, 2006.
Barack Obama, “Remarks on Immigration,” June 15, 2012.
Peter King and Tom Suozzi, “A Grand Compromise on Immigration,” *New York Times*, March 24, 2019.

March 30 – Family, Poverty, and Health

Some of the most complicated questions concerning race are tied up in questions of poverty and health outcomes. To what extent are the problems faced by racial minorities due to discrimination and structural obstacles and to what extent should responsibility be placed on individuals?

Chapter 2, “The Bankruptcy of Virtuous Markets: Racial Inequality, Poverty, and ‘Individual Failure’,” in *Whitewashing Race*.

Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Enduring Solidarity of Whiteness,” *The Atlantic*, February 8, 2016.

John Commins, “Physicians' Unconscious Racial Bias Could Impair Health Outcomes,” *Health Leaders Media*, April 2, 2012.

Mary Carmichael, “The Great Divide: Why racial disparities in health care persist,” *Newsweek*, February 15, 2010.

Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton, “How others' (and our) attitudes about race affect our health,” *The Berkeley Blog*, <http://blogs.berkeley.edu/author/rmendoza-denton/>, August 9, 2012.

Ziad Obermeyer, Brian Powers, Christine Vogeli and Sendhil Mullainathan, “Dissecting racial bias in an algorithm used to manage the health of populations,” *Science*, October 25, 2019.

Rachel Estabrook, “There is more to fixing food deserts than building grocery stores,” *National Public Radio*, March 20, 2012.

Rachel R. Hardeman, Eduardo M. Medina, and Katy B. Kozhimannil, “Structural Racism and Supporting Black Lives — The Role of Health Professionals,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, December 1, 2016.

Jonathan Metzl, “Structural Competency Meets Structural Racism,” *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*, September, 2014.

April 6 – Residential Segregation, Housing Discrimination

Most American cities are still very segregated by race. Is this because of discrimination, or personal choice? What implications does segregation have for larger questions of race relations?

National Fair Housing Alliance, “2018 Fair Housing Trends Report,” April, 2018, pp. 6-7,31-40,47-48,61-67.

Matthew Desmond, “How Home Ownership Became the Engine of Economic Inequality,” *New York Times*, May 9, 2017.

Gregory D. Squires, “HMDA Disparities or Discrimination?” *American Banker*. September, 27, 2005.

Matthew Desmond, “Forced Out: For Many Poor Americans, Eviction Never Ends,” *New Yorker*, February 8&15, 2016.

Kyle Vanhemert, “The Best Map Ever Made of America’s Racial Segregation,” *Wired*, August 26, 2013. Here is a link to the interactive map. Compare your home town to Madison, Milwaukee, and a few other cities: <https://demographics.virginia.edu/DotMap/index.html>.

Kelefa Sanneh, “Is Gentrification Really a Problem?” *New Yorker*, July 11&18, 2016.

"How Segregation Destroys Black Wealth," *New York Times*, September 15, 2015.
Jacob S. Rugh, "Vanishing wealth, vanishing votes? Latino homeownership and the 2016 election in Florida," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, May, 2019.

April 13 – Crime and policing

Racial disparities in policing have received a great deal of attention in the law few years with the high-profile killing of unarmed black men by police and protests from the Black Lives Matter movement. What are the structural and social bases for these patterns? What impact does the jury system have on racial bias in criminal justice?

Radley Balko, "There's overwhelming evidence that the criminal-justice system is racist. Here's the proof," *Washington Post*, September 18, 2018.

United States Sentencing Commission, "Demographic Differences in Sentencing: An Update to the 2012 Booker Report," November, 2017, pp.1-17.

Chris Rickert, "Racially tinged confrontation ends in broken nose, remorse — and lingering sense of violation for former Badgers star Trent Jackson," *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 11, 2018.

Jelani Cobb, "The Matter of Black Lives," *New Yorker*, March 14, 2016.

Barbara Reynolds, "I Support BLM's Cause, But not its Approach," *Washington Post*, August 24, 2015.

Bruce Western, "Race, Crime, and Punishment," Cato Institute, March 18, 2009.

Kami Chavis, "The Supreme Court Didn't Fix Racist Jury Selection," *The Nation*, May 31, 2016.

Andrew Cohen, "Racial Bias in Death Penalty Cases," *The Atlantic*, April 23, 2012.

Harry Levine, "How Police and Politicians Profit by Destroying the Lives of Young Black People for Tiny Amounts of Pot," *The Nation*, November 14, 2013.

John Gramlich, "Black and White Officers See Many Key Aspects of Policing Differently," Pew Research Center, January 12, 2017.

April 20 – Education policy and segregation in schools

Racial politics has shifted from a politics of confrontation (as in the 1960s) to a politics of avoidance (simply moving apart). This has been evident in residential segregation but also in public education. What implications does this have for the quality of education in the inner cities? The other central debate concerns the racial gap in academic achievement and how best to address it. Are KIPP schools part of the answer?

National Center for Education Statistics, "Racial/Ethnic Enrollment in Public Schools," 2016.

Claude M Steele, "Not Just a Test," *The Nation*, May 3, 2004.

Paul Tough, "What It Takes To Make a Student," *The New York Times Magazine*, November 26, 2006.

Christina Clark Tuttle, Bing-ru Teh, Ira Nichols-Barrer, Brian P. Gill, Philip Gleason, "Student Characteristics and Achievement in 22 KIPP Middle Schools," Mathematica Policy Research, Final Report, June 2010.

Jeffrey Aaron Snyder, "Teaching Kids 'Grit' is All the Rage. Here's What's Wrong With It," *The New Republic*, May 6, 2014.

Ira Nichols-Barrer, et. al., "Does Student Attrition Explain KIPP's Success?," *Education Next*, Fall, 2014.

Robert Pondiscio, "Mr. P Learns His Lesson," *Business Week*, December 17, 2007.

Rachel M. Cohen, "An Unusual Idea for Fixing School Segregation: What if the Answer Lies in Changing How College Admissions Work?" *The Atlantic*, May 23, 2018.

Paul Tough, "What College Admissions Offices Really Want," *New York Times*, September 10, 2019.
Nate Bowling, "The Conversation I'm Tired of Not Having," January 24, 2016.

April 27 – Various Issues and Concluding Thoughts

Our last seminar will go back to some of the big questions that we started with. Are color-blind policies possible or desirable? How can the problems of race best be addressed by the political system and by our society? What do you think of Barack Obama's "more perfect Union"? What are new research questions concerning race that political science should be engaged in?

David Leonhardt and Ian Prasad Philbrick, "Donald Trump's Racism: The Definitive List," *The New York Times*, January 15, 2018.

Deroy Murdock, "On Race and the Right, the *Washington Post* Gets it Wrong," *Washington Post*, August 24, 2018.

Barack Obama, "A More Perfect Union," Philadelphia, PA, March 18, 2008.

Jonathan Mahler, "G.M., Detroit and the Fall of the Black Middle Class," *New York Times*, June 28, 2009.

Meizhe Lui, et al. "Policy Steps Toward Closing the Gap," in *Rethinking the Color Line*, edited by Charles Gallagher, 5th ed., 2012, 393-400.

Charles Gallagher, "Ten Things You can Do to Improve Race Relations," in *Rethinking the Color Line*, edited by Charles Gallagher, 5th ed., 2012, 400-402.

Thomas Sowell, "Is Personal Responsibility Obsolete?," June 7, 2016, Townhall.com.

David French, "In America, You're Your Own Greatest Oppressor," *National Review*, September 2, 2016.

Ta-Nehisi Coates, "What O.J. Simpson Means to Me," *The Atlantic*, October, 2016.

Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President at Howard University Commencement Ceremony
Howard University," May 07, 2016.

*** The final exam will be a take-home exam due on May 6th ***