

## ***PS 210 – Race and Ethnicity in U.S. Politics***

**Spring Semester: 2010**

**PS 203 CRN 33620**

**Room: HU 213**

**Time: MW 1 – 2:15**

**3 credits**

**Professor: Dr. Zook**

**Office: HU 263**

**Office Hours: MW (12:10-12:55); TR (1:10-1:55); by appointment.**

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### **Important Dates**

**1<sup>st</sup> Fieldwork Assignment due – M, February 22**

**Midterm Exam – W, March 10**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Fieldwork Assignment due – M, March 29**

**Research Paper due – M, April 12**

**Final exam – W, May 12 (12:30-2:30)**

### **Course Description**

Examines the role of race/ethnicity in the American political system. Themes discussed include the social construction of race; the concept of racial hierarchy; racial/ethnic origins of political institutions (e.g. the Constitution); minority representation; the relationship among race, racism, and public/foreign policy; immigration and citizenship; and the role of race in campaigns. (BSSD[M]) Assessment levels: EN 101/101A, RD 120. Three hours each week.

### **Introduction to Course**

*“The people had come in hordes; and old Durham had squeezed them tighter and tighter, speeding them up and grinding them to pieces and sending for new ones. The Poles, who had come by tens of thousands, had been driven to the wall by the Lithuanians, and now the Lithuanians were giving way to the Slovaks. Who there was poorer and more miserable than the Slovaks, Grandmother Majauszkiene had no idea, but the packers would find them, never fear.... They were like rats in a trap, that was the truth; and more of them were piling in every day.” – The Jungle, by Upton Sinclair*

Are ethnic (or racial) identities based on inherent differences or the manipulations of external forces seeking to take advantage of the resulting tensions? In The Jungle, employers encourage ethnic strife in order to distract workers from focusing on class tensions. To what extent has ethnic or racial conflict proved beneficial to political actors in the United States? Will a post-racial society simply result in other types of conflict such as class warfare coming to the forefront? Can a post-racial political system ever be a reality? These questions and many more will be discussed as we delve into the myths and realities of race and ethnicity in U.S. politics.

### **Office Hours**

Office hours are open-door, first-come, first-served. If my hours are inconvenient for you, please don't hesitate to schedule another appointment time with me.

### **Course Objectives**

This course will lay the theoretical and conceptual groundwork for analyzing issues of race, ethnicity, and U.S. politics. Students will have the opportunity to debate these issues using analysis of theories derived from researching the goals and positions of various political actors. In addition, students will differentiate between potential solutions to contemporary political issues concerning race and ethnicity.

### **Study Helps**

A review study-guide will be distributed in class during the week before each exam. In addition, if the class so desires, I would be willing to schedule an extra "last-minute" review session in the week prior to each exam.

### **Readings**

The readings for this course are necessary in order to participate in class discussions, incorporate concepts into written assignments, and achieve success on exams. Readings should be completed prior to the date where they are listed at the end of this syllabus. The following books (available in the bookstore) are required for this course:

- Sowell, Thomas. Black Rednecks and White Liberals. San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2005.
- King, Jr., Martin Luther. Why We Can't Wait. Signet Books, 2000.

The following readings (available online) are required for this course:

- AIM. "Trail of Broken Treaties." 1972.
- Black Panther Party. "Black Panther Party Platform and Program." 1966.
- Chavez, Cesar. "The Last Shall Be First." 1984.
- King, Jr., Martin Luther. "I Have a Dream." 1963.
- King, Jr., Martin Luther. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." 1963.
- X, Malcolm. "The Ballot or the Bullet."

Other readings will be announced throughout the course.

### **Grading**

Grading will be as follows:

<b>Participation</b>	<b>50 points</b>
<b>Memos</b>	<b>50 points</b>
<b>Midterm Exam</b>	<b>100 points</b>
<b>Fieldwork Assignments</b>	<b>100 points</b>
<b>Research Paper</b>	<b>100 points</b>
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>100 points</b>

Letter grades will be distributed as follows:

<b>451 – 500</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>401 – 450</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>351 – 400</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>301 – 350</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>0 – 300</b>	<b>F</b>

### **Policies**

- *Cell phones, recording equipment, and lap-tops.* A letter from Disability Support Services is needed prior to use. Unauthorized usage of these devices is not permitted in the classroom and will result in a reduction in your final participation grade.
- *Academic dishonesty.* Cheating or plagiarism on a paper, project, or exam will result in an F for that exercise. Cheating and plagiarism consist of helping or receiving help from another student during an exam, having someone else write any part of your papers or exam, using any form of notes during an exam, or failing to acknowledge statements or quotes from another author. In addition, you should cite a source whenever using a paraphrase, fact, or statistic, that is not common knowledge. When in doubt, it's always best to include a citation.
- *Lateness.* Although late assignments will be accepted, be aware that your grade on the late paper will decrease by 5 points for every 24-hour period after the class in which it is due. If you miss an exam for a valid reason, you will have the opportunity to make it up at another time. The make-up exam will be more difficult, however. Be sure to e-mail me in advance.
- *Disability.* Any student who may need an accommodation due to a disability, please make an appointment to see the professor during office hours. A letter from Disability Support Services authorizing your accommodations will be needed.

### **Participation and attendance**

General class participation counts for 50 points of your grade. This segment of the grade provides the instructor with the opportunity to reward those students who exhibit effort and a strong interest in the course by attending class, participating in class, coming to office hours, etc. Lack of attendance and late arrivals to class will be taken into consideration when determining this participation grade. In order to do well on the exams, attendance is strongly urged. Participation in class discussions should involve respectful consideration of the views of others. Showing respect for the professor and other students will prevent significant reduction of the participation grade.

### **Memos**

At some point during each class, you will be asked to write a memo on a topic I will provide linked to the readings. These memos will count for up to 50 points of your final grade and cannot be made up. Therefore, attendance and completion of the readings are important for this segment of the grade.

### **Fieldwork assignments**

Two fieldwork assignments will be announced in class (50 points each; 100 points total). These essays, based on out-of-class social science observations, must be at least 3 pages double-spaced.

### **Exams**

There are two exams. Each exam counts for 100 points. The exams may include a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

### **Research Paper**

The research paper is worth 100 points and should be at least 5-7 double-spaced pages (1250-1750 words) plus a bibliography. At least 3 scholarly published works must be used in compiling this paper. In addition, you may use credible newspaper and internet sources (not Wikipedia). Address the following components in your research:

- Choose a public policy issue change that has been advocated by members of one or more ethnic/racial groups. Discuss specific advocates such as individuals, interest groups, and/or social movements that have advocated for this change. How did they justify this policy shift? Show how ethnic/racial identities played a role in their advocacy.
- Analyze the willingness of political decision-makers from other ethnic/racial groups to adopt this policy change. What arguments were used to oppose/support this change? To what degree was the race/ethnicity of the advocates a factor in the decision of the larger society to adopt/reject this political change?
- Discuss the consequences of this policy issue advocacy. What types of tactics were used to press for change? Analyze the effectiveness of these political tactics and speculate on whether other tactics would have been more or less effective. Conclude with your own creative proposal for a more effective to bridge the ethnic or racial gaps between the advocates and the decision-makers.

## **Class Schedule: Topics and Assignments**

**MW, January 25 and 27 – Introduction to course**

**MW, February 1 and 3 – Social construction of race/ethnicity**

- Read Sowell (Chapter 1)

**MW, February 8 and 10 – Racism/ethnocentrism**

- Read Sowell (Chapter 2)

**MW, February 15 and 17 – Racial and ethnic discrimination**

- Read Sowell (Chapter 3)

**MW, February 22 and 24 – Militant resistance to racial/ethnic inequality**

- Read Black Panther Party. (“Black Panther Party Platform and Program.”)
- **1st Fieldwork Assignment due February 22**

**MW, March 1 and 3 – Racial and ethnic civil rights movements**

- Read King (“I Have a Dream”)

**M, March 8 – Racial and ethnic civil rights movements (continued)**

**W, March 10 – Midterm exam**

**MW, March 15 and 17 – NO CLASS; SPRING BREAK**

**MW, March 22 and 24 - TBA**

**MW, March 29 and 31 – Race, ethnicity, and religion in U.S. politics**

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Fieldwork Assignment due March 29**
- Read King (“Letter From a Birmingham Jail”)

**MW, April 5 and 7 – Race and public policy**

- Read King (Why We Can't Wait)
- Read AIM (“Trail of Broken Treaties.”)

**MW, April 12 and 14 – Race and ethnicity in voting trends**

- Read Malcolm X (“Ballot or the Bullet”)
- Read Chavez (“The Last Shall Be First”)
- **Research paper due April 12**

**MW, April 19 and 21 – Race and ethnicity in urban politics**

- Read Sowell (Chapter 5)

**MW, April 26 and 28 – Ethnic minorities as candidates/office-holders**

## **MW, May 3 and 5 – Future of race relations**

- Read Sowell (Chapter 6)

## **W, May 12 – Exam (12:30-2:30)**

### **Standards of College Behavior (Student Code of Conduct) – 42001CP – p. 4**

The following statement appears in College offices and labs to remind students of the behavior standards and process adopted by the College. All full and part-time faculty are strongly encouraged to include the statement in their syllabi.

- A. The College seeks to provide an environment where discussion and expression of all views relevant to the subject matter of the class are recognized as necessary to the educational process.
- B. However, students do not have the right to interfere with the freedom of the faculty to teach or the rights of other students to learn, nor do they have the right to interfere with the ability of staff to provide services to any student.
- C. Faculty and staff set the standards of behavior that are within the guidelines and spirit of the Student Code of Conduct or other College policies for classrooms, events, offices, and areas, by announcing or posting these standards early in the semester.
- D. If a student behaves disruptively in the classroom, an event, an office, or an area after the instructor or staff member has explained the unacceptability of such conduct and the consequences that will result; the student may be asked to leave that classroom, event, office, or area for the remainder of the day. This does not restrict the student's right to attend other scheduled classes or appointments.
- E. If the student does not leave, the faculty or staff member may request the assistance of Security.
- F. The faculty or staff member and the student are expected to meet to resolve the issue before the next class session.
- G. The Dean of Student Development or designated instructional Dean of Workforce Development and Continuing Education should be informed verbally or via email about any situation that violates the Student Code of Conduct.
- H. If, after a review of the situation and a restatement of the expected behaviors, the student refuses to comply with the stated standards of conduct required, then the faculty or staff member should refer the issue in writing to the dean of student development for action under the Student Code of Conduct.
- I. The faculty or staff member will provide the Dean of Student Development with a written summary of the facts or conduct on which the referral is based, which must include the date, time, place, and a description of the incident.

## **Weather Issue Policies**

- *Weather Emergency*  
Campus Facilities staff and the Office of Safety & Security will monitor media stations for updated storm information and the issuance of a National Weather Service WATCH (severe storm possible in our area) or WARNING (severe storm sighted and may be headed our way). If weather WATCH is issued, a "[Code Yellow](#)" alert will be issued. If weather WARNING is issued, a "[Code Red](#)" alert will be issued. The Emergency Response Teams will notify the campus community and off-campus locations.
- *Winter Weather Emergency (snow, ice)*  
Collegewide Weather Manager will monitor conditions that may disrupt College activities. If conditions warrant, the Executive Vice President for Administrative & Fiscal Services will make the final decision on any weather closings. The College Director of Communications will notify the media of any closings.

## **E-Mail Policy**

Student e-mail (montgomerycollege.edu) is an official means of communication for the College. It is expected that you check your student e-mail regularly and frequently, as you are responsible for information and announcements that will be sent to you from the College. For this class, student e-mail will be used only for situations where timing is essential. Most information is discussed in class and all assignments will be turned in as hard copy during regular class times. If you contact the professor through e-mail, you must use your student e-mail account (rather than a yahoo account) so that you can be recognized as a student.