

SocStd 98SE

Race and ethnicity in the United States and its impact on public policy

Spring 2022
Wednesdays, 9:45-11:45 am

Dr. Sarah James

Office: CGIS S223

Email: sarahjames@g.harvard.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays 1-3pm (virtual at <https://harvard.zoom.us/j/9232449589>) & Wednesdays 2:45-4:00pm (in person in CGIS cafe). You can sign up for office hours at bit.ly/SEJCal

Course website: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/89143>

Racial discord dominates many contemporary explanations for recent political and sociological developments in the United States. The scars of slavery, the Civil War, failed reparations, and resistance to the Civil Rights movement are common knowledge. However, the story of race in America is much more complicated, particularly when examined in conjunction with the haves and have-nots of political power. In the first half of the course, we will move beyond the headlines of recent racial discord by combining works from history, psychology, sociology, and political science to better understand the history of race in America. The second half of the course focuses on the history of key policy areas and the institutions that resulted from them: immigration, education, healthcare, voting rights, statues and symbols, and the carceral state and policing. We will explore how race and racism has influenced the development of policies within each of these policy areas, with an eye to evaluating how such policies can be made more equitable. Though we will read some scholarship from political theory to ground our thinking about race and politics, we will primarily rely on readings from the empirical social sciences. We will focus our efforts on developing coherent, empirically backed arguments in response to the following essential questions:

- What is race and racism? When and why did these concepts emerge?
- How has the role of race and racism in American politics changed over time?
- What role has race played in the development of American politics and American political institutions?
- How have different policy areas contributed to or addressed racial inequality?
- How might different policy areas impact racial equality in the future?

Our purpose is two-fold: first, we will engage in respectful, evidence-based, and moving discussion about race, power, and politics to develop answers to our essential questions (see below). Second, we will learn to develop a research question, craft theoretically grounded hypotheses, choose an appropriate methodology and research design, and write coherently in the social sciences. This is intended as preparation for writing a senior thesis.

We will begin each class with discussion and application of the readings, followed by a brief break, and conclude each day with a mini lesson on how to conduct research and write coherently for social scientists. This time may also include workshopping and peer review opportunities for students to share challenges and successes and get feedback on their progress.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

There are two types of assignments in this course: **reflections on the readings** each week and a **final project**, which can be either a policy analysis and proposal or a research style seminar paper.

Reading reflections are worth 40% of the overall grade and the various research assignments are worth 60%. For the reading reflections, students may decide what combination of short and long reflections they would like to complete such that the total possible points they have earned adds up to 40 points (i.e., 8 short reflections *or* 4 long reflections *or* 4 short reflections and 2 long reflections). **Reading reflections are due by 8am the day we have class.**

Students may also choose how to earn the other 60% from their **final research paper**: through meeting more or fewer incremental deadlines. We will spend a portion of most sessions learning about the different aspects of conducting social science research and writing about our findings. More detailed descriptions of each assignment and the rubrics I will use to score them are available on Canvas and will be discussed in class.

Assignment Type	Options	Value
Reading reflections (total points should amount to 40)	Short reflection 2-3 sentence summary of each reading AND 2-3 questions or comments about themes or confusions across the readings.	5% each
	In-depth reflection 3-4 page reflection that identifies key themes from the readings, articulating how the readings either connect or contradict one another and other ideas from the course	10% each
Research or Policy Paper (see rubric for grading criteria)	More structured, more feedback	
	Research question paper (due 2/25/22)	5 %
	Contextualization paper (due 3/25/22)	10 %
	First draft (due no later than 4/22/22)	15 %
	Final draft (due date dependent on exam schedule)	30 %
	More autonomy, fewer feedback opportunities	
Research question paper (due 2/25/22)	10 %	
Contextualization paper (due no later than 3/25/22)	15 %	
Final draft (due date dependent on exam schedule)	35 %	

Late assignments

All students may have an **automatic 24-hour extension on any final project assignment**. Students should let me know before the stated deadline if they tend to take advantage of the extension (note this is not intended to be a request for permission to use the extension—you should just assume you have the extension if you need it). This is intended to give you the flexibility to manage your own time and any unexpected challenges that might arise throughout the semester. Any extensions beyond the 24 hours should be cleared with me at least 72 hours before the deadline and should be in response to mental or physical health issues or some other urgent and unexpected situation.

A note about participation

I believe that students can contribute in a myriad of ways: writing excellent reflection papers, asking questions of their peers, raising their hand in class, attending office hours, and reaching out to the instructor via email, just to name a few. Contributing to the intellectual dialogue and conversations in our class is a foundational expectation of the course but is not explicitly included in the grading scheme because of how subjective assessing participation can be. I will touch base with students if I am concerned about their engagement in the course, but otherwise trust that students will do their best to contribute to our collective learning when and how they are most excited about doing so. This being said, *attendance at our weekly seminars is mandatory*; students who miss multiple sessions without documented rationale may lose up to 5 points off their final grade. *Laptops and cell phones are permitted, but only to reference the readings, not for notetaking; there should be no typing happening. If they are distracting, I will ban them.*

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION & BELONGING

One of the goals of this class is to use social science research to ground conversations about race and racism, but this approach does not remove the passion, emotion, and challenge of having such conversations. This is especially true given that we will only be working together for two weeks. Furthermore, we all interpret findings through the lenses of our own experiences, be it ideological, racial, regional, or economic (to name a few). I have done my best to include a diverse set of perspectives; however, I acknowledge that it is possible there may be both overt and covert biases in the material, due to both the lens through which much of political science and journalism is written and through my own biases when choosing materials.

We will discuss topics that may generate strong personal and emotional reactions. Our conversations will not always be easy; we will make mistakes in our speaking and our listening; sometimes we will need patience or courage or imagination or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts, our classmates, and our own ideas and experiences. We will always need respect for others. Thus, an additional aim of our course necessarily will be for us to increase our facility with the sometimes-difficult conversations that arise as we deepen our understandings of multiple perspectives. While our intention may not be to cause discomfort or offense, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored and is something that I consider to be very important and deserving of attention. If and when this occurs, there are several ways to address it:

1. Discuss the situation privately with me. I am always open to listening to students' experiences and want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.
2. Discuss the situation with the class. Starting by asking a question from a position of assuming the best about the speaker's intentions can be a useful strategy for bringing something to the class' attention. Chances are there is at least one other student in the class who had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability for all class participants to have a fuller understanding of context and impact of course material and class discussions.
3. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with me, I encourage you to speak with one of your resident advisors.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

While I am always happy to be your first stop for any support you may need or questions you might have during the semester, Harvard does offer a wealth of resources for students. The following is a non-exhaustive list of some of the resources available to you for navigating the many academic, personal, and health challenges you may encounter during your time at Harvard:

Mental Health Support: Counseling and Mental Health Services (CAMS) has free, 24/7 access to counselors for students at (617) 495-2042. They also offer ongoing mental health support accessible on campus. You can see their full range of services at <https://camhs.huhs.harvard.edu/our-services>.

Research Support: Our librarians are some of the most underutilized resources on campus! They can help you locate resources, find data, or brainstorm research ideas. Susan Gilroy is the librarian assigned to work with social studies students. Her email address is sgilroy@fas.harvard.edu. Kathleen Sheehan is the librarian whose expertise is most aligned with our course in the social sciences. You make an appointment with her at <https://library.harvard.edu/staff/kathleen-sheehan> or email her at ksheehan@fas.harvard.edu.

Writing Support: For specific information on social science style writing, check out GovWrites (<https://govwrites.squarespace.com/>). For more general help with grammar, proofreading, and overall clarity, consider making an appointment with the Harvard Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/>).

COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

We will read between 120 and 250 pages each week. Note that the course intentionally starts with a heavier reading load and lightens up as the semester goes along to allow for students to shift their focus to the final project. Be sure to check each citation for any specifics on which chapters or pages to focus on. At the end of each class, I will preview the following week's readings and offer suggestions on what can be skimmed vs. what should be read in detail.

PART I: SETTING THE STAGE

What is race and racism? When and why did these concepts emerge?

What role have race and racism played in American history?

How has the role of race and racism in American politics changed over time?

January 26: Social science and its approach to race, racism, and policy

What is social science?

How do social scientists approach the study of race and policy?

What is critical race theory and to what extent should it influence social science research?

Skill: The arc of research

Abrams, Stacey Y., et al. "E Pluribus Unum: The Fight over Identity Politics." *Foreign Aff.* 98 (2019): 160.

Hochschild, Jennifer. "Race and class in political science." *Mich. J. Race & L.* 11 (2005): 99.

Michener, Jamila. "Policy feedback in a racialized polity." *Policy Studies Journal* 47.2 (2019): 423-450.

Mills, Charles. *The Racial Contract*. Cornell University Press. 1997. Introduction & Overview, pg 1-40

Walt, Stephen. "Are scholars becoming too scholastic?" *Foreign Policy*. July 2010.

WATCH: Bridges, Khiara M. "Critical Race Theory: An Introduction"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8ix4Y2FIv0>

February 2: Defining race and racism

What is race?

How should we define racism?

Skill: The two types of research questions and how to write them

Bowser, Benjamin P. "Racism: Origin and theory." *Journal of black studies* 48.6 (2017): 572-590.

Fredrickson, George M. *Racism*. Princeton University Press, 2015. Introduction & Chapter 2

Illing, Sean. "Is there an uncontroversial way to teach America's racist history?" *Vox*. July 11, 2021.

Kendi, Ibram X. *How to be an Anti-Racist*. Random House. 2019. Introduction & Ch 1

López, Ian F. Haney. *Racism on trial: The Chicano fight for justice*. Harvard University Press, 2009. Introduction & Chapter 2

Roberts, Steven O., and Michael T. Rizzo. "The psychology of American racism." *American Psychologist* (2020).

PART II: THE POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

What role has race played in the development of American politics and American political institutions?

Have U.S. racial dynamics in politics changed over time? If so, how?

February 9: Colonization, the founding, and the origins of racial stratification

Who in the US defined race and how did they define it?

What are the historical reasons for acknowledging race in American society and politics?

Skill: Finding scholarly resources & staying organized while researching

Ericson, David F. *Slavery in the American republic: developing the federal government, 1791-1861*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011. Ch 1 and Ch 5.

Hirsh, Michael. "How America's Founding Fathers Missed a Chance to Abolish Slavery." *Foreign Affairs*. July 3 2020.

Finkelman, Paul. "America's 'Great Chief Justice' was an unrepentant slaveholder." *The Atlantic*. June 15, 2021.

Reséndez, Andrés. *The other slavery: The uncovered story of Indian enslavement in America*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. Ch 1.

February 16: Origins of the contemporary racial order

What were the incentives to make policies based on race?

How has the definition of white changed over time?

What role has race played in the development of American institutions?

Skill: Overviewing social science methods

Fox, Cybelle. "Three worlds of relief: Race, immigration, and public and private social welfare spending in American cities, 1929." *American Journal of Sociology* 116.2 (2010): 453-502.

Lieberman, Robert C. "Race, institutions, and the administration of social policy." *Social Science History* 19.4 (1995): 511-542.

Muhammad, Khalil Gibran. *The condemnation of Blackness: Race, crime, and the making of modern urban America, with a new preface*. Harvard University Press, 2019. Introduction, Ch 1 and 2.

Nadasen, Premilla. "From widow to "welfare queen": Welfare and the politics of race." *Black Women, Gender & Families* 1.2 (2007): 52-77

February 23: Resistance and Protest Part I (Movements)

What tools and strategies have minority groups used to protest racism and discrimination?

Under what conditions are protest and resistance effective? Does it vary by group?

Skill: Workshop research questions

Blackhawk, Maggie, et al. "Congressional Representation by Petition: Assessing the Voices of the Voteless in a Comprehensive New Database, 1789–1949." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (2020).

Blakemore, Erin. "The radical history of the Red Power movement's fight for Native American Sovereignty." *National Geographic*. November 25, 2020.

Hooker, Juliet. "Black Lives Matter and the paradoxes of US Black politics: From democratic sacrifice to democratic repair." *Political Theory* 44.4 (2016): 448-469.

Martinez, Lisa M. "Yes we can: Latino participation in unconventional politics." *Social Forces* 84.1 (2005): 135-155.

Nadasen, Premilla. "We Do Whatever Becomes Necessary". *Want to Start a Revolution?* New York University Press, 2009. 317-338.

Yukich, Grace. "Muslim American activism in the age of Trump." *Sociology of Religion* 79.2 (2018): 220-247.

Research question paper due 2/25/22

March 2: Resistance and Protest Part II (Intergroup dynamics)

How have racial groups cooperated to protest and resist discrimination?

Under what conditions is intergroup cooperation successful?

Skill: The why behind contextualizing research

Filler, Nicole. "Intersectional perspectives on Asian Pacific American activism and movement building." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 6.3 (2018): 466-475. SKIM

Han, Hahrie C. *Moved to Action*. Stanford University Press, 2020. Chapters 3 & 5 .

Heaney, Michael T. "Intersectionality at the grassroots." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* (2019): 1-21.

Hussain, Amir. "Muslim Americans assert solidarity with Black Lives Matter, finding unity within a diverse faith group." *The Conversation*. June 30, 2020.

Jefferson, Hakeem, Fabian Neuner & Josh Pasek. "Black Americans support the Floyd protests. Whites are divided. Here's why." *The Washington Post*. June 10, 2020.

Kim, Claire Jean, and Taeku Lee. "Interracial politics: Asian Americans and other communities of color." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34.3 (2001): 631-637.

Lee, Taeku. "Race, immigration, and the identity-to-politics link." *Annual Review of Polit. Science*. 11 (2008): 457-478.

March 9: Contemporary Electoral Politics

How should we describe the current role of race in politics?

What explains the election of Barack Obama and the subsequent presidential politics?

Skill: How to effectively incorporate other scholarly sources (aka contextualizing your research aka writing a literature review)

Barker, David C. & Sam Fulwood III. "Young Black Americans not sold on Biden, the Democrats, or voting." *The Conversation*. August 5, 2020.

Bautista-Chavez, Angie M., and Sarah E. James. "Beyond Likely Voters: An Event Analysis of Conservative Political Outreach." *Political Science Quarterly* 134.3 (2019): 407-443.

Hajnal, Zoltan L., and Taeku Lee. *Why Americans don't join the party*. Princeton University Press, 2011. Ch 4 & 6 (SKIM methods sections)

Hochschild, Jennifer, and Vesla Weaver. "Is the significance of race declining in the political arena? Yes, and no." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38.8 (2015): 1250-1257.

Reny, Tyler T., and Matt A. Barreto. "Xenophobia in the time of pandemic: othering, anti-Asian attitudes, and COVID-19." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* (2020): 1-24.

Sides, John, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck. *Identity crisis*. Princeton University Press, 2019. Chapters 1 & 2

"The Latinx Vote in 2020 (Part II): Growing the Pie." *Equis Research*. April 22, 2020.

Contextualization & data sources paper due 3/11/21

PART III: PUBLIC POLICIES

How has this policy area contributed to or addressed racial inequality?

How might this policy area impact racial equality in the future?

March 23: Immigration and the changing racial order

How has immigration policy changed over time and how do these changes reflect changing racial dynamics?

How do immigration policies impact the lived experiences of people residing in the United States?

Skill: Using evidence in research papers (aka when to use primary and secondary sources)

Cook-Martin, David and David S. Fitzgerald, "How legacies of racism persist in US immigration policy" SSN Key Findings Brief, Scholar Strategy Network, June 2014.

Gonzales, Roberto. "Learning to be illegal: Undocumented youth and shifting legal contexts in the transition to adulthood." *American Sociological Review*, 2011: 602-619

Pierce, Sarah, Jessica Bolter, and Andrew Selee. "U.S. Immigration Policy under Trump: Deep Changes and Lasting Impacts." *Transatlantic Council on Migration: Migration Policy Institute*. July 2018.

Waters, Mary. "Crime and Immigration: New Forms of Exclusion and Discrimination." *Issues of Science and Technology*. Fall 2016.

Wong, Janelle. *Democracy's promise: Immigrants and American civic institutions*. University of Michigan Press, 2008. Chapters Ch 1.

"All Presidents Are Deporters in Chief." *New York Times*. July 13, 2019.

Zepeda-Millán, Chris. *Latino mass mobilization: Immigration, racialization, and activism*. Cambridge University Press, 2017. Ch 2.

March 30: Incarceration and Legality

What economic, social, and political incentives lead to the rise of the carceral state?

What are the social and political consequences of a carceral state that disproportionately targets people of color?

Skill: Citations

Carlson, Kirsten. "Supreme Court affirms tribal police authority over non-Indians." *The Conversation*. June 3, 2021.

Fortner, Michael Javen. "The Carceral State and the Crucible of Black Politics: An Urban History of the Rockefeller Drug Laws." *Studies in American Political Development* 27.1 (2013): 14-35.

Lerman, Amy E., and Vesla Weaver. "Staying out of sight? Concentrated policing and local political action." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 651.1 (2014): 202-219.

Murakawa, Naomi. "The Origins of the Carceral Crisis: Racial Order as 'Law and Order' in Postwar American Politics," in *Race and American Political Development*, eds. Joseph Lowndes, Julie Novkov, and Dorian Warren (New York: Routledge, 2008): 234-255.

April 6: Education

What is the role for education and educational access in changing unequal racial outcomes?

Is changing the educational system the starting point for radical change or is it a reflection of change in other policy areas?

Skill: Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing

Darling-Hammond, Linda. "Race, inequality and educational accountability: The irony of 'No Child Left Behind'." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 10.3 (2007): 245-260.

Jack, Anthony Abraham. *The privileged poor*. Harvard University Press, 2019. Chapters 1 & 2

Jiménez, Tomás and Adam Horowitz, "When White Is Just Alright: How Immigrants Redefine Achievement and Reconfigure the Ethnoracial Hierarchy," *American Sociological Review* 2013: 849-871

Reed, Douglas S. "Harlan's Dissent: Citizenship, Education, and the Color-Conscious Constitution." *RJF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 7.1 (2021): 148-165.

April 13: Voting Rights

Is voting a right or a responsibility?

Should governments monitor who votes or encourage people to vote?

Skill: Writers' workshop

Barreto, Matt A., Gary M. Segura, and Nathan D. Woods. "The mobilizing effect of majority-minority districts on Latino turnout." *American Political Science Review* 98.1 (2004): 65-75.

Highton, Benjamin. "Voter identification laws and turnout in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (2017): 149-167.

Michener, Jamila. "Race, Poverty, and the Redistribution of Voting Rights." *Poverty & Public Policy* 8.2 (2016): 106-128.

Newkirk, Vann R. II. "How *Shelby v. Holder* Broke America." *The Atlantic*. July 20, 2018.

Schuit, Sophie, and Jon C. Rogowski. "Race, representation, and the voting rights act." *American Journal of Political Science* 61.3 (2017): 513-526.

Optional First draft due 4/15/22

April 20: Student choice 1

Skill: Deep dive on introductions & conclusions

April 26: Student choice 2 & Wrap Up

Skill: Writers' workshop

Options for student choice:

Climate Change and Climate Justice

How has (and will) climate change affect social, political and economic outcomes for different racial groups?

In what ways is climate change similar or different from the other public policy areas of concern for racial justice activists?

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "The politics of climate change is more than the politics of capitalism." *Theory, Culture & Society* 34.2-3 (2017): 25-37.

"EPA Annual Environmental Justice Progress Report FY 2020." *Environmental Protection Agency*. 2020. Executive Summary.

Flavelle, Christopher. "As Warming Fuels Disaster, Relief Often Favors White People." *The New York Times*. June 7, 2021.

Hale, Stephen. "The new politics of climate change: why we are failing and how we will succeed." *Environmental Politics* 19.2 (2010): 255-275.

Marris, Emma. "Inevitable Planetary Doom Has Been Exaggerated." *The Atlantic*. February 1, 2021.

Healthcare

How does the American healthcare system work and why is it designed the way it is?

What are the social, economic, and political impacts of having access to healthcare?

Campbell, Andrea Louise. *Trapped in America's Safety Net: One Family's Struggle*. University of Chicago Press, 2014. Ch 1 & 4

Oliver, Thomas R. "The politics of public health policy." *Annual Review of Public Health* 27 (2006): 195-233.

Michener, Jamila. *Fragmented democracy: Medicaid, federalism, and unequal politics*. Cambridge University Press, 2018. Chapters 1 and 2

Michener, Jamila D. "Politics, Pandemic, and Racial Justice Through the Lens of Medicaid." (2021): 643-646.

Tesler, Michael. 2012. "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): 690-704.

Statues and symbols

How should Americans acknowledge and celebrate their history given past expressions of racism?

What drives public opinion regarding monuments? How should public serving institutions decide what historical figures to display and honor?

Blight, David W. "Yes Freedman's Memorial Uses Racist Imagery, but Don't Tear it down." *The Washington Post*. June 25, 2020.

Brophy, Alfred L. "Why the case for the removal of Confederate Memorials isn't so clear cut." *The Conversation*. April 25, 2017.

Carr-Peterson, Jordan & Christian R. Grose. "What persuades Southerners to take down Confederate symbols? Hearing it's good for business." *The Washington Post*. July 2, 2020.

Johnson, Tyler, Kathleen Tipler, and Tyler Camarillo. "Monumental decisions: How direct democracy shapes attitudes in the conflict over confederate memorials." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 52.4 (2019): 620-624.

Tesler, Michael. "Democrats increasingly thing the Confederate flag is racist. Republicans don't." *The Washington Post*. July 9, 2015.

Yin, Victoria. "Indigenous activists demand removal of Iowa monuments, restructuring of historical narrative." *Des Moines Register*. July 5, 2020.