

**Racial Politics in America
Harvard Pre-College Program
Summer 2016**

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Course description

Racial discord between blacks and whites dominates many contemporary explanations for major 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 this course, we complicate our understanding of the history of race in America by combining works from history, psychology, sociology, and political science. We examine the groups—Europeans, Latinos and Asians—that have also experienced severe discrimination, and question which racial or ethnic divide is most useful for understanding American politics. We will study the creation of contemporary American institutions and politics to understand the obstacles to and hope for an America in which access to power and resources is more equal. In addition to exploring racial politics, we will identify the components of a strong research question and strategies for conducting efficient research. You will develop a research question and conduct independent research to explore existing hypotheses.

We will begin each class with discussion of the readings, followed by a brief break, and conclude each day with a mini-lesson on research and question development. This time may also include opportunities for students to workshop their questions and get assistance with their research.

Note that a laptop is required to participate in the course; however if access to a laptop will be an issue, please contact me and we can work out a plan to provide technology for students who may need it.

Essential Questions

- What is race? Who in the United States has defined race and how have they defined it?
- What explains the severe inequality among whites and non-whites in the U.S? OR increasing inequality in the US?
- What is the most important racial/ethnic divide for understanding American politics and inequality?
- What is the racial order and does it reflect a fixed hierarchy in the United States?
- Can the United States overcome its history of racism?
- Which, if any, institutions offer the most promise for addressing racial disparities?
- How do different racial groups cooperate to demand greater equality? What explains these relationships?

Readings

The readings in this course serve several purposes. First, they provide practice with consuming and understanding social science research. Second, they establish a foundation of facts, at best, and well-studied opinions, at least, upon which to base our discussion. These readings are meant to challenge both your analytical skills and your

opinions and perceptions. To get the most out of the assignments, reflect on a meaningful subset—which will vary by the week—of the following questions as you read:

- What is the argument? What is the research question? How does the author answer it?
- What are the assumptions (explicit and implicit) upon which the argument is based? Is the theory logically consistent? Is it plausible?
- Is the theory empirically relevant? Are the empirical findings consistent with the expectations?
- What further evidence would you use to evaluate the argument? What further testable hypotheses follow from this theory? How would you design a study that could determine the empirical relevance of the author's approach in comparison to other approaches?
- Is the theory interesting? How does this argument fit into the literature? What does this study tell us that we didn't already know? What should it tell us that it doesn't? What questions still need to be answered?
- How do the week's readings fit together? How do they fit into the course as a whole? Are we seeing progress in this research area?

The reading load in this course reflects that of a typical college course. In order to ensure careful reading and strong class discussions, students are expected to react to each night's readings in three ways. **Your reaction should be emailed to me by 6am of the day the readings are due, and the reaction should be included in the body of the email, not in an attached document.** In other words, your reaction is due the morning of the day we discuss the readings in class. Your reactions should contain the following:

- A 2-3 (no more) sentence summary of the argument of each paper assigned
- 2-3 questions (total) about points, arguments, or evidence that you found confusing, contradictory, or particularly interesting. We will use these questions to generate discussion in the class.
- 1 (note, NOT 1 per reading, but 1 overall) research question that the readings generated for you

Expectations

This course mirrors the workload and structure of a college style seminar in political science. Given the focus on discussion, I expect you to complete all readings before the start of class, submit reflections by 6am each day, and come prepared to both ask questions and engage in respectful, scholarly conversation. When offering opinions based on personal experience, be sure to frame your ideas as your own experience, rather than hard and fast fact (in other words, use "I" statements). I also expect all assignments by the assigned deadline. Failure to meet deadlines will be reflected in your final course evaluation.

Long term Assignments

We will learn two skills in this class critical for effectively conducting research: developing a strong research question and finding relevant, scholarly sources. Your final assignment consists of formulating a refined, targeted, plausibly answerable research question with an accompanying analysis of relevant theories extant in current literature. Criteria for success for the analysis will be distributed in class. The final product should be between 4 to 6 pages and contain references to 4-6 sources discovered through your research process. You may use sources from our syllabus, but they will not count towards the 4-6 total.

You will submit **your final research question by the end of the day (midnight) on Friday, July 15.** The **final analysis will be due by 8am on Friday, July 22.**

Readings & Course Schedule

Part 1: The Origins of the American Racial Paradigm

July 11: Defining politics and political science

Skill: Distinguish between a topic and a question; identify your topic

There are no readings that need to be completed prior to our first class. However, we will be reading, defining, and discussing different definitions of and approaches to political science to frame the rest of the course.

July 12: Explaining race and reactions to race

Skill: Developing a research question

Micro explanations:

Donald R. Kinder and Cindy D. Kam. *Us Against Them: Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion*, Ch 1. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2009.

Macro explanations:

George Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History*, Introduction, chapters 1 and Epilogue

Paul Frymer, "Racism Revised," *American Political Science Review*, 2005, pp. 373-387

Optional reading:

Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto. *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2001.

July 13: Origins of the American Racial Order

Skill: Conducting keyword searches and identifying scholarly sources

Pre-1865:

Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, chapters 11, 18

David Ericson, *Slavery in the American Republic*, chapter 4

Post 1865:

Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *Condemnation of Blackness*, Introduction (pgs. 1-5), chapter 1, skim chapter 2

Optional reading:

Hochschild, Jennifer L. *Facing Up to the American Dream: Race, Class, and the Soul of the Nation*. Princeton University Press, 1996.

July 14: Immigration & the changing racial order

Skill: How to efficiently find relevant sources (using one source to track down additional sources)

David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Modern Texas, 1836-1986*, chapters 7, 8, 10, and 12

Cybelle Fox, "Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and Public and Private Social Welfare Spending in American Cities," *American Journal of Sociology*, 116 (2), 2010: 453-502

Syllabus—Racial Politics in America

Summer 2016

Final

July 15: Race and the Development of Institutions & the Welfare State

Skill: Workshop final question

Final research question due by midnight via email

Historical Explanations:

Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself*, Introduction, chapters 4-6.

Harris, Frederick C and Robert C. Lieberman. 2015. "Racial Inequality After Racism: How Institutions Hold Back African Americans." *Foreign Affairs* (March/April): 9-20.

Optional Reading:

Orleck, Annelise. *Storming Caesars palace: How black mothers fought their own war on poverty*. Beacon Press, 2005. Ch 3

Alesina, Alberto, Edward Glaeser, and Bruce Sacerdote. "Why doesn't the US have a European-style welfare system?." *NBER working paper* 8524 (2001).

Part 2: Contemporary racial politics in America

July 18: Responses to Ethnic and Racial Change

Skill: Finding media sources using Lexis Nexis and Factiva

Black-white responses:

Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers*, chapter 1

Latino-white-black responses:

Helen Marrow, *New Destination Dreaming: Immigration, Race and Legal Status in the Rural American South*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011, chapters 5

White-NonWhite response:

Barretto, Matt A et al., 2012. "The Tea Party in the Age of Obama: Mainstream Conservatism or Out-Group Anxiety?" *Political Power and Social Theory* 22: (online version).

Optional Reading:

Omar Wasow, "Nonviolence, Violence and Voting: Effects of the 1960s Black Protests on White Attitudes and Voting Behavior," Princeton University, working paper, May 4, 2015

http://www.omarwasow.com/Protests_on_Voting.pdf

Moynihan, Daniel P. "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action (1965)." *African American Male Research* (1997). Select pages to be identified in class

Jens Hainmuller and Daniel Hopkins. "The Hidden American Immigration Consensus: A Conjoint Analysis of Attitudes toward Immigrants." *American Journal of Political Science*. Early View, published November 2014.

July 19: John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

Syllabus—Racial Politics in America

Summer 2016

Final

July 20: The American Carceral State, Part I (Causes)

Skill: Using proper citations

Naomi Murakawa, “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.

Michael Fortner, “The Carceral State and the Crucible of Black Politics.” *Studies in American Political Development*. Vol. 27(1), pg. 14-35

Optional Reading:

Nicola Lacey and David Soskice, “Crime, Punishment and Segregation in the United States: The Paradox of Local Democracy,” *Punishment and Society*, forthcoming

July 21: The American Carceral State, Part II (Consequences):

Skill: To quote or not to quote

Vesla Weaver and Amy Lerman, “Political Consequences of the Carceral State.” *American Political Science Review*, 104 (4): 817-33.

Traci Burch, “Effects of Imprisonment and Community Supervision in Neighborhood Political Participation in North Carolina,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. January 2014, 65 (1)

July 22: Racial Politics in the Age of Obama

Share outline of your questions

Final analysis due by Sam via email

Bobo, Lawrence D. and Camille Z. Charles. 2009. “Race in the American Mind: From the Moynihan Report to the Obama Candidacy.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 621(1): 243-259.

Optional Reading:

Frederick Harris, *The Price of the Ticket*. Chapter 6 (Skim)

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.

Optional Reading:

Hochschild, Jennifer L., Vesla M. Weaver, and Traci R. Burch. *Creating a new racial order: How immigration, multiracialism, genomics, and the young can remake race in America*. Princeton University Press, 2012. Chapter 7.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the theft of someone else’s ideas and work. It is the incorporation of facts, ideas, or specific language that are not common knowledge, are taken from another source, and are not properly cited.

Syllabus—Racial Politics in America

Summer 2016

Final

Whether you copy verbatim or simply rephrase the ideas of another without properly acknowledging the source, the theft is the same. A computer program written as part of your academic work is, like a paper, expected to be your original work and subject to the same standards of representation. In the preparation of work submitted to meet course, program, or school requirements—whether a draft or a final version of a paper, project, take-home exam, computer program, placement exams, application essay, oral presentation, or other work—you must take great care to distinguish your own ideas and language from information derived from sources. Sources include published and unpublished primary and secondary materials, the Internet, and information and opinions of other people.

You are expected to follow the standards of proper citation and to avoid plagiarism. Please consult the [Harvard Guide to Using Sources](#), prepared by the Harvard College Writing Program, for a helpful introduction to all matters related to source use: identifying and evaluating secondary sources, incorporating them into your work, documenting them correctly, and avoiding plagiarism.