

**BLACK POLITICS**  
Political Science 504  
Autumn 2000  
Tues. & Thurs. 9:30-11:18 am

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Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs  
. 2-3 and by  
appointment

**Course Description**

In this course we will examine the relationship between African Americans and the American political system in an effort to gain a broader perspective of the American political process. This course is meant to provide you with a general overview of some of the key areas of Black politics, thereby facilitating your knowledge of an important sub-field of political science. Throughout the quarter we will cover various topics such as Black political behavior, leadership<sup>1</sup> representation, and strategies of empowerment. What are some of the historical dynamics that shape the relationship between African Americans and the government? How much influence have Blacks been able to exert on the political system? What are some alternative forms of participation that Blacks have used when traditional channels have been closed? How has the increased presence of African Americans in governmental institutions changed the face of politics? We will attempt to address these and other important questions through course readings, short lectures, films, and class discussion.

I do not anticipate this being an overwhelmingly difficult class. However, I do expect you to do your fair share, as you will find that your grade is directly related to the amount of work and effort that you put into the class. Therefore, students who want to do well in this course should follow a simple but proven formula: come to class regularly and on time; read thoroughly and prior to the class period in which the readings will be discussed; contribute regularly to class discussion; pay attention and ask questions when you don't understand; complete assignments carefully and in a timely manner; and finally, contact me if you find that you're having any difficulties. I am always more than happy to offer my assistance.

**Required Texts**

The following books are required and are available for purchase at Long's, OSU Bookstore or SBX.

\*\* There is also a required reading packet available at the cop-Ez located at Tuttle Park Place.

Bell, Derrick. 1992. *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*

Cohen, Cathy. 1999. *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*

Norris, Aldon. 1984. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*

## Course Requirements and Grading

### Attendance and Participation

class attendance and participation are vital components of this class, and as such, are required. You are expected to not only attend class, but also to have read all assigned readings for the day. Attendance will be taken regularly and those students who miss more than 2 classes will find their final grades reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional absence beyond 2. In contrast, students with perfect attendance whose final grades fall in the gray zone on the border between grades will be rewarded for their regular attendance. If you do miss class you are responsible for getting the material from another student in the class. You are also responsible for any assignments provided during the class period(s) you miss.

Given that participation counts as a significant portion of your final course grade, it is strongly suggested that you make an effort to come to class prepared to discuss the topics and readings for the day. class participation will involve not only your respectful attention to the contributions of classmates, but also your own regular and thoughtful contributions to class discussion that demonstrate an understanding of the readings. Opportunities to participate will be plentiful since the short writing assignments will be the basis upon which students will oftentimes lead class discussions. However, please understand that you are expected to participate in addition to and beyond that which is done in accordance with the short writing assignments.

### Short Writing Assignments

There will be 3 short writing assignments, which are basically reactions to the readings. Please note: I am NOT looking for summaries of the readings, but rather short analyses of the day's topic. These reaction papers should be no more than 1-2 pages (typed, single or double-spaced, 10/12 font) and should address points that you find interesting or that you perhaps don't agree with. The papers are to be based on the readings, but they can certainly move us beyond them - particularly if you raise questions/issues that the readings didn't address. All papers are due in class on the days for which you have signed up. If I receive them after class (i.e. in my mailbox, on my desk) they are considered to be late and will receive an automatic 10-point deduction for each day they are late. Since there are 3 assignments, the first is worth up to 34 points; the second and third are worth up to 33 points each for a total of 100.

### Term Paper

Each student must prepare a term paper on a topic of his/her choosing. The paper should address some aspect of Black politics that we've touched on in class (talk to me if you have an idea for the paper that deals with a topic not discussed in class). The final paper must be at 10 pages in length in should include appropriate references. You will be required to submit a brief description of the topic you plan to pursue in the paper. The description should be a couple of paragraphs (or certainly no more than 1 page) and is due by October 14<sup>th</sup>. I will review each of your descriptions and provide feedback to you concerning the topic to ensure that the paper is manageable and sufficient for the class.

You will also be required to present your paper to the class at the end of the quarter. Relax, this isn't anything formal. It is only a 5-6 minute talk about the nature of your project and your findings, if applicable. Your paper should be turned in by November 30<sup>th</sup>. An absence for your presentation will result in a zero for 5% of your grade. No late papers will be accepted.

### Exams

There will be a midterm exam on October 24<sup>th</sup> and a final exam, which will take place during finals week as scheduled by the University Registrar. The exams will be comprised of essay questions based on assigned readings and class lectures. The exam dates are not negotiable. Please make your travel arrangements accordingly.

## Grade Formula

Participation	15%
Short writing	15%
Term Paper	20%
Presentation	5%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	<u>25%</u>
	100%

## Policies

Late assignments will be penalized 10 points for each day that they are late. Assignments that are more than one week late will not be accepted. Failure to take exams at the scheduled time will result in a grade of zero. If you must miss an exam and have a very good reason, you must get my permission in advance of the exam so that arrangements can be made for a makeup exam. But please note that make-up exams will be allowed only under exceptional circumstances (and with sufficient documentation). If you have a very good reason for not notifying me in advance of missing an exam, you may be allowed to take the make-up with a penalty of 15 points (unless you can state to my satisfaction why it was not possible to notify me sooner). You should also understand that make-up exams are always ten times harder so it would be in your best interest to take the exams when scheduled.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be reported to the university committee on academic misconduct for appropriate action according to university policy.

Students with disabilities should let me know during the first week of the quarter (or contact Wayne DeYoung 292-2880). Special assistance is available for alternate formats for readings and/or test taking.

Again, if you find yourself experiencing any difficulties with the course materials or assignments, please come and talk with me as soon as possible. Taking corrective steps early is a strategy that promotes mastery of the material and a desirable outcome in terms of your grade. In addition, feel free to stop by my office to discuss any other course-related information or feedback you might have. I will be available in my office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-3. If these times are not convenient for you, we can schedule another time that fits into your schedule.

## Course Outline and Reading Schedule

Sept.21	course Introduction
I.	The Nature of the Problem: Racism and Power in America
Sept.26	<u>Let's Talk About It: Race in American Society</u> King, Martin L. "Racism and the White Backlash" (in packet) Bell, Derrick "Introduction" in <i>Faces at the Bottom of the Well</i>
Sept.28	<u>Realizing the American Dream or Hitting the Political Glass Ceiling : The Structure of Power in America</u> Carmichael, Stokely and Charles Hamilton "White Power" (in packet) Hero, Rodney chapter 2, 11 (in packet)

- October 3      Black Political Thought: Integration vs. Separation  
 King, Martin L "Black Power" (in packet)  
 Malcolm X "The Ballot or the Bullet" (in packet)  
 Brooks, Roy "The case for a Policy of Limited Separation" (in packet)
- October 5      Fighting for Social Change  
 Morris, Aldon *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* ch. 1-4, 8-10

## II. From Protest to Politics: The Nature of African American Politics

- October 10    Entering the Mainstream Political Arena: the Voting Rights Act  
 Grofman et al. "The Right to the Vote and the Right to Representation" (in packet)  
 Guinier, Lani "The Triumph of Tokenism" (in packet)
- October 12    Black Political Behavior: Electoral  
 Dawson, Michael chapter 3 "The Politicization of African American Racial Group Interests" (in packet)  
 Gay, Claudine and Katherine Tate "Doubly Bound" (in packet)  
 Welch and Sigelman "A Black Gender Gap?" (in packet)
- October 17    Blacks and Party Politics  
 Barker, Jones, and Tate "change Through Politics: Political Parties" (in packet)  
 Dawson, Michael chapter 5 "African American Partisanship and the American Party System (in packet)
- October 19    Are there other forms of political expression? Everyday Forms of Resistance  
 Scott, James "Domination, Acting, and Fantasy" ch. 2 **and** "The Infrapolitics of Subordinate Groups" ch. 7 (in packet)  
 Kelley, Robert "Kickin' Reality, Kickin' Ballistics" (in packet)
- October 24    Issues of Representation: the National Level (congress)  
 Swain, Carol chapters 1, 9, 10 (in packet)  
 Whitby, Kenny "The color of congress: The Impact of Race and the Role of Issues..." (in packet)  
 Barrett, Edith "The policy Priorities of African American Women in State Legislatures" (in packet)
- October 26    MIDTERM EXAM

- October 31 Issues of Representation: the Local Level  
 Persons, Georgia chapter 3 "Black Mayoralities and the New Black Politics" (in packet)  
 McCormick, Joseph and Charles Jones chapter 4 "The Conceptualization Of Deracialization" (in packet)  
 Persons, Georgia chapter 10 "The Election of Gary Franks and the Ascendancy of the New Black Conservatives" (in packet)
- November 2 Black Incorporation and Empowerment: Are Coalitions the Answer?  
 Carmichael and Hamilton chapter 3 "The Myths of Coalition" (in packet)  
 Gomes and Williams "Coalition Politics: Past, Present, and Future" (in packet)  
 McClain, Paula "Coalition or Competition: Patterns of Black-Latino Relations in Urban Politics" (in packet)

### III. Continuing Challenges to Black Politics in the Post-Civil Rights Era

- November 7 Will the Real Leaders Please Stand Up: Examining Black Political Leadership  
 West, Cornel chapter 3 "The Crisis of Black Leadership"<sup>T1</sup> (in packet)  
 Barker and Jones "Black Leadership and the Continuing Struggle for Racial Justice" (NOT in packet - will hand out in class)
- November 9 TBA
- November 14 Black Is/Black Ain't: AIDS Policy and its Challenges to Black Politics Cohen, Cathy  
*The Boundaries of Blackness* chapters 1-8
- November 16 The Quest for Socioeconomic Justice: Affirmative Action  
 Jones, Mack "Affirmative Action: What is the Question?" (in packet)  
 Pinkey, Alphonso "The Demise of Affirmative Action" (in packet)  
 Steele/Page Issue 11 "Is Affirmative Action Reverse Discrimination"<sup>1</sup>  
 (in packet)
- November 21 Bell, Derrick *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*
- November 23 HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
- November 28 Presentations
- November 30 Presentations (final papers due)
- December 5 Final Exam