

BLACK POLITICS
POLITICAL SCIENCE 504
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
MON. & WED. 2:30-4:18
DERBY HALL 0080

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Office Hours: Tues., 11:00am-12:00pm;
Wed., 1:00pm-2:00pm
and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an advanced undergraduate course exploring the American political system through the lens of the African American cultural and political experience. It is my observation that many Americans either dislike or show a great deal of apathy toward politics. I believe, however, that politics affects the everyday lives of individuals regardless of whether or not individuals are aware. It is my intention to demonstrate how politics and the American political system affect Black Americans, to illuminate the reality of African Americans within the American political system, and to show how relevant politics is on an everyday basis.

The overall goal of the course is to get students to think about and understand the importance of politics. The issues that will be focused upon are ones that are of specific importance to Black politics. This course is a challenging one in the sense that students will be required to think and write critically and thoughtfully about the issues. It will also be an interesting one given that all students keep up with the readings and participate actively and regularly. Students who want to do well in this course must come to class both regularly and on time, read thoroughly and prior to class, participate, pay attention, ask questions, complete assignments, and contact me if you are having any difficulties. My plan is to make this course a worthwhile learning experience. If you are experiencing any difficulties, I am happy to offer my assistance.

This course is intended to sharpen analytical thinking about Black politics, discuss contemporary issues and problems facing African Americans with respect to the American political system, examine various avenues of political expression, and raise questions and new ideas pertaining to the exploration of Black politics.

REQUIRED TEXTS

****All books are currently available at SBX****

Barker, Jones, and Tate. 1999. *African Americans and the American Political System*, 4th Edition. Prentice Hall.

Johnson and Lyne. 2003. *Walkin' the Talk: An Anthology of African American Studies*. Prentice Hall.

Walton and Smith. 2003. *American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom*, 2nd Edition. Longman Publishers.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

READINGS AND CURRENT EVENTS

Readings are to be completed for each class meeting. This will facilitate meaningful class discussion and will make the class more informative and interesting for all. In addition, to pay attention to current political events that may be relevant to the class. That means, you should watch the local news, read newspapers, watch Headline News, MSNBC, CNN, etc., and be able to find and discuss issues of race and American politics. For example, with presidential elections on the horizon and the various political candidates, there is a great opportunity to learn to think about how each of the candidates and their politics would affect various aspects of Black politics.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

There will be 3 written assignments throughout the duration of the course. Each paper will pertain to one of the three major sections of the course. These papers are to be critical evaluations of readings, arguments, ideas, debates, etc., of some aspect of the material presented in the section. These are open-ended assignments. That is, it is up to you to decide what it is you want to cover, **but you must make some type of an argument based on what you have read.** For example, you could critique a few readings as a means of establishing an argument for why you disagree with a particular line of reasoning. But of course, you are not limited to a critique. These written assignments are to be between 5-7 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font (Times New Roman), with page numbers and standard 1-inch margins. They must also include the proper citations and footnotes. Your papers are to be turned in on or before the day that they are ultimately due in hard copy form. I will not accept papers that are emailed. The due dates for the papers are as follows:

Paper 1: Wednesday, October 8

Paper 2: Wednesday, November 5

Paper 3: Monday, November 24

GROUP PROJECT

There will be several debates scheduled throughout the quarter. Each of you will be placed in a group of 4-5 members and given a topic. Don't worry; you will only be participating in one debate during the quarter. You will have to argue for or against the topic you are given. The topics are ones that will probably not be discussed much throughout the quarter. Therefore, you and your group members will be responsible for finding and presenting the information. Your debates should be as interesting and creative as possible because the group that wins the debate will receive extra credit. The winner of the debate will be determined by a majority vote of your class members. In addition, your group will have to hand in a paper that addresses your topic and the argument you are making in your debate (this is basically a hardcopy version of your presentation/debate). The paper is due the day of your debate and is to be between 5-7 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font (Times New Roman), with page numbers and standard 1-inch margins. They must also include the proper citations, footnotes, and a reference page. Your entire group receive the same grade which will be based on both the presentation and the paper.

MIDTERM AND FINAL

The midterm will be predominately essay based with the possibility of short identification questions. The midterm will be given during the sixth week of class and will cover all readings and discussion from the class sessions leading up to the midterm. The final will also be essay based with the possibility of short identification questions and will be given **Thursday, December 11, 11:30 am-1:18 pm.** The final will not be cumulative specifically, but will require you to apply concepts and information from the first part of the course.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Class participation is a vital component of this class making attendance both necessary and required. I do not claim to know everything there is to know about Black politics, so class discussions are a means for all of us to learn. Attendance will be taken most class periods. Students who miss more than 3 classes will find their final grade reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional absence beyond 3. Students with perfect attendance (or have at least not missed beyond 3 classes) and contribute meaningfully to class discussions who, at the end of the course, find themselves boarding between two grades will be rewarded

for their regular attendance and participation. Your participation will come from your class presentations, speaking in class about readings, raising questions about the presentation of the readings, or any other meaningful and substantive contributions.

EXTRA CREDIT

There is a maximum of 3 extra credit percentage points. One means of attaining extra credit is through winning your debate. If you win your debate, you and your group members will each receive 2 extra credit percentage points. The second way of getting extra credit is by participating in research conducted by political science faculty members and/or graduate students. Generally, there is only one opportunity and usually consists of completing a survey. This is worth 1 extra credit percentage point.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Attendance and Participation	10%
Written Assignment 1	10%
Written Assignment 2	15%
Written Assignment 3	15%
Group Project	10%
Midterm	20%
Final	20%
Extra Credit	Maximum of 3%

COURSE POLICIES:

LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND MISSED EXAMS

Late assignments will be penalized 1/3rd of a letter grade for each day they are late. Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted. Failure to take exams at the scheduled time will result in a grade of zero. Exceptions to this policy must be cleared **in advance** and can only be granted when students present documentation of exceptional circumstance.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citations) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university committee on academic misconduct and handled according to university policy.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE

Section 1: The Early Years

Week 1:

Wednesday, Sept. 24 Course introduction

Week 2: *The Origins of Black Politics: African American Culture*

Monday, Sept. 29 Johnson and Lyne: Wheatly, Banneker, Jefferson, Hume, Kant, Cuvier, and Harding (pp37-57; 75-77)

Wednesday, Oct. 1 Johnson and Lyne: Walker, Garnet, Sojourner Truth, Delaney, Davis (pp. 96-120; 164-185; 200-209)

Week 3: *The Origins of Black Politics: Political Science, Political Culture, and Socialization*

Monday, Oct. 6 Barker, Jones, and Tate: Chapters 1-3

Wednesday, Oct. 8 Walton and Smith: Chapters 1-4

***Written Assignment 1 due by today**

Section 2: Race and the American Political System

*Week 4: *Political Parties, Voting Behavior, and Elections*

Monday, Oct. 13 *Political Parties*
Barker, Jones, and Tate: Chapter 8
Walton and Smith: Chapter 9

Wednesday, Oct. 15 *Voting Behavior and Elections*
Barker, Jones, and Tate: Chapter 9
Walton and Smith: Chapter 10

*Week 5: *Congress and the Presidency*

Monday, Oct. 20 *Congress*
Barker, Jones, and Tate: Chapter 10
Walton and Smith: Chapter 11

Wednesday, Oct. 22 *The Presidency*
Barker, Jones, and Tate: Chapter 11
Walton and Smith: Chapter 12

Week 6:

Monday, Oct. 27 *Judicial Politics*
Barker, Jones, and Tate: Chapter 5
Walton and Smith: Chapter 13
Johnson and Lyne: Davis (pp 708-719)

Wednesday, Oct. 29 **Midterm**

*Week 7: *Interest Groups, Coalitions, and Urban Politics*

Monday, Nov. 3 *Interest Groups and Coalitions*
Barker, Jones, and Tate: Chapter 7
Walton and Smith: Chapters 7-8

Wednesday, Nov. 5 *Urban Politics*
Barker, Jones, and Tate: Chapter 4
Johnson and Lyne: Parsons (pp 636-662), Reed (720-742)

***Written Assignment 2 due by today**

Section 3: Issues In Black Politics

*Week 8: Public Opinion and the Media

Monday, Nov. 10 *Public Opinion*
Walton and Smith: Chapter 5

Wednesday, Nov. 12 *Media*
Walton and Smith: Chapter 6

*Week 9: Domestic and Foreign Policy

Monday, Nov. 17 *Domestic Policy*
Walton and Smith: Chapter 15

Wednesday, Nov. 19 *Foreign Policy*
Walton and Smith: Chapter 16

Week 10:

Monday, Nov. 24 *Gender*
TBA

***Written Assignment 3 due by today**

Wednesday, Nov. 26 **No Class**

Week 11:

Monday, Dec. 1 *Popular Culture*
Johnson and Lyne: Rose (pp 663-677), Hughes (pp326-331), McKay (pp332-333)

Wednesday, Dec. 3 *Future of Black Politics*
Barker, Jones, and Tate: Chapter 12
Johnson and Lyne: Wilson (pp 568-582), Marable (pp 609-615)

Final Exam: Thursday, December 11, 11:30-1:18