POLITICS IN MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETIES

In the United States and many other countries, civil society contains cleavages rooted in race, ethnicity, and religion. Indeed, the truly homogeneous polity is a rarity. This course will explore the political dimensions of cultural pluralism, and examine policy formulas aimed at achieving collective goals and values such as equality, justice, and democracy in culturally plural polities.

Although the particulars of race, ethnicity, and religion as political vectors vary, there are common aspects which make comparative analyses of these phenomena fruitful. Solidarities grounded in these forms of affinity offer a powerful basis for political mobilization. In the United States and many other multi-cultural polities, historically unequal treatment of particular groups—in the American case, racial minority categories, or African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans—creates dilemmas ensuring that the values of equality, justice and democracy are realized. It also calls into question the norms that underlie the constitutional order and are assured to all racial groups. In different ways, most multi-cultural states face the challenge of assuring to all racial, ethnic and religious groups that they enjoy equal standing and that their aspirations can be met within the framework of the polity.

This course will first seek to understand race, ethnicity, and religion as political phenomena. Doctrines and ideologies of incorporation and solidarity normally associated with states (or communities claiming the right to form states) will then be considered, in particular the powerful creed of nationalism. Cultural identities are not static, unchanging patterns of solidarity; they are dynamic, changing orientations whose processes of formation and activation require examination.

We will consider in detail the United States as a multi-cultural polity. The formation of a national society will be reviewed as an historical process, and the various sources of the American population explored. Particular attention will be given to the situation of racial minorities, who, in various ways at different periods, have experienced discriminatory or unequal treatment at the hands of the state or the dominant society.

We will conclude with a review of various policy issues arising in multi-cultural societies. Accommodation of difference in multi-cultural polities is a compelling challenge; closely examined, the great majority of contemporary nation-states are diverse in the ethnic, racial and religious composition of their citizenries. Catastrophes such as Bosnia and Rwanda are grim warnings of the consequences of a failure to meet this challenge.

Course Objectives

The fundamental objective of the course is to provide the student with an analytical framework for understanding the political dynamics of multi-cultural societies. Above all, the course aspires to offer its members a better understanding of the politics of
cultural pluralism in the United States. Multi-cultural issues will be central to 21st century American politics. Our exploration of these questions in the lectures, section discussions, and readings should help prepare course participants for the policy challenges of tomorrow.

**Course Requirements**

Regular attendance at lectures is indispensable; the reading material is designed to supplement and not duplicate the lectures. In addition to keeping up with the assigned reading, I encourage you to subscribe to a good daily newspaper like the *New York Times*. The paper version of the *New York Times* is available at a substantial discount to students and it is free on line. Reading a good newspaper will enhance your understanding of the lectures and make you better able to participate in class discussions. Attendance at the section meetings is also an obligation. The grade for section participation will be partly based on regular attendance.

Students will be expected to complete the readings for each syllabus topic concurrently with class coverage.

There will be two midterm exams and final examination. The latter will be comprehensive. The final exam will take place at 12:25 pm on Wednesday May 16th. All examinations will be of an essay type. Students affiliated with the McBurney Center should see me about exam arrangements and any other accommodations.

**Course Evaluation**

The final grade will be determined according to the following criteria:

- First Examination........................................25%
- Second Examination.....................................25%
- Section Participation.....................................10%
- Final Examination.......................................40%

**Books Recommended for Purchase**

The following books are required reading for the course and recommended for purchase. They are available at the Rainbow Book Store, 426 Gilman Street.

- Mary C. Waters. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America.*

All books may be found in the Helen C. White Library Reserve Room.
Office Hours:

B. Marquez: Wednesdays 1:15 to 3:15 and by appointment. 403 North Hall. marquez@polisci.wisc.edu

J. Edelson: Monday 10:55 to 11:55 and Friday 12:10 to 1:10. 121 North Hall. edelson@wisc.edu

S. McNulty: Wednesdays 3:30-5:30. Education Building Lobby. smcnulty2@wisc.edu

COURSE OUTLINE/TOPICS

Week One. January 22nd – 25th

Course Assignments, Syllabus Distributed
Overview and Introduction
America’s first Black President

Week Two January 28th – February 1st

What is Ethnicity? What is Race?
Racial Boundaries and Identity
Religion and Identity

Week Three. February 4th – February 8th

The Modern State and Identity Formation
Nation and Nationalism

Sections Discuss: Amartya Sen. Identity and Violence.

Week Four. February 11th – February 15th

Understanding Racial and Cultural Conflict
Critical Race Theory
Video: A Class Apart

Sections Discuss: Waters. Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America.
Week Five. February 18th – February 22nd

Cultural Pluralism and Assimilation
Symbols and Psychological Dimensions: Race, Class & Culture

Week Six. February 25th – March 1st

First Mid Term Exam (February 25th)

Colonial Origins of American Multi-Cultural State
Thomas Jefferson on Democracy and Participation

Week Seven. March 4th – March 8th

Native Americans and the New Nation
Contemporary Native American Identities
Video: Who Owns the Past?

Sections Discuss: Haney Lopez. White By Law.

Week Eight. March 11th – March 15th

White Ethnic Immigration and Mobility
African Americans and the Legacy of Slavery

Week Nine. March 18th – March 22nd

African Americans, Migration and Mobility
Guest Lecturer Professor Joe Salmons: “German Immigrants Who Didn’t Learn English in Wisconsin.”
Latinos, Conquest and Annexation

Spring Recess March 23rd – March 31st

Week Ten. April 1st – April 5th

Asian Americans: A Model Minority?
The Japanese Internment and Mobility

Sections Discuss: Steinberg. The Ethnic Myth: Race Ethnicity and Class in America.
Week Eleven. April 8th – April 12th

Is Ethnic and Racial Conflict Inevitable? One, Two, Many Canadas
Video: Blood and Belonging.

Sections Continue Discussing: Steinberg. The Ethnic Myth: Race Ethnicity and Class in America.

Week Twelve. April 15th -- April 19th

Second Mid Term Exam (April 15th)

The Civil Rights Movement in the United States
Civil Rights and the Dilemma of Formal Equality

Week Thirteen. April 22nd -- April 26th

The American Civil Rights Movement: A Legal Perspective (McNulty)
Reparations for Slavery in the United States

Sections Discuss: Kanstroom. Aftermath.

Week Fourteen. April 29th -- May 3rd

Opposition to Immigration: An Historical Perspective (Edelson)
The Prospects for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Week Fifteen. May 6th – May 10th

Bridging the Racial Divide
Conclusions, Policy Reflections
Review for Final Exam

Sections Discuss: Wilson and Taub. There Goes the Neighborhood.