The Political Economy of Race

In the United States and many other countries, civil society contains cleavages rooted in race, ethnicity, and religion. This course will explore the economic underpinnings of racial politics in the United States. It will examine the issues of racial group mobility from a historical perspective as well as the problems faced by racial and ethnic minorities in an era of economic restructuring. Debates surrounding questions of racism, assimilation, and identity politics will be incorporated into a discussion of policy formulations aimed at achieving collective goals and values such as equality, justice, and democracy in American society. The course will first seek to understand the changing nature of ethnic and racial boundaries. Racial and ethnic identities are not static, unchanging patterns of social solidarity. They are dynamic, changing orientations, whose processes of formation and activism require close examination.

The course will consist of lectures and discussion sessions. I will lecture on various topics noted in the class outline, often beginning with a discussion of current events as they relate to race and ethnicity. I encourage you to bring questions to class and to respond to issues I may raise. In addition to keeping up with the assigned reading, I ask that you subscribe to a good daily newspaper like the *New York Times* (available at a substantial discount to students). Reading a good newspaper will enhance your understanding of the lectures and make you better able to participate in class discussions. This class is designed to sharpen your analytical skills, so any information on current events you can bring to the class will help you engage in a dialogue with your fellow students and me.

The following books are on reserve and have been ordered at the Rainbow Book Store for purchase:

Christopher S. Parker and Matt Barreto. *Change They Can’t Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America.*


Daniel Q. Guillion *The Political Power of Protest: Minority Activism and Shifts in Public Policy.*

Rogers Smith and Desmond King. *Still a House Divided: Race and Politics in Obama's America.*


*Selected Chapters*
Course Requirements

I. Class Participation

This class emphasizes reading and discussion. Extra credit will be given for participation above and beyond the call of duty.

II. Book Critiques

You will be required to write five (5) book critiques. You are asked to analyze the author’s thesis, methods, evidence, and conclusions of the reading assignments. Guidelines will be handed out in class.

Time will be set aside to discuss all of the assigned readings. In order to facilitate our critique of the assigned readings, all students will be assigned to a small discussion group. On the days when discussions of the assigned readings are scheduled, students in these groups will spend about fifteen minutes reading each others papers, offering constructive criticism to one another, and raising issues and questions to be brought before the whole class.

Everyone will be required to write a critique of Smith and King’s book, *Still a House Divided*. You can then choose four other books from the reading list to critique.

Please note, even if you have not written a critique during a given week, it is still essential that you read the assigned books each week before coming to class. It is not possible to put off any of the readings before the final exam and expect to do well in the class.

III. A Mid Term and a Final Exam.

All reading materials and lectures will be fair game for the exams. The final exam will be comprehensive.

*Grades* will be determined using the following weighing scheme:

- Book Critiques………………………………..40% (8% each)
- Mid Term Exam…………………………….30%
- Final Exam………………………………….30%
- Class Participation…………………………up to 5% extra credit
Students must complete all required work in order to be eligible to receive a passing grade in the course. In calculating the final grade, number grades rather than letter grades will be averaged. Make up exams will be given and late papers accepted without a penalty only in the case of a medical emergency.

Office Hours:

Wednesdays from 9:00 to 11:00 or by appointment, 403 North Hall. I can be reached via email at marquez@polisci.wisc.edu

Feel free to make an appointment to see me or drop by during my office hours. I welcome students.

CALENDAR

Week One. September 4th: Introduction

Wednesday: Course objectives and assignments.

Week Two. September 9th & 11th: White Immigrants and SES Mobility

Monday: Some Current Data on Race and Ethnicity. Race as a constructed Category.

Wednesday: Theories of Assimilation and Acculturation.

Week Three. September 16th & 18th: Economic and Political Change

Monday: African and Mexican Americans in the Political Economy.

Wednesday: Class discussion of Smith and King. Still a House Divided, chapters 1 – 5, 8 & 9.

Week Four. September 23rd & 25th: The Civil Rights Movement

Monday: World War II and the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement

Wednesday: The Chicano Movement/The Black Power Movement.

Week Five. September 30th & October 2nd: The Civil Rights Movement.

Monday: The 1960s Riots and the End of the Civil Rights Movement

Wednesday: Class discussion of Guillion. The Political Power of Protest.
Week Six. October 7th & 9th: Theories of Race and Racism

Monday: Are Asians a Model Minority? (cont.)

Wednesday: Racism, Colorism, and Cultural Difference

Week Seven. October 14th & 16th: Theories of Race and Racism

Monday: Are Latinos Remaking the Color Line?

Wednesday: Discuss: *Citizens of Asian America* with Professor Cindy I-Fen Cheng as our special guest. Critique Due.

Week Eight. October 21st & 23rd: Theories of Race and Class

Monday: Racial Discrimination in Everyday Life.

Wednesday: Hate Crimes and Racial Profiling.

Week Nine. October 28th & 30th: The Continuing Significance of Race

Monday: The Trayvon Martin Case. Study guide for mid term exam handed out.


Week Ten. November 4th & 6th: Race in the Political Process

Monday: Mid Term Exam


Week Eleven. November 11th & 13th: The Backlash Over Illegal Immigration

Monday: Contemporary Trends in Immigration

Wednesday: Prospects for Comprehensive Immigration Reform
Week Twelve. November 18th & 20th: Racism in American Politics

Monday:  Racial Categories in Latin America and Mexico.

Wednesday: Arab Americans, Race and Ethnocentrism.

Week Thirteen. November 25th & 27th: Racism in American Politics

Monday:  Video. “Caught in the Crossfire: Arab-Americans in Wartime.”

Wednesday: Discuss:  Jamal and Naber. Race and Arab Americans Before and After 911, chapters 1 – 4, 8 – 12. Critique Due.

*****Thanksgiving Recess November 28 – December 1*****

Week Fourteen. December 2nd & 4th: Bridging the Racial Divide.

Monday:  Race, Religion and Politics.

Wednesday: Race, Religion and Politics (cont).

Week Fifteen. December 9th & 11th: Bridge Over the Racial Divide?

Monday:  Class discussion of Parker and Barreto. Change They Can’t Believe In. Book critique due.

Wednesday: Summary and review for the final exam.