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 those in 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 are 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 online. 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 Sunday May 11th. 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 W. Gilman Street.

- Desmond King and Rogers Smith. *Still a House Divided: Race and Politics in Obama's America*. (selected chapters)
- Daniel Kanstroom. *Aftermath: Deportation Law and the New American Diaspora*.
- 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 1:30 to 3:30 and by appointment. 403 North Hall. marquez@polisci.wisc.edu

J. Edelson: TBD edelson@wisc.edu

R. Schwartz: TBD raschwartz4@wisc.edu

**COURSE OUTLINE/TOPICS**

**Week One. January 21st – 24th**

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

**Week Two January 27th – 31st**

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

**Week Three. February 3rd – February 7th**

The Modern State and Identity Formation
Nation and Nationalism


**Week Four. February 10th – February 14th**

Critical Race Theory
Rational Applications of Problematic Beliefs: How Americans Translate Prejudices to Political Preferences (Edelson)
Video: *A Class Apart*

Sections Discuss: Waters. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America.*
Week Five. February 17th – February 21st

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

Week Six. February 24th – February 28th

First Mid Term Exam February 24th

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

Week Seven. March 3rd – March 7th

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

Week Eight. March 10th – March 14th

Toward a Pluricultural State: The Struggle for Indigenous Rights in Guatemala
(Schwartz)
White Ethnic Immigration and Mobility
African Americans and the Legacy of Slavery

Spring Recess March 15th – March 23rd

Week Nine. March 24th – March 28th

African Americans, Migration and Mobility
Guest Lecturer Professor Joe Salmons: “German Immigrants Who Didn’t Learn English in Wisconsin.” (March 26th)
Latinos, Conquest and Annexation

Week Ten. March 31st – April 4th

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 7th – April 11th

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

Week Twelve. April 14th - April 18th

Second Mid Term Exam (April 14th)

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

Week Thirteen. April 21st - April 26th

The American Civil Rights Movement
Reparations for Slavery in the United States

Sections Discuss: Kanstroom. Aftermath.

Week Fourteen. April 28th - May 2nd

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

Week Fifteen. May 5th – May 9th

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