

Racial and Ethnic Politics

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Sample Undergraduate Course Syllabus

Instructor: Seyoung Jung (seyoung4@illinois.edu)

Course Description

This course is about racial and ethnic politics in the U.S., focusing primarily on African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and Whites. It is designed to explore conceptual and methodological issues while focusing on how racial and ethnic groups shape and are shaped by the American political system. Among the topics to be covered include the meaning of race and ethnicity, the history of racial and immigration politics, prejudice, group participation and mobilization, political representation, and public opinion.

Course Goals

The reason to take the course is to learn about the roles that race and ethnicity play (and have played) in American politics, both at the institutional and individual levels. The course is beneficial because it should help all students –regardless of major or interest level –to be better consumers of news about politics and more analytical evaluators of policy impacts (particularly the implicit or unintended consequences that various proposals can have on different groups in society.) By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Apply previous knowledge of politics (e.g. institutions, policies, behaviors) to the case of race/ethnicity in the U.S.
- Summarize, analyze, and develop understandings and measures of race and ethnicity.
- Compare how theories and policies apply to different groups in society.
- Explain and evaluate how racism is studied in individuals, policies, and institutions.
- Construct a survey, produce survey results, compare responses, and evaluate how well the data fit with pre-existing theories.

Attendance and Learning Checks

This course meets regularly per school policy. I will not take attendance but hand out one learning check question at the beginning of the class. 5% of your grade will be based on this attendance and learning checks. Repeated absences without justification (defined by school policy) will be considered a reason to fail the course. Students may have their absence excused (thereby not losing participation points) by providing notification to the instructor in advance of class, if the absence is for acceptable reasons as outlined in the Student Code

(e.g., religious observance, disability accommodation, illness, university athletic participation).

Discussion

20% of your grade will be based on participation. Participation involves both online and offline discussions. On weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, you will be asked to post an initial discussion post on a given topic. On the following week (weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15), you will be asked to post two reply posts to your classmates. Then, during the class, we will discuss the issues that came up during the online discussions. The discussion forums are a ripe place to engage with one another as you wrestle with the content covered in the module.

Project Milestones

You will be required to work on a semester-long project that culminates in an 8-10 page paper. Over the course of the project, you will gain experience as a social scientist collecting original data and interpreting it. Below are rough descriptions of the five assignments included in the project.

- Project Milestone 1: How to Measure Race and Ethnicity (8%)
- Project Milestone 2: Interviews and Survey, Part 1 (8%)
- Project Milestone 3: Interviews and Survey, Part 2 (8%)
- Project Milestone 4: Choose Paper Prompt (1%)
- Project Milestone 5: Final Research Paper (25%)

Final Exam

25% of your grade will be based on the final exam. The exam will consist of short answer questions (2-3 sentences each).

Late Policy: If you are unable to meet a particular deadline, it is your responsibility to make prior arrangements with the instructors for that given week. Otherwise, work submitted later than the deadline will receive grade reduction of 1/3 of a letter grade per day the assignment is late, and work submitted later than 12 days will receive a failing grade unless consent has been given by the instructor.

Email Policy: If you have a question about the course or an assignment, I'd encourage you to check the syllabus first to see if the answer to your question is there. You are also encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns about the course with me at office hours or after class. If you need to reach me outside of class or office hours, please send me an email and I will attempt to respond as quickly as I can within reason.

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom: Disruptions or interruptions in the classroom due to the improper use of cell phones or laptops (e.g., texting, chatting, browsing Facebook) will not be tolerated. Students who are disrupting the class will be asked to stop using their electronic device and may be asked to leave.

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

- Pew. 2015. "Multiracial in America: Proud, Diverse and Growing in Numbers." Pew Research Center Social and Demographic Trends.
- Pew. 2021. "Deep Divisions in Americans' Views of Nation's Racial History – and How To Address It." Pew Research Center.

Week 2: Conceptualization

- Diamond, Jared. 1994. "Race Without Color." *Discover* 15: 82-89.
- Chandra, Kanchan. 2006. "What is ethnic identity and does it matter?." *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 9: 397-424.

Week 3: Measurement

- Skerry, Peter. 2000. *Counting on the Census?: Race, Group Identity, and the Evasion of Politics*. Chapter 3 ("Creating Racial and Ethnic Categories"). Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Yadon, N., Ostfeld, M.C. 2020. Shades of Privilege: The Relationship Between Skin Color and Political Attitudes Among White Americans. *Polit Behav* 42, 1369–1392.

Week 4: Identity and Interests

- Waters, Mary C. 1990. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*. Chapter 3 ("Influences on Ancestry Choice"). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dawson, Michael C. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*. Chapter 4 ("Models of African-American Racial and Economic Group Interests"). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Week 5: Drawing Boundaries

- Schildkraut, Deborah. 2007. "Defining American Identity in the Twenty-First Century: How Much 'There' is There?" *Journal of Politics* 69: 597-615.
- Devos, Thierry and Mahzarin R. Banaji. 2005. "American = White?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 88: 447-466.

Week 6: Competition & Cooperation

- Sonenshein, Raphael J. 1993. *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles*. Chapter 1 ("Overview"). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- McClain, Paula et al. 2006. "Racial Distancing in a Southern City: Latino Immigrants' Views of Black Americans." *Journal of Politics* 68: 571-584.

Week 7: Stereotypes & Prejudice

- Devine, Patricia G. 1989. "Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 56: 5-18.
- Kinder, Donald R., and Cindy D. Kam. 2010. *Us Against Them: Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion*. Chapter 1 ("Four Theories in Search of Ethnocentrism") Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Week 8: Intergroup Contact Theory

- Pettigrew, Thomas F. "Intergroup contact theory." *Annual review of psychology* 49.1 (1998): 65-85.
- Enos, Ryan D. "Causal effect of intergroup contact on exclusionary attitudes." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2014): 201317670.

Week 9: Criminal Justice

- Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow*. Chapter 1 ("The Rebirth of Caste"). NY: The New Press.
- Peffley, Mark and Jon Hurwitz. 2007. "Persuasion and Resistance: Race and the Death Penalty in America." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 996-1012.

Week 10: Racial Attitudes

- Sidanius, James, Pam Singh, John J. Hetts, and Chris Federico. 2000. "It's Not Affirmative Action, It's the Blacks." In *Racialized Politics: The Debate about Racism in America*, eds. David O. Sears, Jim Sidanius, and Lawrence Bobo. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sniderman, Paul M., Gretchen C. Crosby, and William G. Howell. 2000. "The Politics of Race." In *Racialized Politics: The Debate about Racism in America*, eds. David O. Sears, Jim Sidanius, and Lawrence Bobo. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Week 11: Reparations & Race-Conscious Policies

- Hatamiya, Leslie T. 1993. *Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and the Passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988*. Chapter 1 ("The Wartime Experience") Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Kennedy, Randall. 1999. "Suspect Policy: Racial Profiling Usually isn't Racist; It Can Help Stop Crime; And It Should be Abolished." *New Republic* (Sept 13, 1999): 30-35.

Week 12: Media & Campaigns

- Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare*. Chapter 5 ("The News Media and the Racialization of Poverty") Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Berinsky, Adam J., Vincent L. Hutchings, Tali Mendelberg, Lee Shaker, and Nicholas A. Valentino. 2010. "Sex and Race: Are Black Candidates more likely to be Disadvantaged by Sex Scandals?" *Political Behavior* 33: 179-202.

Week 13: Parties and Local Governments

- Frymer, Paul. 1999. *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America*. Chapter 2 ("Competitive Parties and the 'Invisibility' of Captured Groups"). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Evans, Laura. 2011. "Expertise and Scale of Conflict: Governments as Advocates in American Indian Politics." *American Political Science Review* 105(4): 663-682.

Week 14: Representation & Empowerment

- Lublin, David. 1997. *The Paradox of Representation: Racial Gerrymandering and Minority Interests in Congress*. Chapter 3 ("The Election of Black and Latino Representatives"). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Barreto, Matt A. 2007. "¿Sí Se Puede! Latino Candidates and the Mobilization of Latino Voters." *American Political Science Review* 101: 425-441.
- Fraga, Bernard L. 2015. "Redistricting and the Causal Impact of Race on Voter Turnout." *Journal of Politics* 78: 19-34.

Week 15: Political Participation

- Leighley, J.E. and A. Vedlitz. 1999. "Race, Ethnicity and Political Participation: Competing Models and Contrasting Explanations." *Journal of Politics*. 61:4, 1092-1114
- Ocampo, Angela X., Karam Dana, Matt A. Barreto. 2018. "The American Muslim voter: Community belonging and political participation." *Social Science Research* 72: 84-99.

Week 16: Review Session