AAS/POL 320: African American Politics

Spring 2022

Lamar 127

T/TR, 1pm

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# KEY SPRING 2022 DATES

# Classes Begin: January 18

# Last day to register or add classes; refund period ends: January 31

# Mandatory drop date for non-attendance: February 7

# Paper 1: February 22

# Deadline for course withdrawals (no refund): February 28

# Midterm: March 10

# Paper 2: April 7

# Final May 5 (Noon)

PURPOSE

The design of this course is to introduce students to the history, complexity and challenges of African-American politics. We will cover three distinct eras: pre-Civil Rights, Civil Rights, and post-Civil Rights. On Blackboard, work will be organized as Units 1 and 2.

In the pre-Civil Rights era portion of the course, Unit 1, we begin with an examination of the Constitution and its role in shaping the political fortunes of African-Americans. We follow this with a discussion of Reconstruction-era politics and the slide into Jim Crow legislative and judicial fiats. Emerging from Reconstruction and Jim Crow was the development of a racial consciousness that did, and continues to structure African-American politics.

The second portion of this course, the Civil Rights era, Unit 2, concentrates on judicial and legal achievements. Typically, students are familiar with *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). We will discuss this case, but also examine other cases critical to the success of the movement. We study the constitutional arguments of those wanting to change the status quo as well as the opposition. Studying the legal foundations of these critical cases helps students better assess the success and failures of the judiciary in leading America away from Jim Crow. Next, we discuss how the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 changed the dynamics of African-American politics. In this regard, we review black partisanship, redistricting and gerrymandering, and political ideologies common in black America.

In Unit 2, we cover a gamut of contemporary issues, among them post-Civil War era politics, political economy, and how lower socioeconomic status affects black politics and the political implications of the criminal justice system on African-Americans. We examine the mass media and its oft-criticized portrayals of blacks in American society. Is this criticism justified or off-target?

Finally, in Unit 4, we examine affirmative action and its role in university admissions. We catch-up on the protest politics of 2020 emanating from the George Floyd protests? What resulted from the protests and is the change permanent or illusory? We conclude with an overview of symbolic racism and the role of race in constructing the political dialogue throughout the entirety of the American experience.

**There are no POL course requirements for this class.**

# SCHEDULE

The last page of this syllabus lists the daily schedule.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this semester, students should be able to:

* Discuss how the Constitution adjusted to changes in the political context related to the African American political experience. – Unit 1
* Describe the critical legal developments in African American political development – Units 1
* Explain the evolution in African American political development – Unit 1
* Explain the impact of housing, incarceration rates, and poverty on African American political development – Unit 2.
* Explain the evolving legal status of affirmative action – Unit 2.
* Understand and explain how racial politics defines the American political tradition – Unit 2.

We have a busy semester in front of us. With each of you contributing your best, I hope and expect you will take much from this class. I recognize that many of you enter this class with pre-conceived notions of African American politics. I cannot change minds. That is not my goal. However, what I expect is that you finish this course with a broader and more factually correct notion of African American politics.

Importantly, I ask that you respect the diverse views of fellow students and utilize common courtesies during our discussion sessions. I will deduct points from your participation grade if your behavior degrades the learning environment. I especially encourage students to ask questions, particularly if you need an item clarified or reviewed. Feel free to consult with me via email or stop by during office hours. Do *not* delay until late in the semester to seek help. By then it will be too late.

ATTENDANCE VERIFICATION

At the start of the semester, I will take a manual rollcall. If attendance is not verified, then a student is dropped from the course and any financial aid will be adjusted accordingly. The University must abide by federal guidelines to verify the participation of online students. For all course types, including thesis, internships, labs, online courses, etc., the instructor must verify your participation based on some type of participation.

MAKE-UP POLICY

I allow make-up work only if you obtain a University approved excuse. These include University-mandated COVID quarantining or representing UM at a University-approved function. In lieu of a University-approved excuse, any student failing to turn in their assignment will receive a zero on that assignment or exam.

# GRADING

I use the +/- grading scale.

Grading Scale:

A: 93-100 A-: 90-92

B+: 87-89 B: 83-86 B-: 80-82

C+: 77-79 C: 73-76 C-: 70-72

D: <70 F: < 60

Please do not ask me to calculate your grade for you.

Midterm: \_\_\_\_ x. 20 = \_\_\_\_

Final Exam: \_\_\_\_ x .25 = \_\_\_\_

Discussion Forum: \_\_\_\_ x. 15 = \_\_\_\_

Paper 1: \_\_\_\_ x .20 = \_\_\_\_

Paper 2: \_\_\_\_ x .20 = \_\_\_\_

Sum: = \_\_\_\_

The Political Science Department maintains a "C" policy. Students must make at least a grade of C or better for the course to count towards the major.

All graded assignments will be graded within ten days of submission.

# TESTS

# You will have one midterm exam on March 10 and a final comprehensive exam on May 5 (noon). Tests utilize multiple choice, short answer, fill-in-the blank and essay.

# DISCUSSION FORUMS

Discussion is **15%** of your final grade. This will be assessed through your participation in discussion prompts on Blackboard (e.g. see the schedule and prompts below). The Forums open at 8am and close on 5pm. As an example, Discussion Forum #1 is open 8am January 19 and closes at 5pm January 25. Your grade depends on your contribution to the conversation. Yes/No questions and Yes/No answers do not contribute to the discussion. To get full credit you need to respond at least once to **TWO** other classmates posts in a manner that contributes to the discussion. Answers with links to fact-based research that explain your position are ideal.

# PAPERS

**Paper Assignments: Due February 22 and April 7**

Students will turn in two 3-page writing assignments. I will post the exact paper topic and formatting requirements on Blackboard two weeks prior to the paper due date. You will need to turn your paper in on Blackboard. Each paper is worth **10%** of your final grade. I assign *any paper* turned in after the due date a **20-point penalty**.

**Papers need to abide by** [American Political Science Association format](https://www.tamiu.edu/uc/writingcenter/documents/APSAformatanddocumentation_7-30-12_JM.pdf)**.**

Please consider using the Writing Center.

MISCELLANEOUS

# Use your olemiss.edu email address and please be accessible via Blackboard.

# Email is the best way to reach me. Emails sent after 5pm will not be returned until the next workday. All work must be submitted through Blackboard.

# This syllabus is a guide for the coming semester. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, but I will do my best to adhere to this syllabus.

* **Disability Access and Inclusion**: The University of Mississippi is committed to the creation of inclusive learning environments for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your full inclusion and participation or to accurate assessment of your achievement, please contact the course instructor as soon as possible. Barriers may include, but are not necessarily limited to, time limits, difficulty with the acquisition of lecture content, inaccessible web content or the use of non-captioned or non-transcribed video and audio files. Students must also contact Student Disability Services at 662-915-7128 or [sds.olemiss.edu/](http://sds.olemiss.edu/) so that office can 1) explore if barrier removal is necessary; 2) provide you, if approved, with Instructor Notification forms; 3) facilitate the removal of curricular barriers; and 4) ensure you have equal access to the same opportunities for success that are available to all students.
* Materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection under Title 17 of the United States Code. Under certain Fair Use circumstances specified by law, copies may be made for private study, scholarship, or research. Electronic copies should not be shared with unauthorized users. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability as well as disciplinary action under University policies.
* **Student Privacy Policy**

The University of Mississippi protects the privacy of all students, including online and distance learning students, through adherence to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) through compliance with other institutional policies and procedures governing the management and security of protected information of faculty, staff, and students, and by

outlining the expectations of privacy for the university community as regards to electronic information. [Student Privacy Policy](https://secure4.olemiss.edu/umpolicyopen/ShowDetails.jsp?istatPara=1&policyObjidPara=11873531)

Academic Ethics

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, just ask. If you think something might be wrong, it probably is. No matter, just ask for clarification. Please reference the [UM M Book](https://communications.olemiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/10/MBook.pdf) for all policies regarding academic honesty, ethics, and plagiarism. Punishment for violations of academic ethics will range from loss of a letter grade on the assignment to failure in the class. The decision will be made by the faculty member in consultation with the department chair.

Students are encouraged to visit the University’s ***Keep Learning*** site (https://olemiss.edu/keeplearning/) to access information and resources related to COVID-19 support. The site provides links to University student services to facilitate and support learning.

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| **Unit** | **Day** | **Month** | **Date** | **Assignments** | **Topic** | **Discussion Forum** | **Availability** |
| 1 | Tuesday | January | 18 |  | Course Introduction |  |  |
| 1 | Thursday | January | 20 |  | America's Founding |  |  |
| 1 | Tuesday | January | 25 |  | America's Founding | 1 | 1/18 - 1/25 |
| 1 | Thursday | January | 27 |  | Jim Crow | 2 | 1/20 - 1/27 |
| 1 | Tuesday | February | 1 |  | Jim Crow | 3 | 1/25 - 2/1 |
| 1 | Thursday | February | 3 |  | Overcoming Jim Crow |  |  |
| 1 | Tuesday | February | 8 |  | Overcoming Jim Crow | 4 | 2/1 - 2/8 |
| 1 | Thursday | February | 10 |  | Civil Rights Era Laws |  |  |
| 1 | Tuesday | February | 15 |  | Civil Rights Era Laws | 5 | 2/8 - 2/15 |
| 1 | Thursday | February | 17 |  | Civil Rights Era Laws |  |  |
| 1 | Tuesday | February | 22 | **Paper 1 Due** | Partisanship | 6 | 2/15 - 2/22 |
| 1 | Thursday | February | 24 |  | Partisanship |  |  |
| 1 | Tuesday | March | 1 |  | Partisanship | 7 | 2/22 - 3/1 |
| 1 | Thursday | March | 3 |  | Redistricting |  |  |
| 1 | Tuesday | March | 8 |  | Housing Policy | 8 | 3/1 - 3/8 |
| 1 | Thursday | March | 10 | **Midterm** |  |  |  |
| 2 | Tuesday | March | 22 |  | Incarceration Politics | 9 | 3/8 - 3/22 |
| 2 | Thursday | March | 24 |  | Socioeconomics and Policy | 10 | 3/21 - 3/24 |
| 2 | Tuesday | March | 29 |  | Socioeconomics and Policy |  |  |
| 2 | Thursday | March | 31 |  | Socioeconomics and Policy | 11 | 3/24 - 3/31 |
| 2 | Tuesday | April | 5 |  | Election 2020 |  |  |
| 2 | Thursday | April | 7 | **Paper 2 Due** |  | 12 | 3/31 - 4/7 |
| 2 | Tuesday | April | 12 |  | Affirmative Action |  |  |
| 2 | Thursday | April | 14 |  | Affirmative Action | 13 | 4/7 - 4/14 |
| 2 | Tuesday | April | 18 |  | Contemporary Politics |  |  |
| 2 | Thursday | April | 21 |  | Contemporary Black Elected Officials | 14 | 4/14 - 4/21 |
| 2 | Tuesday | April | 26 |  | Election 2022 |  |  |
| 2 | Thursday | April | 28 |  | Future of Black Politics | 15 | 4/21 - 4/28 |
| 2 | Thursday | May | 5, Noon | **Final** |  |  |  |