

POL 353: Contemporary Race Relations in American Politics

Mondays and Wednesdays 4:25pm-5:45pm
Frey Hall-211

Course Syllabus-Spring 2023 (Draft version: January 9, 2023)

Contact Information

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Office Hours: Monday 1:30pm-2:30pm or by appointment ([Zoom link](#))

Course Information

Course Description

Introduces students to the dynamics of race/ethnicity in United States and specifically examines the role of race/ethnicity in American politics. To help students understand different perspectives on the topic, this course utilizes an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates theoretical frameworks, survey data, and commentary to understand concepts of race and identity.

Learning Objectives

The overarching goal of this course is to help students become familiar with not only the relevant contemporary and historical circumstances, but also various scholarly perspectives that are integral to our understanding of today's race relations in the US by the end of this course. To this end, every effort will be made to prepare the course materials and learning environments to achieve following outcomes:

- Students can better understand how a racial hierarchy shapes the contemporary American society and its significance for studying American politics.
- Students are familiar with different conceptualizations and measurements of racial attitudes and their political consequences.
- Students are familiar with different theoretical perspectives on conflicts between racial groups in the domains of US politics.
- Students can identify, critically assess and discuss important issues of race in politics.

Course Website

Brightspace will allow students to access course materials. The Brightspace system is available from any computer with access to the Internet at the following website, <https://mycourses.stonybrook.edu/>. Logging into Brightspace requires a NET ID and a Password. Use this page to obtain additional readings, electronic copies of assignments, and other course handouts and resources.

Course Materials and Copyright Statement

Course material accessed from Brightspace, SB Connect, SB Capture or a Stony Brook Course website is for the exclusive use of students who are currently enrolled in the course. Content from these systems cannot be reused or distributed without written permission of the instructor and/or the copyright holder. Duplication of materials protected by copyright, without permission of the copyright holder is a violation of the Federal copyright law, as well as a violation of Stony Brook's Academic Integrity.

Academic Integrity Statement

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty is required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please refer to the academic judiciary website at https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html.

Please pay particular attention to 'Definition' provided under 'Policies & Procedures' tab on the linked website. If you have any concerns or questions about how to cite work appropriately, please consult me or a reference librarian.

Student Accessibility Support Center (SASC) Statement

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, Stony Brook Union Suite 107, (631) 632-6748, or at sasc@stonybrook.edu. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Critical Incident Statement

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of University Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

Grading

Your overall course grade will be based on the following:

Assignments & Exams	Grade Percentage
Participation	10%
Selected Reading Discussion	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructor Evaluation of Reading Report (20%)• Instructor Evaluation of Reading Discussion (50%)• Peer Evaluations of Reading Discussion (30%)	
Experiment Proposal Assignments	40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic Approval (10%)• Detailed Outline (30%)• Experiment Proposal Submission (60%)	
Outline Peer Review	10%
Exams	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Midterm Exam (50%)• Noncumulative Final Exam (50%)	
Total	100%

Grading Scale

93+	A	73 - 76	C
90 - 92	A-	70 - 72	C-
87 - 89	B+	67 - 69	D+
83 - 86	B	63 - 66	D
80 - 82	B-	60 - 62	D-
77 - 79	C+	0-59	F

Participation (10%)

Participation grade in this class is to be earned, not to be lost. In this course, students can work to earn a higher participation grade through several different ways, such as engagements in class discussions, asking for clarifications or question, making relevant comments and offering observations during class, as well as asking questions before / after class, coming to office hours for help, or emailing me questions.

There are two unique features about participation grade component in this course. **First**, students may earn **up to 2% course extra credit points** via active participation throughout the semester. This is, in part, to focus on promoting active class engagements via corresponding rewards. **Second**, students who do not participate in class via the aforementioned may earn at least half credit for the participation grade IF 1) they did not miss more than 1 class session AND 2) they are not disruptive during class sessions.

Selected Reading Discussion (20%)

Each student will lead a short in-class discussion of a selected article from the required course readings assigned between January 30th and May 3rd (i.e., all readings denoted by * in the course schedule except for Omi and Winant (2014)). A sign-up sheet will be circulated in class on January 23rd and January 25th. Students must sign up for one by January 25th; if a student was enrolled in the course late, they will be assigned to an available reading discussion. No more than (TBD) students may sign up for a discussion of the same reading. Students' selected reading discussion grade will be based on the following:

- Instructor Evaluation of Reading Report (20% of selected reading discussion grade; **4% of overall course grade**)
 - Each student must submit on the course Brightspace page a reading report that summarizes the selected reading in their own words **AT LEAST 24 hours prior to the start of the class session the reading is due**. For example, if you sign up for a discussion of d'Urso (2022) reading, you must submit your reading report before 4:25pm EST on January 31st.
 - The reading report will be a minimum of 350 words and graded based on the extent to which it sufficiently describes/explains the key puzzle(s), research question(s), theory, hypotheses, data & measures, and results, as well as its significance, of the selected reading.
 - The submitted reading report will then be distributed to all other students in class prior to the discussion.
- Instructor Evaluation of Reading Discussion (50% of selected reading discussion grade; **10% of overall course grade**)
 - The discussion for which each student signed up will be held towards the end of class (about 15-20 min) on the date of the selected reading is due.
 - Given that a complete reading report was submitted on time, the student's discussion will focus on the significance of their selected reading whereby they will describe a question based on the selected article and articulate why it is important for us to deliberate in relations to race relations in the US.
- Peer Evaluations of Reading Discussion (30% of selected reading discussion grade; **6% of overall course grade**)
 - All other students will complete an anonymous evaluation of the discussion in terms of the extent to which 1) they find the reading report to be effective in its ability to help others gain a clear understanding of the selected article and 2) they find the content of the discussion incisive. Peer evaluation grade component will be based on evaluations of (TBD) randomly selected students.

This course activity has three main goals. First, it is to ensure that each student can read and think carefully about at least one scholarly article assigned in the course. Second, it aims to help students develop/improve their ability to deliver deliberated thoughts and ideas more effectively. Last but not least, it is intended to motivate students to hold one another accountable at least with regards to the assigned course readings.

Experiment Proposal Assignments (40%)

Over the course of the semester, each student will write a paper that proposes an experiment related to topics covered in the course. The final paper (experiment proposal submission) will be a minimum of (TBD) words (and up to a maximum of (TBD) words). This must consist of a research question, a literature review, a hypothesis, a detailed experimental design (and methods), and a discussion of possible results. Students must first receive approval for their topic in the beginning of the semester. Each student will turn in a detailed outline which they will receive feedback on. Students will then turn in their complete experiment proposal by 4pm EST on May 3rd. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be made available on the course Brightspace page at the start of the semester.

- Topic Approval (10% of experiment proposal assignment grade; **4% of overall course grade**)
- Detailed Outline (30% of experiment proposal assignment grade; **12% of overall course grade**)
- Experiment Proposal Submission (60% of experiment proposal assignment grade; **24% of overall course grade**)

Outline Peer Review (10%)

Students will write a review for the detailed outline written by one other student in the class. The review will be a minimum of 350 words. Each review must provide a concise summary of the paper outline along with specific feedback/comments on the overall idea, organization, literature review, and specific suggestions for improvement.

Midterm Exam (10%)

There will be a midterm exam held in class on **March 8th (Wednesday)**. The midterm exam will have 30 multiple choice and true/false questions based on class lectures, as well as *some* of the assigned readings, from January 23rd to March 1st.

Final Exam (10%)

The final exam will have 30 multiple choice and true/false questions based on class lectures, as well as *some* of the assigned readings, from March 6th to May 1st (i.e., it will **NOT** be cumulative).

- **Final Exam Date/Time (Frey Hall 211): Tuesday, May 16th 2:15pm-5:00pm**

Extra Credit

Aside from the extra credit possibility via participation, there will be a couple of other opportunities through which students can earn extra course points. These will be explained on the first day of class.

Make-up Policy

Per Office of the Registrar, it is the responsibility of the student to plan a class schedule that avoids exam conflicts and too many exams in the same day. Students should notify the instructor in advance if they will be missing an exam and arrange to take the test early—at least two weeks in advance. If you are unable to take a test due to an emergency you will need to provide evidence of the emergency (doctor note for illness, police accident report for car accident, etc). Unexcused make-up exams are allowed within one week of the original exam date but will be penalized two letter grades. **Please note that make up exams will be different from the regular exam.**

Email Policy

You are responsible for all the information that is sent to the class via email. If for some reason you cannot receive email through your Stony Brook email address, it is your responsibility to let the instructor know as soon as possible.

Course Schedule

All readings will be posted on Brightspace. They will be labeled by corresponding week(s) listed in the course schedule. Lecture slides will be posted to Brightspace. These are outlines of the class sessions and are **NOT** a substitute for taking notes during class sessions. **Should there be any change to the course syllabus, you will be notified in advance and an updated syllabus will be posted on the course Brightspace page ASAP.** Required readings will be denoted by *. For any required reading(s) listed under a given class session, you are expected to have completed the reading(s) *before* the start of the class session.

Course Introduction: January 23rd (Monday)

- January 23rd (Monday)
 - No Reading

Weeks 1-2: January 25th (Wednesday)—February 1st (Wednesday)

Key questions, readings and assignments

- What do we mean by race or ethnicity in America? In what ways have the race relations in postbellum America changed and in what ways have they *not* changed?
 - Readings
 - * **For January 25th:**
 - *Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 2014. *Racial Formation in the United States*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge. Ch. 4, “The Theory of Racial Formation”, pp. 105-136.
 - * **For January 30th:**
 - No reading
 - * **For February 1st:**
 - *d’Urso, Amanda Sahar. 2022. “A Boundary of White Inclusion: The Role of Religion in Ethnoracial Assignment.” *Perspectives on Politics*: 1–18. doi:10.1017/S1537592722003309.
 - Assignments
 - * No assignments due in Weeks 1-2

Week 3: February 6th (Monday)—February 8th (Wednesday)

Key questions, readings and assignments

- This week will serve as a “experimental design primer” in order to help students with regards to their study design for the experiment proposal assignments.
 - Readings
 - * **For February 6th**
 - No reading
 - * **For February 8th:**
 - No reading
 - Assignments & Notes
 - * No assignments due in Week 3

Weeks 4-6: February 13th (Monday)—March 1st (Wednesday)

Key questions, readings and assignments

- What are political and racial attitudes and how do we measure them? What are implicit attitudes? What can implicit racial attitudes tell us and what can they *not* tell us? Can racial attitudes and political attitudes be separated from one another?
 - Readings
 - * **For February 13th:**
 - No readings
 - * **For February 15th:**
 - *Banks, Antoine J. and Heather M. Hicks. 2016. “Fear and Implicit Racism: Whites’ Support for Voter ID Laws.” *Political Psychology* 37(5): 641-658.
 - * **For February 20th:**
 - No readings
 - * **For February 22nd:**
 - *Feldman, Stanley and Leonie Huddy. 2005. “Racial Resentment and White Opposition to Race-Conscious Programs: Principles or Prejudice?” *American Journal of Political Science* 49(1): 168-183.

- * **For February 27th:**
 - No readings
- * **For March 1st:**
 - *Stephens-Dougan, Lafleur. 2022. "White Americans' Reactions to Racial Disparities in COVID-19." *American Political Science Review*: 1–8. doi: 10.1017/S000305542200051X.
- Assignments & Notes
 - * **Experiment Proposal Assignments: Approved topic due at 4pm EST on February 13th**

Week 7: March 6th (Monday)—March 8th (Wednesday)

Key questions, readings and assignments

- Midterm exam week
 - Readings
 - * **For March 6th:**
 - No readings
 - * **For March 8th:**
 - No readings
 - Assignments & Notes
 - * Midterm exam held in class on March 8th (Wednesday)

Week 8: March 13th (Monday)—March 15th (Wednesday)

Key questions, readings and assignments

- Spring recess week
 - Readings
 - * **For March 13th:**
 - No readings - **NO CLASS**
 - * **For March 15th:**
 - No readings - **NO CLASS**
 - Assignments & Notes
 - * **NO CLASS on March 13th & March 15th: Spring recess (3/13-3/19)**

Weeks 9-12: March 20th (Monday)—April 12th (Wednesday)

Key questions, readings and assignments

- What underlies conflicts along the racial group lines? How do inter-racial conflicts manifest in the political realm? What roles does identification with a racial group play in these conflicts?
 - Readings
 - * **For March 20th:**
 - No readings
 - * **For March 22nd:**
 - *Jardina, Ashley and Spencer Piston. 2022. "The Effects of Dehumanizing Attitudes about Black People on Whites' Voting Decisions." *British Journal of Political Science* 52(3): 1076-1098.
 - * **For March 27th:**
 - No readings
 - * **For March 29th:**
 - *Goldman, Seth K. 2017. "Explaining White Opposition to Black Political Leadership: The Role of Fear of Racial Favoritism." *Political Psychology* 38(5): 721-739.
 - * **For April 3rd:**
 - No readings
 - * **For April 5th:**

- *Pérez, Efrén O. 2015. “Ricochet: How Elite Discourse Politicizes Racial and Ethnic Identities.” *Political Behavior* 37(1): 155–180.
- * **For April 10th:**
 - No readings
- * **For April 12th:**
 - *TBA
- Assignments & Notes
 - * **Experiment Proposal Assignments: Detailed outline due at 4pm EST on March 29th**
 - * **Outline peer review due at 4pm EST on April 12th**

Weeks 13-15: April 17th (Monday)—May 3rd (Wednesday)

Key questions, readings and assignments

- How can a common ingroup identity be forged among Americans of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and what may be the limitations?
 - Readings
 - * **For April 17th:**
 - No readings
 - * **For April 19th:**
 - *Carter, Niambi M. and Efrén O. Pérez. 2016. “Race and Nation: How Racial Hierarchy Shapes National Attachments.” *Political Psychology* 37(4): 497-513.
 - * **For April 24th:**
 - No readings
 - * **For April 26th:**
 - *TBA
 - * **For May 1st:**
 - No readings
 - * **For May 3rd:**
 - *Craig, Maureen A., Linda X. Zou, Hui Bai and Michelle M. Lee. 2022. “Stereotypes About Political Attitudes and Coalitions Among U.S. Racial Groups: Implications for Strategic Political Decision-Making.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 48(9): 1349-1366.
 - Assignments & Notes
 - * **Experiment Proposal Assignments: Experiment proposal submission due at 4pm EST on May 3rd**

Final Exam

- Location
 - **Frey Hall 211**
- Date/Time
 - **Tuesday, May 16th 2:15pm-5:00pm**