Course Description

Some of the most enduring divisions and violent conflicts in American social and political life center on race. The goal of this course is to explore, discuss, and better understand the relationship between perceptions of racial identity, attributions of racial difference, and politics, broadly defined. At the forefront of this course are some core questions about democratic and social theory. With respect to democratic theory, we will deliberate repeatedly over whether racial order and inequality are essential to, or an exception from, the fulfillment of liberal democracy in the US. That is, are racial and ethnic hierarchies built into the foundation of American history, politics, and policy, or eradicable flaws in an otherwise just and democratic society? What role, if any, do racial attachments play in shaping decision making across a range of core political arenas? How do the perceptions about and consequences of race vary across the multiplicity of racial groups in American society? We conclude by considering emerging questions that are likely to dominate the field of racial politics in the future.

Course Requirements

The course is a graduate-level seminar organized around intensive readings of books and research articles. Work for the course consists of the following three elements:

(1) Prepare for every class by reading and digesting the assigned material.

(2) Actively participate in class discussions. In addition, each student will be assigned the task of introducing and briefly critiquing one of the readings each class. In their overview, students should highlight the question, research design, evidence, results, and implications of their reading as well as note any major flaws.

(3) Write a research paper on some aspect of American racial politics. The paper should be a quality product that could ultimately be publishable – although you do not have to complete all parts of the project for this class. The paper should be different from papers you have written for other classes or should show substantial progress from previous work. Please see me to discuss different projects and the exact requirements for the paper. I have several data sets that you are welcome to use for this purpose.

The Readings

I will endeavor to have all books and articles available for you to read in one form or another. In other words, you can buy all or many of the books yourself or you can make copies of mine. The following books are classics that are central to the race politics literature. If your interest rises
to the level of work required for the course, these books are apt to enjoy a long shelf life and you will want (now or later) your own copy to mark up. Finally, you will see that I usually list additional optional readings for any given week – these are given to you should that week’s topic be of especial interest to you. There is no expectation that these be read in addition to the week’s assigned readings.

Paul Sniderman and Edward Carmines (1997). *Reaching Beyond Race*
Marisa Abrajano and Michael Alvarez (2010). *New Faces, New Voices: The Hispanic Electorate in America*

**Student Presentations**

Students are welcome and encouraged to present their own race-related research in front of the class. Given our small class size, we will have ample time for these presentations so just let me know if and when you are interested in presenting your own in-progress research or research ideas.

**Course Outline**

**Week One: Race and American Values: Theory and Practice**
Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*, Part I, Sections 2 (Democratic Social Condition), and 3 (The Sovereignty of the People).

**Recommended Readings**


**Student Presentations**

Students are welcome and encouraged to present their own race-related research in front of the class. Given our small class size, we will have ample time for these presentations so just let me know if and when you are interested in presenting your own in-progress research or research ideas.

**Course Outline**

**Week One: Race and American Values: Theory and Practice**
Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*, Part I, Sections 2 (Democratic Social Condition), and 3 (The Sovereignty of the People).

**Recommended Readings**


**Student Presentations**

Students are welcome and encouraged to present their own race-related research in front of the class. Given our small class size, we will have ample time for these presentations so just let me know if and when you are interested in presenting your own in-progress research or research ideas.
Week Two: Race and Policy

Recommended Readings

Week 3: Race and Party Politics
Marisa Abrajano and Zoltan Hajnal Manuscript. Immigration and the New Politics of Race and Party - Selected Chapters

Recommended Readings
Week 4: Race in the Voting Booth


Recommended Readings


Week 5: Are Minorities Really Groups?

Recommended Readings

Week 6: Models of Minority Politics: Are Minorities Different?
Participation:

Party Identification:

Vote Choice:

Recommended Readings


Week 7: Minority Representation


Recommended Readings


---

**Week 8: The Challenges of Immigration**


**Recommended Readings**


Frank Bean and Gillian Stevens (2003) *America’s Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity* Chs 1, 4, 9


**Week 9: Race and Responsiveness**
Hajnal and Horowitz. N.D. Race, Well-Being, and Party

**Recommended Readings**

**TWO OPTIONS FOR WEEK 10: Emerging Questions in American Racial Politics**

**OPTION A: Inter-Group Coalition-Building and Conflict Processes**

Some of the following readings

**Theories:**

**Empirical Results:**


Recommended Readings


OPTION B: The Future of Race in America


Recommended Readings:


