

RACE AND CLASS IN AMERICAN POLITICS

Special Topics in English: Interdisciplinary Studies C
Department of British and American Studies,
Faculty of Foreign Studies, Nanzan University
Fourth Quarter, Academic Year 2017

Instructor: Dr. Ayako Hiramatsu
Class Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 1st Period, 9:20-10:50am
Classroom Location: Q310
Office Hour: Thursdays 12:30-13:30pm
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I. Introduction

Race remains to this day one of the boundary markers that define American politics. Though many Americans do not always talk about its presence in polite conversations, and perhaps it is not an easy subject to fathom for those who were born and raised in a seemingly more homogenous society, such as Japan's, ascriptive racial categories have characterized the meaning of citizenship and the tenor of political debate over public policies in America. Because current political divisions in the United States are intertwined in many intricate ways with the country's history on race, one cannot fully comprehend the landscape of American politics without adequate understandings of this history and its present manifestations.

This class examines how and why historically race shaped the development of American public policies, and in what ways and to what extent America has presently overcome and embraced its divisive legacies. The first half of the course covers the country's history of politics on race. Why did slavery endure in the United States even after the nation's founding, contrary to the proclamation that "all men are created equal" in the Declaration of Independence? After the abolition of slavery during the Civil War, why did the system of Jim Crow emerge as a new regime of racial subjugation by the end of the nineteenth century and survive well into the middle of the 1960s? The second half looks at the forces that push for and against racial equality in contemporary America through a number of public policy arenas, such as workplace discrimination, housing and criminal justice reform. How have political actors across the American political institutions and in the society tried to address the issues of race? Race has also intersected with the formation of economic class in America, and the intersections will be pointed out throughout the course.

Pre-requisites: It is highly recommended that students have already taken the American Politics class and have some basic understandings of the history and the political institutions of the United States.

Course Format: This class time will be divided between lectures by the instructor and student discussions.

Textbook for purchase: Students must obtain their own copy of the following book, which is available at the Kinokuniya Bookstore on campus, or online bookstores such as Amazon

Desmond S. King and Rogers M. Smith. 2011. *Still a House Divided: Race and Politics in Obama's America*. Princeton University Press.

II. Course Objectives

1. Students learn about the ways in which opposing views on race, fought over the country's system of separation of powers and checks and balances, shaped the

historical development of American public policies.

2. Students learn the extent to which race still influences the contemporary political debate in the United States.
3. Students will also learn to write and orally demonstrate complicated and nuanced ideas to the audience in English.

III. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Introduction

1. Monday, November 20th. *“White Nationalism and American Politics.”*
Special Guest Lecture by Dr. Tracey Teslow of University of Cincinnati. Lecture room location: S-22. Your attendance for this session is required and it counts towards the participation grade.
2. Thursday, November 23rd. *Course Introduction and Reflections on the Guest Lecture*

Historical Trajectories of Racial Alliances in America

3. Monday, November 27th. *Race, Class and State Building in America*
King and Smith, pp. 3-16
4. Thursday, November 30th. *Opposing Political Orders Over Race*
King and Smith, pp. 16-31
5. Monday, December 4th. *Slavery and Civil War*
King and Smith, pp. 35-54
6. Thursday, December 7th. *Resurgence of Racial Hierarchy since the late 19th Century*
King and Smith, pp. 54-78
7. Monday, December 11th. *The Long Civil Rights Movement*
King and Smith, pp. 78-89

Modern Racial Orders through Public Policy Developments

8. Thursday, December 14th. *Affirmative Action in Workplace: Creation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee and the Roles of the Judiciary*
King and Smith, pp. 93-112
9. Monday, December 18th. *Affirmative Action in Workplace: The Contemporary Republican Party’s Color-Blindness*
King and Smith, pp. 112-136
10. Thursday, December 21st. *Inequality in Homeownership*
King and Smith, pp. 137-167

[*December 23rd – January 5th, Winter break]

11. Thursday, January 11th. *Elections, Redistricting and the Difficulty of Multiracial Voter Coalition Formation*
King and Smith, pp. 168-191
12. Monday, January 15th. *Public Education and Census Racial Categories*

King and Smith, pp. 192-214

13. Thursday, January 18th. *Criminal Justice System Reform*
King and Smith, pp. 215-234

14. Monday, January 22nd. *Immigration Policies*
King and Smith, pp. 234-249

Conclusion

15. Thursday, January 25th.
King and Smith, pp. 253-292

It should be noted that the reading assignments for each class will be quite heavy (often more than 25 pages). Students are expected to have read the materials before coming to class and be ready to discuss about them in class. Besides finishing the readings prior to class, students must email brief comments on the materials to the instructor by 8:30am on the day of the class (see below for details).

IV. Assignments:

There are three kinds of assignments for the students to complete: emailing comments to the instructor in response to the day's reading, an in-class presentation and the final paper. The details are explained below.

- a) *Sending in comments*: You must email your response to the day's reading assignment to the instructor at <ahirama [at] nanzan-u.ac.jp> by 8:30am in the morning of the class. These comments could address the main problems raised in the text and your thoughts on them. The comments can be brief, but should be at least 50 words in length. You must send comments in at least seven of the twelve class meetings in which readings are given if you want to receive any credit for the participation score.
- b) *In-class presentation*: Each student will make a presentation in front of the class based on one of the reading assignments given between classes #3 and #14. The presentation should be fifteen-minute long, and it should consist of a) summary of the main claims of the reading, b) the student's response and thoughts on the authors' analysis, and c) discussion questions for the audience in the class. Since the readings contain a fair number of references to the historical figures and events, you will need to do a brief research on them by yourself before making the presentation.
- c) *Final paper*: Write a paper on one of the topics that come up in King and Smith's *Still a House Divided*. The topic can be a public policy, a court case, an interest group organization, a social movement, a political party platform from a certain year, or a political figure, but it should be relevant to the politics of race that the course examines throughout the quarter. You need to do at least two things in the paper: 1) Conduct additional research about the topic from academic sources, such as the university library collection including the electronic resources. 2) Discuss its significance in the context of King and Smith's argument about racial alliances.

The paper should be more than 1200 words in length. Double space, 12 point font, and attach a cover and a full bibliography.

There are a number of citation formats, including, but not limited to, the American Psychological Association (APA) style, Modern Language Association (MLA) style, and the Chicago Manual of Style. Though which citation format one uses is entirely up to each student, one important thing is that it must remain consistent. For details of the citation format, consult *Basic Steps to Writing Research Papers* by David E. Kluge and Matthew A. Taylor (Cengage Learning), which you may have used in your English writing classes. Also, *Purdue Online Writing Lab* is a useful website. Check out <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>

The paper's due date is Wednesday, January 31st, 2018. You should submit two copies of your final paper: one printed copy should be dropped into the report submission box in the hallway of the L-building 7th floor; also an electronic copy should be emailed to the instructor.

To aid students in conducting research for writing their final papers, they should sign up for LexisNexis© and have a look at the Westlaw in the university library. Further instructions will be given in class.

V. Course Grade Evaluation

Final grade will be based on the following components: discussion participation (10%), in-class presentation assignment (45%) and final paper (45%). Students missing more than three classes will not be given class participation score.

VI. Absence Policies

Students missing more than five classes will automatically receive an S grade and will not earn credits for this course. This is a university-wide policy and there will be no exceptions. This class will not accommodate makeups for student absences unless they are officially recognized by the university. If the students miss more than three classes, their participation grade will be zero.

VII. Instructor Office Hours

Students should consult the instructor if they have questions about the class, the readings and the assignments. The walk-in office hour is during the lunch time on Thursdays. If students prefer some other time to meet, they should set up an appointment with the instructor via email. The office is located at Room #801 in L building.

VIII. On Academic Integrity

All of your work must be produced by you and nobody else. Plagiarism is wrong and will not be tolerated. If you violate the academic integrity rule of the university, your behavior will be penalized with sanctions that may be more consequential than just failing the course. In case you do not know the penalty and official rules for academic misconduct, consult the Nanzan University Academic Integrity Rule Book.