
Political Science 205

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Race and Ethnic Politics

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OFFICE HOURS:
Mondays and Wednesdays, 1-4
and by appointment

This course examines the tension between liberal ideas of equality and citizenship and the modern American state. Given 1.) liberalism's traditional value of limited government and 2.) persistent inequalities in American society, how can/ should the state act in order to ameliorate the influence of race and society? Moreover, given American liberalism's reliance on self-interest and majority rule as fundamental mechanisms for achieving political outcomes, can the American political tradition furnish effective racial justice, or must these commitments be reevaluated? And how much can past experience shape our evaluations of future strategies for groups seeking to achieve political power?

The course readings presume no single answer, but seek to explore the different ways that the ascriptive features of culture and politics shape the way we view ourselves and one another. Peter Skerry's book on the census is included to raise questions about how individuals view their own identity, and whether and how the state should take those identities into consideration. Noel Ignatiev's book, *How the Irish Became White* is an examination of how one ethnic minority moved from one ascriptive categorization into another, which exposes the flexibility of what it means to be "white."

Richard Valelly's *The Two Reconstructions* looks to politics to determine the nature of racial oppression. In it, Valelly examines how essentially the same problem—enfranchisement—met two different fates at the hands of two different political alignments. Gerald Gamm's *Urban Exodus* makes the argument that culture shapes groups' response to racism. Peter Skerry's *Mexican Americans: The Ambivalent Minority*, raises provocative questions about how and whether political strategies shape the capacity of groups to assimilate. Finally, John Skrentny's *The Minority Rights Revolution* examines how institutional and rhetorical changes in mid-twentieth century America dramatically altered the nature of group politics in America, and again raises questions about how different group strategies account for varying degrees of success among minority groups.

Course Requirements:

There will be two 6-8 page papers, and two in-class examinations. Your grade will be based on the following formula:

20% Paper 1, 6-8 pages (September 28)

20% Midterm examination (October 28)

25% Paper 2, 6-8 pages (November 16)

25% Final examination (to be held at regularly-scheduled exam time)

10% Participation

Paper topics will be distributed in class, and will be due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Unexcused late papers will be counted off a half letter grade per day (including weekends), and will not be accepted after one week. Students must keep a copy of all work submitted until final grades have been posted. Your grade will be evaluated according to the following:

- Effective analysis of a range of conflicting and diverse material
- Accurate explanation of course concepts
- Original thought that addresses substantive questions raised in class, but that also pushes beyond the boundaries, showing that you have thought about the subject on your own

Examinations will be given during class time. Both will be comprehensive and “closed-book.” Should you anticipate that you will not be able to be present on the day of an exam, you should inform me as soon as possible. The only way you can be guaranteed a make-up exam is if you schedule one ahead of time.

Participation will be evaluated on your attendance and your contribution to discussion. You are strongly advised to attend every class meeting, and you should provide me with an college-approved excuse when you are forced to miss. Students who are unable to attend class because of religious practice will be excused upon notifying me. Students who anticipate absences because of their participation in a sport or extracurricular activity should inform me of this at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as absences are anticipated. I will generally be understanding about a reasonable number of excused absences, but **each unexcused absence, and even an accumulation of excessive excused absences, will result in a deduction from your participation grade.**

Students are expected to participate when discussion is called for, but this not an episode of “Hardball.” On television talk shows, the smooth-tongued and the quick-witted are rewarded. The academic experience, on the other hand, is a search for truth, and students are expected to display conscientious consideration of their fellow students and of the material. Finally, please be aware that “negative contributions” to the classroom, such as disrespect for the classroom environment and poor preparation, will be counted against you.

Academic honesty is expected of all students. All work produced in this course must be the student’s own original work that has been prepared for this course alone. Any violation of this expectation will be taken seriously. Students who plagiarize an assignment will receive a grade of zero (0) for that assignment, and will be referred to their class dean for further action. A grade of zero will make it exceedingly unlikely that you will receive a satisfactory final grade for the course, and the college handbook outlines additional administrative procedures and penalties that may accrue, including probation, suspension, and expulsion.

Plagiarism is deceptively tempting these days, with many sources available online. Do not be deceived. If you have any questions about plagiarism, you should confer with me

or another faculty member. You might also go to www.plagiarism.org, and click on “Research Resources.”

Texts:

The following books are available for purchase at the college bookstore:

- Peter Skerry, *Counting on the Census*
- Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*
- Richard Valelly, *The Two Reconstructions*
- Gerald Gamm, *Urban Exodus*
- Peter Skerry, *Mexican Americans: The Ambivalent Minority*
- John Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution*

Additional required readings have been placed on the course Blackboard site.
These readings are listed on the syllabus below.

Schedule of Assignments (* indicates that the reading is on Blackboard)

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| August 31 | Introduction to the course |
| September 2 | <i>No Class (a makeup class will be scheduled)</i> |
| September 5 | *James Madison, “Federalist 10” *Rogers Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz” *Michael Vorenberg, “Bringing the Constitution Back In” *William Novak, “The Legal Transformation of Citizenship in Nineteenth – Century America” |
| September 7 | *T.H. Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class” * <i>University of California Regents v. Bakke</i> *Christopher Shea, “The Case for Class-Based Affirmative Action” |
| September 9 | Skerry, <i>Counting on the Census</i> , chas. 1-2 |
| September 12 | Skerry, <i>Counting on the Census</i> , ch. 3 *Nazli Kibria, “The Contested Meanings of ‘Asian American’: Racial Dilemmas in the Contemporary US” |
| September 14 | Skerry, <i>Counting on the Census</i> , ch. 4 |
| September 16 | Skerry, <i>Counting on the Census</i> , ch. 5 |
| September 19 | Skerry, <i>Counting on the Census</i> , chas. 6-7 |
| September 21 | Ignatiev, <i>How the Irish Became White</i> , introduction, ch. 1 |

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| September 23 | Ignatiev, <i>How the Irish Became White</i> , introduction, chas. 2-3 |
| September 26 | Ignatiev, <i>How the Irish Became White</i> , chas. 4-5 |
| September 28 | Paper 1 Due Ignatiev, <i>How the Irish Became White</i> , ch. 6 |
| September 30 | *Cole, <i>Enemy Aliens</i> , selections *Malkin, <i>In Defense of Internment</i> , selections |
| October 3 | Valelly, <i>The Two Reconstructions</i> , ch. 1 |
| October 5 | Valelly, <i>The Two Reconstructions</i> , chas. 2-3 |
| October 7 | Valelly, <i>The Two Reconstructions</i> , chas. 4-5 |
| October 10 | COLUMBUS DAY – No Class |
| October 12 | Valelly, <i>The Two Reconstructions</i> , chas. 6-7 |
| October 14 | Valelly, <i>The Two Reconstructions</i> , chas 8-10 |
| October 17 | *Thomas Sowell, <i>Race and Culture</i> , selections *Quadagno, <i>The Color of Welfare</i> , selections |
| October 19 | *Thomas Sowell, <i>Migrations and Cultures</i> , selections *William Julius Wilson, “Racial Antagonisms and the Expanding Ranks of the Have-nots” *Roland Fryer, “The Causes and Consequences of Distinctively Black Names” |
| October 21 | Gamm, <i>Urban Exodus</i> , prologue, ch. 1 *Thomas Sugrue, “Crabgrass-Roots Politics” |
| October 24 | Gamm, <i>Urban Exodus</i> , chas. 2-3 |
| October 26 | Gamm, <i>Urban Exodus</i> , chas. 4-6 |
| October 28 | Midterm Exam |
| October 31 | Gamm, <i>Urban Exodus</i> , chas. 7-9 |
| November 2 | Gamm, <i>Urban Exodus</i> , chas. 10-11, epilogue |
| November 4 | Skerry, <i>Mexican Americans</i> , chas. 1-2 |

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| November 7 | Skerry, <i>Mexican Americans</i> , ch. 3-4 |
| November 9 | Skerry, <i>Mexican Americans</i> , chas. 5-6 |
| November 11 | Skerry, <i>Mexican Americans</i> , chas. 6-7 |
| November 14 | Skerry, <i>Mexican Americans</i> , chas. 9-10 |
| November 16 | <i>Paper 2 Due</i> *Samuel Huntington, “The Hispanic Challenge,” “The Special Case of Mexican Immigration,” “One Nation, Out of Many” *Letters to the Editor on Samuel Huntington *Rodolfo O. de la Garza, et. al., “Will the Real Americans Please Stand Up?” |
| November 18 | *Charles Payne, “Debating the Civil Rights Movement: The View From the Trenches” |
| November 21 | Skrentny, <i>The Minority Rights Revolution</i> , chas. 1-2 |
| November 23 | <i>THANKSGIVING BREAK – No Class</i> |
| November 25 | <i>THANKSGIVING BREAK – No Class</i> |
| November 28 | Skrentny, <i>The Minority Rights Revolution</i> , chas. 3-4 |
| November 30 | Skrentny, <i>The Minority Rights Revolution</i> , chas. 5-6 |
| December 2 | Skrentny, <i>The Minority Rights Revolution</i> , chas. 6-7 |
| December 5 | Skrentny, <i>The Minority Rights Revolution</i> , chas. 8-10 |