

PSCI 233-001 Introduction to African-American Politics

Fall 2005

TR 3-4:30

Educ 114

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## Course Description

This course is an historical survey of the main bases and substance of politics among black Americans and the relation of black politics to the American political order. Its two main objectives are: 1) to provide a general sense of pertinent issues and relations over this period as a way of helping to make sense of the present and 2) to develop criteria for evaluating political scientists' and others' claims regarding the status and characteristics of black American political activity.

A core presumption underlying the course's organization is that black American politics originated as an autonomous enterprise only after the Civil War and the extension of citizenship rights to the freedpeople. It was only then that the general black population could participate in public civic action. Therefore, the course's sweep, after a brief, stage-setting foray into the antebellum and slave era, concentrates on the period from Emancipation to the present.

The course also presumes that notions of the boundaries of black American politics – that is, what types of programs and activities qualify as black politics – are themselves the products of political and ideological processes. Consistent with that perspective, we will examine how contemporary ideas of what constitutes black politics emerged and how notions of black political endeavor have evolved over time. We will not assume conventional narratives that restrict the scope of properly black political activity to uniform racial projects such as protest, assimilation, nationalism, accommodation, inclusion, electoral participation or the pursuit of equality. Certainly, many of those projects can reasonably be understood as expressing elements of black American politics, but they are either too abstract or too narrow to help us understand the practical dynamics and concrete social relations that have driven black Americans' political concerns and activities. Moreover, such conventional narratives too frequently reduce to a focus on debates between individuals labeled as leaders, which often in effect denies the existence of politics *among* black people. We will insist on providing a more varied and diverse account of the scope and trajectories of black politics since Reconstruction.

This version of the course is something of an experiment. Basic assigned readings are listed below, but we will also improvise reading assignments and other materials -- for instance, perhaps some films -- as we go along, based on students' familiarity with the general topic area and areas that need more intensive examination.

### Course Requirements

There will be two take-home exams, a mid-term and a final. Each will constitute 40% of the final grade. Class participation will count for the other 20%.

### TEXTS

The following books have been ordered at House of Our Own bookstore, 3920 Spruce St. (215-222-1576):

Beth Tompkins Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945* (University of North Carolina Press)

Rudolph Fisher, *The Walls of Jericho* (University of Michigan Press)

Phillip Klinkner with Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (University of Chicago Press)

Adolph Reed, Jr. *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (University of Minnesota Press)

Dean Robinson, *Black Nationalism in American Politics and Thought* (Cambridge University Press)

Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (LSU Press)

### READING ASSIGNMENTS

## **PART 1: SLAVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION**

### **Week 1: Introduction**

### **Week 2: The Pre-History of Modern Black Politics**

#### **Tuesday:**

Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug*, chapter 1

#### **Thursday:**

Kathleen Brown, "Engendering Racial Difference, 1640-1670" from *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches and Anxious Patriarchs*

Robert Steinfeld, *Contract, Coercion and Free Labor in the Nineteenth Century*, "Introduction" and chapter 1

Klinkner & Smith (K&S), *The Unsteady March*, chapter 1

### **Week 3: Reconstruction and Retreat**

#### **Tuesday:**

Eric Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders During Reconstruction*, pp. 239-88

Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction*, chapters 3, 6 & 7

#### **Thursday:**

Jack Bloom, *Class, Race and the Civil Rights Movement*, chapter 1

David Oshinsky, "'Worse Than Slavery': Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice", chapters 2 & 4

## **PART 2: THE JIM CROW REGIME & THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN BLACK POLITICS**

### **Week 4: White Supremacist Victory and the Jim Crow Regime**

#### **Tuesday:**

J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910*, chaps. 2, 3 & 8

Patricia Storace, "Look Away, Dixie Land," *New York Review of Books* (Dec. 19, 1991)

**Thursday:**

Judith Stein, "'Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others'" *Science & Society* (1974/75)

K&S, chapter 4

**Week 5: The Segregationist Order Consolidates and Blacks Respond**

**Tuesday:**

J. William Harris, *Deep Souths: Delta, Piedmont, and Sea Island Society in the Age of Segregation*, chapters 4-6

**Thursday:**

Charles S. Johnson, "Spatial and Institutional Forms of Racial Segregation" and "Ideology of the Color Line" from *Pattern of Negro Segregation*

Bates, *Pullman Porters*, "Introduction"

**Week 6: The Great Migration and Urbanization**

**Tuesday:**

Bates, chapters 2 & 3

**Thursday:**

Martin Kilson, "Political Change in the Negro Ghetto" in N. Huggins, M. Kilson and D. Fox, eds, *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience*, vol. 2

Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*, chapters 1 and 3

**Week 7: Ideological and Cultural Contexts**

**Tuesday:**

Michele Mitchell, "What a Pure, Healthy, Unified Race Can Accomplish: Collective Reproduction and the Sexual Politics of Black Nationalism," from *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*

Alain Locke, "Introduction," *The New Negro: An Interpretation*

Bates, chapter 4

**Thursday:**

Fisher, *Walls of Jericho*

## **MID-TERM EXAM**

### **Week 8: Depression, New Deal and World War II**

**Tuesday:**

K & S, chapters 5 & 6

**Thursday:**

Bates, chapter 5

### **Week 9: Racial Democracy and Social Democracy**

**Tuesday:**

Bates, chapters 6 & 7

Preston H. Smith II, "The Quest for Racial Democracy: Black Civic Ideology and Housing Interests in Postwar Chicago" *Journal of Urban History* 26 (2000): 131-157

**Thursday:**

August Meier, Elliott Rudwick and Francis Broderick, eds, *Black Protest in the Twentieth Century*, chapters 19 & 22-28

### **Week 10: Racially Segmented Social Policy & the New Deal's Uneven Impact**

**Tuesday:**

Adolph Reed, Jr., ed. *Without Justice for All: The New Liberalism and Our Retreat from Racial Equality*, chapters 4 and 5

**Thursday:**

Paul Moreno, *From Direct Action to Affirmative Action: Fair Employment Law and Policy in America, 1933-1972*, chapters 2 and 3

### **Week 11: The High Period of Civil Rights Activism**

**Tuesday:**

Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, chapters 5-8

K & S, chapters 7 & 8

**Thursday:**  
"At the River I Stand" (film)

**Week 12: Black Power and Black Nationalism**

**Tuesday:** Dean Robinson, *Black Nationalism in American Politics and Thought*, chaps 2-5

**Thursday:**  
Jennifer Jordan, "Cultural Nationalism in the 1960s: Politics and Poetry" in *Race, Politics and Culture: Critical Essays on the Radicalism of the 1960s*, A. Reed, Jr. ed.

Alex Willingham, "Ideology and Politics: Their Status in Afro-American Social Theory" in *Race, Politics and Culture*

**Part 3: THE POST-SEGREGATION ERA**

**Week 13: The Post-Segregation Black Political Regime**

**Tuesday:**  
*Stirrings*, chapters 3-5

Larry Bennett, "Harold Washington and the Black Urban Regime," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 28 (March 1993)

**Thursday:**  
*Without Justice for All*, chapters 7, 9-11

**Week 14: The Current State of Black Politics**

**Tuesday:**

William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*, chapters 1 & 2

*Without Justice for All*, chapter 6

*Stirrings*, chapters 6

Cornel West, *Race Matters*, chapters 1 & 8

K & S, chapter 9

**Thursday:**

*Stirrings*, chapter 7

Claire Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City*, chapter 2

Adolph Reed, Jr. "Whose 'New Black Politics'?" photocopy

Robinson, *Black Nationalism*, chapter 7

Adolph Reed, Jr., *Class Notes: Posing as Politics and Other Thoughts on the American Scene*, pp. 3-9, 14-36, 61-63, 77-90 and 167-70

**FINAL EXAM**