

African American Politics (POS 4077/AFA 4931)
Fall 2015
Dr. Sharon Austin
Director of the African American Studies Program and Associate Professor of
Political Science
The University of Florida

Contact Information:

Office: 104 Walker Hall
Email address: polssdw@ufl.edu
Office number: 273-2360

Office Hours:

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2-4pm

Purpose and Format of Course:

This course will examine the political behavior of African Americans in the United States from the era of disfranchisement to the current era of the first black president. We will begin the semester with a discussion of the denial of “universal freedom” to African Americans during the 1800s. We will then discuss the civil rights and political gains African Americans experienced during the modern civil rights and black power movements. Our course will then compare and contrast the events of the current justice movements to those of the past.

For the remainder of the semester, will discuss other contemporary topics in African American politics and public policy such as affirmative action, Congress, political ideologies, the judiciary, the presidency, political parties, and others. We will end the semester with a discussion of the role of Caribbean-born blacks in cities once dominated by native-born African Americans. The format will be a combination of lecture and discussion.

The Required Textbooks:

American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom. Seventh Edition. Hanes Walton Jr. and Robert C. Smith (New York: Pearson, 2015).

My Grandfather's Son: A Memoir. Clarence Thomas (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2007).

The Price of the Ticket: Barack Obama and the Decline of Black Politics. Fredrick C. Harris (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

The Reserve Articles:

These readings are on reserve on the www.uflib.ufl.edu web site. To read or print these articles, click on the course reserves link, type in my last name, and click on the article's title.

Attendance Policy and Missed Work:

After three unexcused classes are missed, you will not receive the percentage points for class participation (and will not have the option of submitting an optional paper). It is your responsibility to sign the attendance roster that will be given out at the beginning of each class session. If you forget to, sign it during the next class. Also, try to get to class on time. The policy for missed work in this class is consistent with the university's policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>).

Classroom Behavior (Cell Phones and Laptops):

In the past, several of my students have forgotten to turn off their cell phones in class. I am asking you to please turn off your phones before our class begins. Remember, a student who takes his/her work seriously will make sure that his/her phone is off during class meetings.

Also, if you engage in behavior such as texting, browsing the internet, sleeping, loud yawning, or any other behavior that I consider to be disrespectful to me or to your classmates, you may not receive all of the percentage points for class participation. I expect you to pay attention at all times in class especially when films are shown. You do not have my permission to do the work in your other classes when films are shown. If I find out that you're doing this, I have the right to deduct points from your participation grade.

The Examinations:

You will be tested on all material covered in the films, readings, and class discussions. Each test will have three essay questions - two of which are worth 40 points and one worth 20 points. In order to earn the highest grade possible, show me that you have read the assignments and taken detailed notes. None of the tests, including the final, will be comprehensive. One week before each test, we will have a review. Also, I would like to request that you use the bathroom before you begin your examinations on exam days.

The Obama and Thomas Papers:

You must write two 5-page, typed, double-spaced papers – one examining the major themes and arguments in the *My Grandfather's Son* book and one examining the major themes and arguments in *The Price of the Ticket* book. Additional instructions can be found on the assignments tab on canvas. Upload the papers to canvas by midnight on the due dates.

Class Participation and the Optional Paper Assignment:

We will discuss a number of political and public policy issues during the course of the semester. I understand that some students are more comfortable participating in class

discussions than others. Therefore, I am giving you the option of either participating in our class discussions on a regular basis (once or twice a week) or writing a paper.

If you participate verbally (or attempt to and I don't call on you for some reason), email me on the day that you've participated so that I can keep a record of it. Throughout the semester, I will email each of you to let you know if you have participated regularly. If you participate in our discussions, you will not have to write a paper. If not, a 5-8 page typed, double-spaced paper is due on the last day of class. You can write an analysis which gives your opinion on any topic(s) we've discussed in class.

Optional Extra Credit Assignments:

On Monday, September 28th at 3pm Ms. Ilyasah Shabazz, author and daughter of the late Malcolm X, will discuss her new book *X: A Novel* in the Ocora of Pugh Hall. The book is a fictional account of Malcolm X's childhood and early life in Boston based on interviews about his life. You can have five points added to your lowest test grade if you write a typed, double-spaced, two page report of her lecture. If you can't attend the lecture, you can write a two page report on her life and accomplishments. This report must be uploaded onto canvas no later than Monday October 5th at 5pm.

On Friday October 16th at 7pm, U.S. Representative John Lewis will discuss the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in the University Auditorium. You can have five points added to your lowest test grade if you write a typed, double-spaced, two page report of his lecture. If you can't attend the lecture, you can write a two page report on his life and accomplishments. This report must be uploaded onto canvas no later than Friday October 23rd at 5pm.

Your Grade will be Based on:

Attendance	5%
Participation or Optional Paper	5%
First Test	20%
Second Test	20%
Third Test	20%
Obama Research Paper	15%
Thomas Research Paper	15%

Grading Scale:

94-100 A	90-93 A-	87-89 B+	84-86 B	80-83 B-	77-79 C+
74-76 C	70-73 C-	67-69 D+	64-66 D	60-63 D-	Below 60 E

A C- will not be a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule or College Basic Distribution credit.

Disabilities Statement:

Students requiring accommodations must first register with the Dean of Student's office, Disability Resource Center. The Dean of Student's office will provide documentation, which the student will then give to the instructor. For more information, see [HTTP://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc)

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism and cheating on examinations. The penalty for cheating is a grade of 0 on the exam or paper. In addition, the Dean of Student's office may choose to administer a harsher punishment such as a temporary suspension from this class or a permanent expulsion from the university.

The Internship and Fellowship Information:

I receive a lot of information about internships, undergraduate scholarships, and law and graduate school fellowships. At the beginning of most of our classes, I will share this information with you because I strongly encourage you to apply for these things. In the past, several of my students have received a variety of internships and fellowships. You can also look at the careers or scholarships links on the afam.clas.ufl.edu site for internship and scholarship information.

Course Evaluation:

You will have the opportunity to evaluate the class on the last day. You can also fill out an evaluation on evaluations.ufl.edu during the last two weeks of class.

Class Schedule: (Films will be shown at the end of classes. Also, I will give you the attendance roster near the end of class on days films are shown.)

Universal Freedom: Declared and Denied

8-25 Introduction

8-27 Textbook Readings: *American Politics*, entire chapter 1; chapter 6, pp. 91-108

9-1 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, entire chapter 4
Film: JFK and LBJ: A Time for Greatness (50 minutes) includes interviews with Congressman John Lewis and is narrated by Morgan Freeman. It discusses racism in America, the major events of the modern civil rights movement, and the civil rights accomplishments of the Johnson administration.

9-3 NO CLASS (American Political Science Association conference)

9-8 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, chapter 7, pp. 120-128

- Reserve Reading: Martin Luther King Jr.: Apostle for Non-Violence (I will email this.)
- Film: Mississippi: Is This America? (50 minutes) discusses the activities that took place during Freedom Summer 1964 including the activism of Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer and the murders of Medgar Evers and Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney.
- 9-10 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, chapter 8, pp. 137-144
Reserve Reading: Mississippi: Freedom Has Never Been Free (I will email this.)
- 9-15 Textbook Readings: *American Politics*, chapter 6, pp. 109-116; chapter 7, pp. 128-136
Film: The Time Has Come (50 minutes) discusses the contribution of Malcolm X to the modern civil rights and political movements. It also discusses the origin of the black power movement during the mid and late 1960s.
- 9-17 Textbook Readings: *American Politics*, chapter 2, pp. 23-33; entire chapter 3
Reserve Reading: Malcolm X: Sinner and Convert (I will email this.)
- 9-22 **First Test**
- 9-24 Textbook Readings: *American Politics*, chapter 9, pp. 170-183; chapter 12, pp. 261-265

Domestic Policy and the African American Quest for Justice

- 9-29 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, entire chapter 14
Reserve Reading: The New Jim Crow (I will email this.)
Film: Nation of Law (55 minutes) is an episode of the Eyes on the Prize civil rights documentary series that examines the 1968 murders of two members of the Illinois Black Panther Party Fred Hampton and Mark Clark and the attempts by Chicago policemen to cover up the crime. It also examines a 1971 prison uprising at the Attica State Prison in Attica, New York.
- 10-1 Discussion of Film
- 10-6 Reserve Readings:
A Fresh Cut in an Old Wound
What Happened in Ferguson?
Why the Fires in Ferguson Won't End Soon
Film: Justice or Else: Why Are Black Young People So Feared (50 minutes) is a speech by Minister Louis Farrakhan in St. Louis, Missouri about the deaths of Michael Brown and other young black men.
Recommended Film: Justice for Trayvon: Our Son is Your Son (20 minutes) discusses the killing of Trayvon Martin and its implications for race and justice in America. <http://www.bet.com/video/news/national/2013/justice-for-trayvon.html>

10-8 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, entire chapter 5

Congress and Political Parties

10-13 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, entire chapter 10

Films:

Allen West: Is Donald Trump the New Tea Party? (7 minutes)

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgrLb9xBkBg>]

Mia Love: CPAC 2015 Full Speech (6 minutes)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oga_qsXOvdE]

Project 21's Borelli Debates NAACP's Shelton on Tea Party "Racism" (9 minutes)

[<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zez6oHzYTKY>]

10-15 Reserve Readings:

Party Politics and the Racial Divide (I will email this.)

What is the Tea Party? A growing state of mind

GOP, support your black candidates

Is the GOP Ready for Erika Harold?

Meet Mia Love

10-20 **Second Test**

The Fourteenth Amendment and the Issue of Affirmative Action

10-22 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, chapter 2, pp. 33-45

10-27 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, chapter 12, pp. 265-273

Reserve Reading: The One Florida Plan Executive Summary

Film: A Question of Fairness (45 minutes) examines the lawsuits challenging the undergraduate and law school admissions processes at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. In June 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court issues 2 landmark rulings in these cases that will have a major impact on the future use of affirmative action in university admissions.

10-29 Reserve Readings:

Fisher v. University of Texas

Gratz v. Bollinger

Justice Thomas, Justice Marshall, and the Supreme Court

11-3 **Thomas paper is due. Please upload it before midnight.**

Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, chapter 12, pp. 250-261

Film: The Justice Nobody Knows (30 minutes) is a 60 Minutes interview with U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas shortly after the publication of his memoir, *My Grandfather's Son*.

11-5 Textbook Readings: *My Grandfather's Son*, chapters 1-10

President Barack Hussein Obama

11-10 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, entire chapter 11

Film: *The Choice 2012* (55 minutes) is an episode of Frontline that discusses the childhoods and political careers of Barack Obama and Mitt Romney.

11-12 Textbook Reading: *The Price of the Ticket*, chapter 1-3

Reserve Reading: *The Reinvention of the Reverend* (Al Sharpton)

11-17 **Paper on President Obama is due before midnight.**

Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, chapter 8, pp. 144-167

Textbook Reading: *The Price of the Ticket*, chapters 4-6

Reserve Reading: Ben Carson, riding a fresh surge in the polls
Ready for Condi (as VP)

Film: *Black in Latin America: Haiti and the Dominican Republic: The Roots of Division* (50 minutes) discusses the historical and current divisions among Haitian and Dominicans.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RIG4b3LV9o>

The Caribbeanization of Black Politics

11-19 Discussion of Film

Reserve Reading: *Dominican Deportations Reach Crisis Levels, Haitian President Says*

11-24 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)

11-26 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)

12-1 Reserve Reading: *Moderate and Fragmented Black Political Incorporation in Miami-Dade County* (I will email this.)

Film: *Black in Latin America: Cuba the Next Revolution* (50 minutes) discusses the divisions among white and black Cubans

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RIG4b3LV9o>

12-3 Reserve Reading: *Whither A Coalition?: Afro Latino Consciousness, Participation, and Solidarity* (I will email this.)

12-9 **Third Test**