

**African American Politics**  
AAS/PSC 224 (Revised)  
Spring Semester 2010  
Tuesdays/Thursdays 12:30-1:45 p.m.

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Office Hours:  
Thursdays 10-11:30 (Morey)  
OR by appointment

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**Course Description**

This course will examine the relationship between African Americans and the American political system in order to provide students with a broader perspective on the American political process. We will address issues of organizational resources and approaches, political leadership, representation, integrationist and separatist ideologies, and various strategies for African-American political empowerment. No single course could adequately explore the many actors, organizations, theories, and strategies that have shaped African American politics over time. As such, we shall devote the lion's share of our discourse to examining, understanding, and evaluating contemporary African American politics since the 1960s.

**Course Readings**

Several books are required reading for this class. Additional readings are available online and/or at MyRochester. In addition, you are expected to keep up with current political events through regular reading of a newspaper of your choice. During class discussion we will draw links between the political theories and concepts found in the assigned readings and the observable political environment whenever possible.

Books

Frymer, Paul (1999) *Uneasy Alliances*  
Gillespie, Andra (2010) *Whose Black Politics?*  
Price, Melanye T. (2009) *Dreaming Blackness*  
Smith, Robert C. (1994) *We Have No Leaders*  
Walters, Ronald. (2007) *Freedom is Not Enough*

**Grading**

Participation	15%
Short Assignments	15%
Exams (2)	70 %

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION. Those who attend class and actively participate are likely to earn better grades. Participation grades will be based on Q&A and in class discussion. At times designated in the syllabus, each student is expected to submit at least one typed question and answer (Q&A) based on the readings. Questions should address a topic, concept, theory, person, or place that you find interesting, puzzling, or contradictory and each Q&A should be 300 words or less (or about ½ a type-written page). Seven (7) Q&As will make up one half of the participation grade; the other half will be based on class discussion and/or in-class assignments including unannounced quizzes. Participation accounts for 15% of the final course grade. Reading and assignments should be completed before class on the day assigned. Because flexibility is built into the syllabus, late and make-up assignments will be allowed only with a doctor's note or equally serious documented reason for the absence. Pay careful attention to the syllabus and to any adjustments that may occur. You are responsible for material presented in lectures and discussed in class regardless of your attendance behavior.

SHORT ASSIGNMENTS. Students will occasionally be asked to complete short assignments, typically 1-2 page papers or brief presentations, which will require some work beyond the readings. Students will receive ample notice and guidelines to prepare. Short assignments account for 15% of the final grade.

EXAMS. A midterm and final will account for 35% each of your final grade. Exams will be administered during regular class time and will be a mix of short-answer identification and essay questions. Make-up exams will be allowed only in rare circumstances and require advance approval from the professor. The midterm is scheduled for March 4<sup>th</sup> and a non-comprehensive final is scheduled during finals week.

EXTRA CREDIT. Students may earn up to three extra credit points toward the final grade by attending outside events related to the course and writing a one-page response paper. Each EC paper may earn one point.

ACADEMIC HONESTY. You are expected to turn in material that you have completed yourself. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Both cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that will be reported for disciplinary action. Please refer to the University Handbook and/or speak with the instructor if you have any questions in this area.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT. Students with special needs or concerns are encouraged to meet with me or a staff member in the Center for Academic Support to facilitate the accessibility of the course.

### COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 14

Introduction and Course Overview

MODERN TRENDS IN BLACK POLITICS

Jan 19-21

Greenblatt, "Race in America"

Pew Research Center, "Blacks Upbeat About Black Progress, Prospects"

\* MLK Address, Reverend Joseph Lowery, Friday, Jan 22, Strong Auditorium, 6 p.m.

FOUNDATIONS OF BLACK POLITICAL THOUGHT

Jan 26

Washington, Booker T., "The Atlanta Exposition Address," and "The Awakening of the Negro"

DuBois, W.E.B., "Of Mr. Washington and Others," and "The Talented-Tenth"

Submit Q&A

Jan 28

View Documentary: Booker T. Washington: Life and Legacy

Class Discussion

Feb 2

Garvey, Marcus, "The Future as I See it," and "Look for me in the Whirlwind"

Rolinson, Mary, "Appeal," in Grassroots Garveyism, (2007), pp. 131-160 (electronic)

Submit Q&A

Feb 4

View Documentary: Marcus Garvey: Look for me in the Whirlwind

Class Discussion

BLACKS AND AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Feb 9

Smith, *We Have No Leaders*, pp. 1-26

Blacks and Mainstream Party Politics

Feb 11

Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances*, pp. 3-48

Feb 16

Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances*, pp. 49-86

Submit Q&A

Feb 18

Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances*, pp. 87-119

Class Discussion

\*View Documentary: Dr. Carvin Eison's, "Shadows of the Lynching Tree," Eastman Theatre, Feb 19<sup>th</sup>, (Time TBA)

Blacks and Presidential Policy Making

Feb 23

Smith, *We Have No Leaders*, pp. 139-163, 255-274

Submit Q&A

Blacks and Congress

Feb 25

Smith, *We Have No Leaders*, pp. 211-225

Tate, *Black Faces in the Mirror*, pp. 73-95, 113-131(electronic)

Submit Q&A

Mar 2

View Documentary: Dylan's Run

Class Discussion

Mar 4

Midterm Exam

Spring Break

Mar 9-11

A BLACK POLITICAL AGENDA?

Mar 16

Smith, *We Have No Leaders*, pp. 29-85

Walters, *Freedom is Not Enough*, pp. 27-51

Submit Q&A

Mar 18

Smith, *We Have No Leaders*, pp. 226-253

View Documentary: Chisholm '72, Unbought and Unbossed

Class Discussion

Revisiting Black Nationalism

Mar 23

Price, *Dreaming Blackness*, pp. 1-79

The Politics of Racial Uplift

Mar 25

Price, *Dreaming Blackness*, pp. 80-102, 173-179

Coates, Ta-Nehisi, “This is How We Lost to the White Man” in *The Atlantic*, pp. 1-11 (electronic)

Audio documentary: Cosby, “Speech at NAACP *Brown vs Board of Education* Award Event”

Class Discussion

The New, “New” Black Politics

March 30

Gillespie, *Whose Black Politics?*, pp. 9-42

Apr 1

Gillespie, *Whose Black Politics?*, pp. 67-84, 105-130

Submit Q&A

Apr 6

View Documentary: Brick City

Class Discussion

THE FUTURE OF BLACK POLITICS

Apr 8

Gillespie, *Whose Black Politics?*, pp. 131-172, 309-318

Submit Q&A

Black Presidential Politics

Apr 13

Walters, *Freedom is Not Enough*, pp. xi-xii, 1-26, 53-76

Class Discussion

Apr 15

Walters, *Freedom is Not Enough*, pp. 77-132

Apr 20

Walters, *Freedom is Not Enough*, pp. 133-183

Apr 22

Walters, *Freedom is Not Enough*, pp. 185-208

Sinclair-Chapman, Valeria and Melanye Price “Black Politics, the 2008 Election, and the (Im)Possibility of Race Transcendence” in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, pp. 739-745

Submit Q&A

Apr 27

Harris-Lacewell, Melissa, “Commentary: Don’t Hold Obama to Race Agenda”

Thernstrom, Abigail, “Commentary: Identity Politics in the Age of Obama”

Course Wrap-up/ Class Discussion

Final Exam (date/time assigned by Registrar’s office)