Black Political Leadership
AAS / PSC 226
Spring Semester 2013
T/Th 12:30-1:45 p.m.
Goergen 110

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Office hours:
Tuesdays, 2:30-3:30 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description
Is President Barack Obama a black leader or a leader who happens to be black? This course will help students understand where the nation’s first African American president fits in a long stream of black political thinkers, activists, and leaders. Black elected officials such as Barack Obama are among the most recent leaders in the historic black struggle for civil rights and political and economic equality in the United States. Other sources of black leadership include preachers, scholars, and community organizers. In this course, we will systematically examine the strategies, agendas, and styles of black leadership from the 19th century to the present. We will attempt to answer the following questions: What is black leadership? Who are black leaders? How are leaders held accountable and to whom? We will consider black leaders from Booker T. Washington to W.E.B. DuBois, Martin L. King, Jr., to Malcolm X, Septima Clark to Ella Baker, and Jesse Jackson, Sr. to Barack Obama.

Objectives
- To introduce students to black politics through the lens of black political leadership.
- To help students critically evaluate relevant philosophies, issues, goals, strategies, and tactics in black political development.

Required Texts
Four (4) books are required for this course:
Harris, Fredrick. 2012. *The Price of the Ticket: Barack Obama and the Rise and Decline of Black Politics*
*Additional required readings are designated in the syllabus as being available [online], meaning accessible using a general search engine from university-connected computers or on [BB], which indicates the university Blackboard service.*

Course Requirements
Grading
Participation 10%
Quizzes/Short Assignments 20
Black Leader Profile 15
Local Leader Project 30
Research Paper 25
CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION. Regular class attendance and participation are required. We will use facilitated discussion rather than a lecture format in this course; therefore, preparation for class and regular participation are essential. Many classes will begin with small groups completing the Most Interesting Topic exercise. MITs are not graded, but will contribute to assessments of attendance and participation. Participation will be used to calculate 10% of your final grade.

Readings and any additional assignments should be completed before class on the day assigned. Late assignments will generally not be accepted. Excessive absences will result in grade reductions. Pay careful attention to the syllabus and any adjustments that might occur. Students with special needs or concerns are encouraged to meet with me or with staff in the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (http://www.rochester.edu/college/ctel/).

QUIZZES AND SHORT ASSIGNMENTS. Weekly quizzes and short assignments will be used to calculate 20% of your final grade. There will be many opportunities to earn quiz and short assignments; for that reason, late and make-up assignments will not be accepted.

BLACK LEADER PROFILE. Working in pairs, you will deliver a multimedia presentation on an African-American leader examined in the edited volume, Whose Black Politics?. In addition to presenting the research from the assigned chapter, your task will be to answer the question, “Where are they now?” Further details on this assignment will be discussed in class and available on BB. Presentations are scheduled for February 19th and 21st and should be uploaded before class on the day you present. This assignment will account for 15% of your final grade.

LOCAL LEADER PROJECT. This semester-long group project is the centerpiece of the course and will comprise 30% of your final grade. This project will require that your group (in consultation with the professor) interview a Rochester African-American leader of your choice, write a short paper, and make a presentation in class (details will be posted on BB and discussed in class). For example, your group might interview a local activist minister or a member of the school board or city council. Each group will present a multimedia presentation to the class describing and analyzing the subject.

Completion of this project will include a 6-8 page analysis of the Rochester leader. Each paper will also include an Appendix with the name and contact information of the interviewee, a rationale for the selection of this person, a transcript or general description of the interview methodology, and any relevant materials such as photos, brochures, etc., that add context or background. Each group member is expected to contribute significantly to the project. Groups should identify their leaders by Feb 28th. Papers should be submitted in class or uploaded on BB by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, April 23rd and in-class presentations will take place on April 23rd and 25th. Presentations should be uploaded to BB prior to in-class presentation.

RESEARCH PAPER. A research paper on black leadership will be used to calculate 25% of your grade. Papers should follow proper writing, spelling, and grammar rules and be 6-8 pages in length with 1-inch margins and a 12-point font. Papers will be submitted in two stages: First you will turn in a 1-2 page literature review that addresses the question, “What is African-American leadership,” in a particular context. For example, you might examine black women’s leadership, southern leadership or elected leadership. Second, building on your literature review, your final paper will examine a black political leader, organization, or movement (e.g., black arts movement) in terms of leadership style, goals, strategies, tactics, constituencies, and effectiveness. You may use materials from the course in addition to outside scholarly sources (journal articles, books, etc.).
Additional details on these assignments will be handed out in class. Literature reviews should be uploaded on BB by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, March 28th and final papers should be uploaded by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, May 10th. The Writing Center is an excellent resource for help in planning, executing, and revising your papers: http://writing.rochester.edu/help/index.html.

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.

COURSE OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION AND COURSE OVERVIEW
Jan 17

*Annual MLK, Jr. Address tonight, 6-7 p.m. in Strong Auditorium. This year’s speaker is Melissa Harris-Perry. Harris-Perry is a noted political scientist, scholar, and host of a national news show. Write a 1-2 page response paper as an optional short assignment.

PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP
Jan 22
Read:
*Watch the U.S. presidential inauguration, Monday, January 21, 11:30 a.m. then write a 1-2 page response paper as an optional short assignment. We will discuss the presidential inauguration and implications for black political leadership in class.

Jan 24
Read:

A NEW, “NEW BLACK POLITICS”?  
Jan 29
Read:
Gillespie, “Meet the New Class,” and “Where Do We Go From Here?” in WBP?, pp. 9-42 and 309-318.
**CASES IN BLACK LEADERSHIP: BREAKING NEW GROUND**

Jan 31
Read:
Gillespie, “Losing and Winning: Cory Booker’s Ascent to Newark’s Mayoralty,” in *WBP?*, pp. 67-84.

Feb 5
Read:

Feb 7
View and Discuss: Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (Documentary Film)

**CASES IN BLACK LEADERSHIP: DERACIALIZED STRATEGIES**

Feb 12
Read:
Lewis, “Between Generations: Deval Patrick’s Election as Massachusetts’ First Black Governor,” in *WBP?*, pp. 177-194.

Feb 14
View and Discuss: Dylan’s Run (Documentary Film)

*Submit Step 1 of Local Leader Project: Identifying the Interview Subject*

Feb 19
Black Leader Profile (Class Presentations)
*Upload presentations to BB prior to the start of class*

Feb 21
Black Leader Profile (Class Presentations)
*Upload presentations to BB prior to the start of class*

**PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS**

Feb 26
Read:

Feb 28
View and Discuss: Booker T. Washington: Life and Legacy

Mar 5
Read:
Malcolm X. 1964. “The Ballot or the Bullet?” [BB]

"Race" in Black Politics

A Black Agenda?
Mar 7
Read:
Harris, “Toward a Pragmatic Black Politics,” in AAE, pp. 65-72.
Bositis, “The Political Orientations of Young African Americans,” in AAE, pp. 81-90.
*Submit Step 2 of Local Leader Project: Interview Schedule and Objectives

Spring Break
Mar 12-14

Trans-Racial, Post-Racial, or Race-Focused Leadership?
Mar 19
Read:
Hill, “The Race Problematic, the Narrative of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Election of Barack Obama,” in AAE, pp. 133-147.

Mar 21
Read:

Limits of Race-Focused Leadership
Mar 26
Read: Harris, The Price of the Ticket, pp. 3-34
Mar 28
Read: Harris, *The Price of the Ticket*, pp. 35-69
*Upload Research Paper Literature Review on BB by 11:59 p.m.*

Apr 2
Read: Harris, *The Price of the Ticket*, pp. 100-136

Apr 4
Read: Harris, *The Price of the Ticket*, pp. 137-102

**RACE-FOCUSED LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL MARGINALIZATION**

Apr 9
Read: Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness*, pp. 1-32

Apr 11
Read: Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness*, pp. 33-77

Apr 16
Read: Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness*, pp. 78-118, 250-292

Apr 18
Read: Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness*, pp. 293-347

**UNDERSTANDING LOCAL LEADERSHIP**

Apr 23
Class Presentations on Local Leaders
*Upload ALL papers by 11:59 p.m.*
*Upload presentations to BB prior to the start of class*

Apr 25
Class Presentations on Local Leaders
*Upload presentations to BB prior to the start of class*

Apr 30
Class Wrap-Up

Friday, May 10
*Upload Research Papers to BB by 11:59 p.m.*