



POLS-Y 325 (11995), Fall 2016

African American Politics

MW 2:30-3:45 p.m., Jordan Hall A106



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Office hours: MW 4:00-5:00 p.m. (and by appointment),
Woodburn Hall 330

The contents of this syllabus may be subject to changes throughout the semester.
All such changes will be announced in advance (i.e., before they come into effect).

Course Description

The Black Lives Matter movement that emerged in the wake of the killing of Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson in August 2014 has brought to the fore an ongoing debate about the current state of US democracy, especially as it pertains to race and racial inequalities. Drawing upon recent and established research within the fields of American Politics and Political Theory, this course investigates the complex, multifaceted relationship between democracy and racial hierarchy that underlies this debate, and explores how this relationship plays out in the context of African American politics. It does so by first laying out the conceptual groundwork for examining both the normative tensions between democracy and racial hierarchy, and the causal and empirical links that connect the two from a political science perspective (Part I). Next, this course delves into African American political thought in order to contextualize these relationships (Part II). It then examines the politics behind two major deficiencies of present-day US democracy: (1) the “electoral capture” of African American voters in and by a two-party system that is fraught with institutional racism, which in turn inhibits the formation of responsive governments (Part III); and (2) an extremely high incarceration rate, which disproportionately targets African Americans (Part IV). How have African Americans addressed these and other racial inequalities both ideologically and practically? Can the institutional manifestations of US democracy attenuate racial inequalities, or are they part of the problem? These are some of the questions this class explores.

Credit Hours: 3

Required Textbooks

- **Dawson (2001):** Michael C Dawson (2001). *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226138619
- **Frymer (2010):** Paul Frymer (2010). *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America*. Princeton University Press. ISBN: 9780691148014
- **Burch (2013):** Traci Burch (2013). *Trading Democracy for Justice: Criminal Convictions and the Decline of Neighborhood Political Participation*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226064932

Course Requirements (percentages indicate weights for your final score):

Class Attendance	5%
Each class, students are asked to sign an attendance sheet.	
Class Participation	5%
There are occasional pop quizzes to assess class participation.	
Assignments (3 in total; 10% each)	30%
Choose 3 out of a total of 5 assignments (due in class):	
#1 due on Wednesday (2:30 p.m.) of Week 3 (9/7).	
#2 due on Wednesday (2:30 p.m.) of Week 4 (9/14).	
#3 due on Wednesday (2:30 p.m.) of Week 6 (9/28).	
#4 due on Wednesday (2:30 p.m.) of Week 11 (11/2).	
#5 due on Wednesday (2:30 p.m.) of Week 14 (11/30).	
Midterm Exam	30%
Wednesday, October 12 th , 2:30-3:45 p.m., Jordan Hall A106.	
Final Exam	30%
Wednesday, December 14 th , 5:00-7:00 p.m., Jordan Hall A106.	

Class Attendance and Class Participation (each worth 5% of final score)

Class attendance is mandatory, affects your grade and is recorded using in-class sign-in sheets. You can request excused absences for illness, familial situations demanding your immediate attention, religious observances, and official IU business. Each class, you are expected to have read the assigned materials in advance, to have studied the previous lecture, and to participate actively and meaningfully. To assess your class participation, occasional pop quizzes are administered on that day's readings and the material presented in the previous day's lecture.

Assignments (each worth 10% of final score)

Students are required to submit a total of three assignments (printed copies are due in class on the dates listed in the syllabus). There are five assignments to choose from. Only the first three submitted assignments are considered and count towards your final letter grade. Students should complete these assignments on their own. Late assignments are heavily penalized. Assignments include opportunities for extra credit to improve your final score, but these opportunities are only available for the first three submitted assignments. The assignments are posted on Canvas.

Midterm and Final Exams (each worth 30% of final score)

The midterm exam covers the assigned readings and lectures from Weeks 1-8. The final exam is non-cumulative and covers the material from Weeks 9-15. On each exam, students are asked to answer 20 multiple choice questions (worth $\frac{1}{3}$ of exam points) and several short essay questions (worth $\frac{2}{3}$ of exam points). Essay questions are similar to assignment questions. During the mid-term exam and the final exam, each student is allowed to consult his or her submitted version(s) of Assignments 1-3 and Assignments 4-5, respectively. Please note that it is the student's responsibility to check the final examination schedule to determine the date and time of the final exam. Absence from exams are dealt with on the basis of the policies listed on the following website: <http://enrollmentbulletin.indiana.edu/pages/finexpol.php?Term=1>.

Reading Requirements

The assigned readings are listed in the course outline presented below and are indicated by citations, which refer to the full list of references presented at the end of this syllabus. Some citations only assign particular chapters or pages. For instance, "Dawson (2001, Chapter 5, pp. 172-98)" only assigns pages 172-98 of Chapter 5 of the Dawson (2001) textbook for that particular class date. All readings can be accessed via Canvas, except the three required textbooks.

Letter Grade Policies

Your initial final score can range from 0 to 100 points (excluding extra credit). After adding extra credit, and together with the remaining grade policies detailed below, your final score determines your final letter grade, which is assigned on the basis of the following letter grade distribution:

≥ 93.00	A	73.00 - 76.99	C
90.00 - 92.99	A-	70.00 - 72.99	C-
87.00 - 89.99	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
83.00 - 86.99	B	63.00 - 66.99	D
80.00 - 82.99	B-	60.00 - 62.99	D-
77.00 - 79.99	C+	≤ 59.99	F

How to Obtain an A+

An A+ is awarded to students who have earned an A for the class and have successfully completed an empirical research project (± 15 pp.) no later than Wednesday, December 7th, 2:30 p.m. Students who wish to work on such a project should notify the instructor no later than Week 9.

Academic Integrity

As a student at IU, you are expected to adhere to the standards and policies detailed in the *Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct* (available online at the following website: <http://studentcode.iu.edu>). When you submit an assignment with your name on it, you are signifying that the work contained therein is yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. If you are unsure about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification beforehand. All suspected violations of the Code will be handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final course grade, a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities, and must include a report to the Dean of Students, who may impose additional disciplinary sanctions.

Re: Note Selling

Several commercial services have approached students regarding selling class notes/ study guides to their classmates. Please be advised that selling a faculty member's notes/ study guides individually or on behalf of one of these services using IU email, Canvas, or Oncourse violates both IU information technology and IU intellectual property policy. Selling the faculty member's notes/ study guides to fellow students in this course is not permitted. Violations of this policy will be considered violations of the *Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct* and will be reported to the Dean of Students as a violation of course rules (academic misconduct). Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment for which the notes/ study guides are being sold, a reduction in your final course grade, and a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities.

Notifications via Canvas

The default notification settings for Canvas can be found online at the following website: <https://kb.iu.edu/d/bfd1>. Students can customize these settings as they wish. Please note, however, that these customizations will apply to all courses in which you are enrolled — there is no way to have messages forwarded for one course, but not for others, for example. By default, you will receive messages (“conversations”) and announcements forwarded to your IU account; if you choose to modify this default setting, it will be your responsibility to make sure you check Canvas regularly for communications relevant to this class.

Course Outline

The weekly coverage is tentative and might change as it depends on the progress of the class. However, you must keep up with the assigned readings as indicated by the citations, which refer to the list of references.

Week	Topics and Readings
Part I: Race, Democracy and Political Science	
Week 1	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 8/22: Course Outline and the Principles of Political Science <i>Readings:</i> class syllabus • Wednesday 8/24: The Black Lives Matter Movement in Context: The Carceral State, Profit Policing and the Politics of Race in the US <i>Readings:</i> Carmines and Stimson (1989, Chapter 2)
Week 2	<p>Core Concepts (1): Democracy, the State and Political Order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 8/29: Democracy: Political Competition and Political Participation <i>Readings:</i> Dahl (1971, Chapters 1 and 3) • Wednesday 8/31: Protesting While Black? The State and Political Order <i>Readings:</i> Davenport et al. (2011)
Week 3	<p>Core Concepts (2): Race, Racial Identities and Social Hierarchy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 9/5: Labor Day (no class) <i>Readings:</i> n.a. • Wednesday 9/7: Race, Racial Identities and Social Hierarchy <i>Readings:</i> Pratto et al. (2006, pp. 271-94) and Dawson (2001, Chapter 4, excluding pp. 154-64) <i>Assignment 1 is to be submitted in class no later than 2:30 p.m.</i>
Part II: African American Political Thought	
Week 4	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 9/12: A Broad History of Black Political Thought <i>Readings:</i> Dawson (2001, Chapter 1) • Wednesday 9/14: Political Ideology and Public Opinion <i>Readings:</i> Dawson (2001, Chapter 2, excluding pp. 67-81) <i>Assignment 2 is to be submitted in class no later than 2:30 p.m.</i>
Week 5	<p>African American Nationalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 9/19: Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X and Modern Black Nationalism <i>Readings:</i> Dawson (2001, Chapter 3, pp. 85-104) • Wednesday 9/21: Cultural vs. Revolutionary Black Nationalism <i>Readings:</i> Dawson (2001, Chapter 3, pp. 104-22; 133-4)

(Course outline continued on the next page.)

Course outline (continued from the previous page):

Week	Topics and Readings
Week 6	<p>African American Marxism and Radicalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 9/26: Black Marxism <i>Readings:</i> Dawson (2001, Chapter 5, pp. 172-98) • Wednesday 9/28: Black Radicalism <i>Readings:</i> Dawson (2001, Chapter 5, pp. 198-221; 226-9; 236-7) <i>Assignment 3 is to be submitted in class no later than 2:30 p.m.</i>
Week 7	<p>African American Liberalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 10/3: Mainstream Black Liberalism <i>Readings:</i> Dawson (2001, Chapter 6, pp. 238-58) • Wednesday 10/5: Radical Egalitarianism: From Hope to Disillusionment <i>Readings:</i> Dawson (2001, Chapter 6, pp. 258-80)
Week 8	<p>Preparation for the Mid-Term Exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 10/10: Exam Review Session <i>Readings:</i> readings from Weeks 1-7. • Wednesday 10/12: Mid-Term Exam, 2:30-3:45 p.m., Jordan Hall A106 <i>Midterm Exam Material:</i> all readings and lectures from Weeks 1-8.
Part III: Democracy and Institutional Racism	
Week 9	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 10/17: Race, Party Competition and Electoral Capture (1) <i>Readings:</i> Frymer (2010, Chapter 1) • Wednesday 10/19: Race, Party Competition and Electoral Capture (2) <i>Readings:</i> Frymer (2010, Chapter 2)
Week 10	<p>Institutional Racism in the US Party System: Origins and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 10/24: Electoral Competition and Disenfranchisement (1866-1932) <i>Readings:</i> Frymer (2010, Chapter 3) • Wednesday 10/26: Electoral Capture inside the Post-1965 Democratic Party <i>Readings:</i> Frymer (2010, Chapter 4)
Week 11	<p>Mobilizing and Representing ‘Captured’ African American Voters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 10/31: Party Mobilization <i>Readings:</i> Frymer (2010, Chapter 5) • Wednesday 11/2: Congressional Representation <i>Readings:</i> Frymer (2010, Chapter 6) <i>Assignment 4 is to be submitted in class no later than 2:30 p.m.</i>

(Course outline continued on the next page.)

Course outline (continued from the previous page):

Week	Topics and Readings
	Part IV: Race and the Politics of Crime and Punishment
Week 12	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 11/7: The Politics of Mass Incarceration <i>Readings:</i> Burch (2013, Chapter 1) • Wednesday 11/9: The Political Impact of Mass Incarceration <i>Readings:</i> Burch (2013, Chapter 2)
Week 13	<p>Patterns of Imprisonment and Social and Political Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 11/14: Patterns of Imprisonment and Community Supervision <i>Readings:</i> Burch (2013, Chapter 3) • Wednesday 11/16: Patterns of Imprisonment and Political Participation <i>Readings:</i> Burch (2013, Chapter 4: pp. 75-7; 101-4)
Week 14	<p>Solutions and Wider Implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 11/28: The Promising Potential of Political Mobilization <i>Readings:</i> Burch (2013, Chapter 6) • Wednesday 11/30: The Wider Political Implications of Mass Incarceration <i>Readings:</i> Burch (2013, Chapter 7) <i>Assignment 5 is to be submitted in class no later than 2:30 p.m.</i>
Week 15	<p>Class Presentations and Preparation for the Final Exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 12/5: Optional class presentations of empirical research projects. <i>Readings:</i> readings from Weeks 9-14 • Wednesday 12/7: Exam Review Session <i>Readings:</i> readings from Weeks 9-14 <i>A paper copy of the optional research project is to be submitted in class no later than 2:30 p.m. A late and/ or digital submission of your research project is worth 0 points.</i>
Week 16	<p>Finals Week (No Classes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Exam: Wednesday, December 14th, 5-7 p.m., Jordan Hall A106 <i>Final Exam Material:</i> all readings and lectures from Weeks 9-15, except the class presentations of research projects.

A note about the list of references: The list of references presented below is primarily meant as a resource for you to use if you'd like to follow up on a given topic. For instance, these sources might be helpful for those of you who choose to work on the optional empirical research project. Please note that students are only required to read the material indicated in the course outline presented above. For instance, you are only required to read Chapters 1 and 3 of Dahl (1971), not the whole book.

List of References

- Burch, Traci (2013). *Trading Democracy for Justice: Criminal Convictions and the Decline of Neighborhood Political Participation*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226064932.
- Carmines, Edward G and James A Stimson (1989). *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics*. Princeton University Press. ISBN: 069102331X.
- Dahl, Robert Alan (1971). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. Yale University Press. ISBN: 0300153570.
- Davenport, Christian, Sarah A Soule, and David A Armstrong (2011). "Protesting While Black? The Differential Policing of American Activism, 1960 to 1990". In: *American Sociological Review* 76.1, pp. 152–178. ISSN: 0003-1224.
- Dawson, Michael C (2001). *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226138619.
- Frymer, Paul (2010). *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America*. Princeton University Press. ISBN: 9780691148014.
- Katzenstein, Mary Fainsod and Maureen R Waller (2015). "Taxing the Poor: Incarceration, Poverty Governance, and the Seizure of Family Resources". In: *Perspectives on Politics* 13.3, pp. 638–656. ISSN: 1541-0986.
- Pratto, Felicia, Jim Sidanius, and Shana Levin (2006). "Social Dominance Theory and the Dynamics of Intergroup Relations: Taking Stock and Looking Forward". In: *European Review of Social Psychology* 17.1, pp. 271–320. ISSN: 1046-3283.
- Thorpe, Rebecca U (2015). "Perverse Politics: The Persistence of Mass Imprisonment in the Twenty-first Century". In: *Perspectives on Politics* 13.3, pp. 618–637. ISSN: 1541-0986.