Black Political Participation in America
POL 32600, Spring 2015
Dr. Brown
Brown957@purdue.edu
Telephone: (765) 494-0460
@BrownPhDGirl
Office: Beering Hall, Room 2249
Office Number: 765-494-0460

“You do not come to college to be taught what you already know.”

“A University cannot sell you learning”
(Dr. Mary Gossy, Comparative Literature Professor, Rutgers University)

Class Time:
Tuesdays and Thursdays
12 – 1:15pm
Beering Hall Room 1245

Office Hours
11-12pm and 1:30-2pm
Tuesdays and Thursdays
Beering Hall Room 2249

Course Overview
This course introduces students to the dynamics of race in American political life. This class fulfills the College of Arts and Science Diversity in the US core requirement. Using the case of Black Americans, the course explores the following themes: Origins of African American Political Philosophies; Race and Electoral Politics; Race and Political Representation. We will explore questions such as: What is the history of race in American political life? How has the existence of America’s system of racial classification shaped our broader national identity? How does race link up with other identities animating political actions like gender and class? What role do American political institutions—the Congress, presidency, judiciary, state and local governments, etc.—play in constructing and maintaining racial categories? Can we use these institutions to overcome racial boundaries? This course encourages students to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system and its relationship with African American constituents.

Required Text

Articles and other assigned readings are available on electronically on the course Blackboard website. All readings on the syllabus are required.

Course Objectives: Students will:
• Master a broad body of African American political knowledge
• Have a broad understanding of the contemporary and historical thoughts and theories of Black politics as a subfield of political science
• Develop an acute understanding of the role that race played and continues to play in the American polity
• Use data to support an argument or position
• Interpret and apply data from original documents, including cartoons, graphs, letter, etc.
• Effectively use analytical skills of evaluation, cause and effect, compare and contrast.
• Work effectively with others to produce products and solve problems.
• Learn and apply various study strategies to promote academic success

What to expect
My approach in the class integrates participatory lectures with active learning. I alternate approaches throughout the semester. This means that in any given class period we will be doing a variety of different activities so come prepared to shift gears one or more times in the class. This may be a bit unconventional, but I believe it has the additional benefit of making the time less tedious.

Readings
Students are expected to complete the assigned reading before the class period in which the material is assigned. The course schedule (below) provides a general schedule of readings and topics. Using critical thinking (a cognitive reasoning development) students must demonstrate the process of actively seeking to understand, evaluate and analyze information. For each reading(s) students should be able to answer the following questions:
  1. What are the issues?
  2. What are the conclusions?
  3. Are there any fallacies in the reasoning?
  4. How good is the evidence?

Format and Requirements
Because this course is about ideas, which are to be understood and applied critically rather than memorized, the format emphasizes opportunities to process theories of politics through discussion and writing. The class format is a structured discussion. Students will be expected to complete reading assignments on time and participate regularly in class discussions. An additional requirement is that students fill out a course evaluation at the end of the semester.

Participation
This portion is based on performance during discussions and in class assignments. Pay special attention to the discussion questions, topics for debate and the assigned chapters. These will serve as starting points for class discussions. Your in class contributions (questions, comments, challenges, observations, etc.) are important. Frequent classroom contributions will be expected, closely monitored, and observed and impact your final course grade. You will receive a discussion grade for every class. This grade will be based on your contributions to class discussion, any oral presentations, group projects, or short written assignments that contribute to class discussion.

This course includes experiential learning which means the course does not exist in just reading or assignments, it also exists in your active participation in class discussions and activities as well as in your thinking and feeling both in and outside of class.

Classroom discussion is extremely important to this class and many of the readings, and activities are designed to stimulate discussion and learning. Your cooperation is important in this learning process.

I expect everyone in this class to cooperate in the learning process. This cooperation means that comments, arguments and conflicts should contribute to the presentation and understanding of material rather than create hostility and communication barriers among class members.

Finally, I insist, that we all respect the confidentiality of the sharing of all participants in this course.
Quizzes
During this class there may be unannounced pop quizzes on the assigned readings that will be factored into your participation grade.

Attendance
Because learning in this course depends heavily on everyone participating in class discussion, attendance is required at every class session. Students are responsible for signing the attendance sheet at the beginning of class.

You are expected to attend every class. Attendance is closely monitored; you are responsible for all material covered, even if you miss class, for whatever reason. You will be required to sign-in on an attendance sheet for every class. You will be permitted 2 unexcused absences (*an absence is “excused” if you have a signed note from a doctor, dean, mechanic, me, or other relevant authority figure).

If you are absent, you are completely responsible for ALL the material covered and assignments due when absent. Be certain to make contact with a class colleague to obtain notes missed or assignments considered should you be absent. *If you must be absent, you must turn in reading paragraphs for the readings of your missed class.*

Grades and Make-ups
Any assignment may be rescheduled up to one week after originally scheduled per my permission. Students are only permitted one make-up assignment per term with a properly documented excuse. If a student misses more than one assignment, he or she should strongly consider withdrawing from the course.

Five points will be deducted per every twenty four hours an assignment is from the grade. Assignments that are more than five days late will not be accepted.

Procedures for Dealing with Grade/Evaluation Concerns
Grade/evaluation concerns will be only considered if the following procedure is followed:

1. All grade complaints must be TYPED and must clearly express your specific concerns. These written statements must be accompanied by citations of support from course materials, i.e. readings, textbooks, and/or lecture notes, in order to ensure accuracy.
2. Written statements will not be considered until one class session AFTER the assignment is returned to students. Grievances will not be considered once two class sessions have passed. Since class time is limited, I will only deal with questions and concerns during scheduled office hours.
3. Finally, submitting a grade grievance will result in a complete re-grade of the assignment.

Grading Scale

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- **A Quality Work Designates** - work of superior quality. Class participation is voluntary, frequent, relevant, and reflects that you have both read and thought about the material. Written work is clear, well-organized and thought-provoking, and free of grammatical or mechanical errors. Performance on exams is consistently strong; demonstrates complete mastery of facts and concepts.

- **B Quality Work Designates** - work of high quality. Class participation is voluntary, frequent, and reflects that you are keeping up with the assigned materials. Written work reflects a good
understanding of the issues and concepts. Writing is clear with minimal errors. Performance on exams is very strong; demonstrates mastery of facts and concepts.

- C Quality Work Designates - work that minimally meets the course requirements. Class participation is occasional and/or rarely voluntary, with comments that reveal only a superficial grasp of issues and concepts. Written work may contain arguments that are confusing, with minimal evidence of organization. Writing is marred with errors. Performance on exams demonstrates acceptable degree of mastery of facts and concepts.

- D Quality Work Designates – work that has minimal clarity and comprehension. Class participation is minimal, never voluntary, and reveals a lack of preparation and/or understanding. Written work is confusing, contradictory, repetitive, and/or not supported by either your own ideas or your sources. Writing is marred with errors. Performance on exams demonstrates minimal mastery of facts and concepts.

- F Quality Work Designates - Unsatisfactory performance along most (or all) measures.

Course Grading
Participation – 25%
Weekly Assignments – 25%
Midterm Exam - 25%
Final Exam – 25%

Participation Scale
0 = absent
60 = student makes no comment
70 = student offers little to no discussion
80 = student ask clarification questions, but does not advance the classroom discussion
90 = student makes thoughtful insights or asks critical questions
100 = student advances the classroom discussion with questions, comments, observations, and/or personal antidotes

Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness: In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor’s control. Please email brown957@purdue.edu with questions about the next steps.

If a Wind Chill Emergency or a Snow or Ice Emergency is declared, pertinent information will be sent to the Purdue e-mail and text message accounts of faculty, staff, and students and will also be posted on the University’s home page. In addition, local media will be informed to facilitate communication to the local community. The Emergency Procedures Guide (EPG) can be viewed at: https://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/flipchart/index.html

Nondiscrimination: Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life.
Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran. The University will conduct its programs, services and activities consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and orders and in conformance with the procedures and limitations as set forth in Executive Memorandum No. D-1, which provides specific contractual rights and remedies. Any student who believes they have been discriminated against may visit www.purdue.edu/report-hate to submit a complaint to the Office of Institutional Equity. Information may be reported anonymously.

Use of Copyrighted Materials: Among the materials that may be protected by copyright law are the lectures, notes, and other material presented in class or as part of the course. Always assume the materials presented by an instructor are protected by copyright unless the instructor has stated otherwise. Students enrolled in, and authorized visitors to, Purdue University courses are permitted to take notes, which they may use for individual/group study or for other non-commercial purposes reasonably arising from enrollment in the course or the University generally.

Notes taken in class are, however, generally considered to be “derivative works” of the instructor’s presentations and materials, and they are thus subject to the instructor’s copyright in such presentations and materials. No individual is permitted to sell or otherwise barter notes, either to other students or to any commercial concern, for a course without the express written permission of the course instructor. To obtain permission to sell or barter notes, the individual wishing to sell or barter the notes must be registered in the course or must be an approved visitor to the class. Course instructors may choose to grant or not grant such permission at their own discretion, and may require a review of the notes prior to their being sold or bartered. If they do grant such permission, they may revoke it at any time, if they so choose.

Academic Integrity: Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, University Regulations] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated, "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972] For further details on academic integrity, please read the information available at http://www.purdue.edu/odos/aboutodos/academicintegrity.php.

Students with Disabilities/Differently-Abled Students: Purdue University is required to respond to the needs of the students with disabilities as outlined in both the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 through the provision of auxiliary aids and services that allow a student with a disability to fully access and participate in the programs, services, and activities at Purdue University.

If you have a disability that requires special academic accommodation, please make an appointment to speak with me within the first three (3) weeks of the semester so the necessary arrangements can be made. It is important that we talk about this at the beginning of the semester. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Disability Resource Center (http://www.purdue.edu/drc) of an impairment/condition that may require accommodations and/or classroom modifications.
Core Course Assignments

Midterm Essay
You will be asked to answer one out of four questions on the material discussed during the first half of the course in a take-home essay. You must hand submit your essay at the beginning of class on March 12, 2014. All essays must be type written and between 300-500 words using 12 point Times New Roman font. You are required to cite sources using parenthetical within the text for direct quotes – there is no need for a works cited/bibliography if you are only referencing materials assigned in class. You must use at least two class readings in your essay.

Final Exam
You will be asked to answer two out of four questions on the material discussed during the second half of the course in a take-home essay. You must submit your essay to the course blackboard website by 8am Friday, May 8, 2015. All essays must be type written and between 300-500 words using 12 point Times New Roman font. You are required to cite sources using parenthetical within the text for direct quotes – there is no need for a works cited/bibliography if you are only referencing materials assigned in class. You must use at least two class readings in your essay and at least one outside class readings in this essay.

Weekly Assignments – Due via email to the course blackboard website either Monday or Wednesday at 11:59pm depending on due date (see course calendar below)

Politician Paper
All students must write a 2 page double spaced paper about one African-American politician. He or she may be either figures from history or current office holders. He or she may be local, state, or national politicians. He or she may be from Missouri or any other state. The only restriction is that President Barack Obama CAN NOT be your choice of politician for this paper. The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate that, regardless of all of the complaints from the African-American community about there not being enough Black elected officials, there are and have always been Black men and women serving in elected office and trying to meet the needs of their constituencies. The paper should include important information about the politicians’ backgrounds. It should also offer an assessment of the job that they did in office. Did they pass any legislation or champion an important cause? What did the voters think of them? Finally, the paper should give me your personal opinion about the politicians. If you had the opportunity, would you vote for them?

Social Construction
Watch Dave Chapelle’s “I know Black People” youtube clip prior to class. How does the clip “I know Black People” reflect the idea of Social Construction as discussed in the readings. How does this clip relate to American prejudices? Answer these questions in a 1-2 page double spaced essay.

We The People
Reflect upon the week’s readings on the Constitution. In a 2 page double spaced essay use the week’s readings to answer the following questions:

1. Why is the word "slavery" not used in the Constitution? What does this indicate about the way the framers viewed slavery?
2. Who did "we the people" include and exclude? In what sense did the Constitution protect slaveholders’ right to property in slaves?
3. Consider what definition of freedom the Constitution espoused at ratification. Professor Foner notes that "the era of the American Revolution bequeathed a divided legacy to nineteenth-century America. Contradictory concepts of freedom emerged from the Revolution—freedom as the right to enjoy the possession of property, including slave property, unmolested by government, and
freedom as a universal entitlement that applied to all mankind, including slaves.” Which concept of freedom did the Constitution provide for?

Du Bois & Washington
Read the following poem entitled Booker T and W. E. B. by Dudley Randel (http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/177161) From your in class readings and the poem compare and contrast the political philosophies of these two men using these categories: Education – industrial/classical; Civil Rights – Must be demanded/Must be earned; and Political Power – Must result from strategies of self improvement/Must be seized. This assignment must be 2 page double spaced pages.

Black Political Thought Presentation
This presentation requires students to delve deeper into one of the theories of Black political thought and present on an African American political theorist that we have not discussed in class. Students must individually consult with the professor one week before the presentation is due to discuss their presentation. You must create (and make copies of) a handout that summarizes the key points of your presentation and has at least 4 discussion questions for your classmates.

Race and Failures of Federalism - Hurricane Katrina
In a 2 page double spaced essay address how federalism is directly related to Blacks’ freedom struggle. How has state-centered power limited Blacks’ universal freedom? Using Hurricane Katrina as an example, detail how the expansion and contraction of federal power impacts African Americans.

Current Event Discussions
Find a newspaper or magazine article that discusses race and how race is still a relevant category in American politics (make copies or distribute via email prior the class). You must ground your discussion in the theoretical and scholarly concepts used in class. Because this is a participation based requirement, participation points for that day will be doubled. You have the opportunity to earn double participation points on current event discussion class periods. Additional current event discussion may be added (with advance notice) at the discretion of the professor.

To be sure, you will need to follow the news on a daily basis – not just when we have scheduled current event discussions. If you get news from the television, please bring a thorough understanding of the issue if you plan to comment on it. You may bring notes from the news or clippings from papers and periodicals on non-current event discussion class periods. You will get more out of this class intellectually and in enjoyment if you know what is going on around you.

Race, Public Opinion, and the Media
Compare and contrast articles on race in American politics in an African American newspaper (such as the Indianapolis Recorder), a traditional local newspaper (such as the Indianapolis Star), and newspaper with a national readership (such as the New York Times). How are the stories framed in the 3 different newspapers? What is different and what is similar? Is there a difference in how Blacks are portrayed (if at all), diversity among Black public opinion, difference between Blacks and Whites attitudes, does the media portray Black and White voters differently or similarly, or is the significant attention paid to issues that disproportionately affect Blacks? This assignment must be 2 double spaced pages.

Framing Interest Groups and Social Movements
Pick two Black interests groups or social movements - one contemporary (i.e. #BlackLivesMatter, Occupy the Hood, Respect my Vote!) and one historical (i.e. Montgomery Bus Boycott, Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters). Using your selected interest groups or social movements, answer the following questions in a 2 page double spaced essay. What is the difference between material-based and rights-
based movements and coalitions? How are historical moments of black social movement activism reflected in contemporary interest group politics? What is “the problem of resource constraint”?

**Black Politics in the Real World (Part I and II)**

These short interactive assignments require you to observe the application of Black politics outside of the classroom. You must engage with Black political elites and African American constituents (either through a Black grassroots or community organization that has a political component or a Black civic group).

**Part I - Questions to ask members of a Black community or civic organization:**

- How do individuals and community-based groups participate in public life and policy making?
- What role, if any, does race play in how elected officials interact with your organization?
- What role does race play, if any, in the field of community development and how civic life is supported?
- How does race relations impact your organization’s objectives for creating successful community change?
- What’s the role of a Black “citizen” in public life?

**Part II - Questions to ask an elected official:**

- What does it take to get elected to public office?
- What impact does race, if any, have on the election process?
- In general, do you believe that race effects or matters in the legislative process?
- Do you think your race matters in how you see/interpret legislation?
- What influence, formal and informal, does race play, in the policy process?

These two short interactive assignments should be no more than 3 double spaced pages. Please include the name and very brief biographical information of the elected official and organization/organizational member interviewed. You must include your observations and thoughts about the interview in the conclusion of the paper.

**Black Politics Meets Mr. Obama**

In a one page essay answer the following questions. How did Obama’s campaigns exemplify the “new style” of Black politicians? What is the difference between substantive and descriptive representation with respect to Obama’s primary and presidential campaigns? (Review Walton and Smith’s discussion of these concepts of representation). What effect did Obama’s campaign have on racially polarized voting and de-racialization?

**The Supreme Court & Black Politics**

In a one page essay answer the following question. How has the Supreme Court’s approach to Blacks’ civil and political rights evolved over time?

**Political Hip Hop Presentation**

Students must bring an example of a political hip hop song to class – not one of the songs that I have previously played in class. This song should incorporate topics from any aspect of Black politics. The student must be able to clearly identify why the song was chosen and why it is labeled political. An analysis of the political lyrics should be the focus of the presentation. You must create (and make copies of) a handout that summarizes the key points of your presentation and has at least 4 discussion questions for your classmates.
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<th>Criteria for All Papers</th>
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<td>All papers should be typed and double-spaced using Times New Roman 12-point font. You must cite your sources when you use quotations, paraphrase, and cite all facts. Endnotes, footnotes, and parenthetical citations are all acceptable methods of doing this—pick ONE. You must also list all of the references that you consulted in a reference page or bibliography. Encyclopedias and Wikipedia are NOT acceptable reference sources. You must use the APA citation style. Please take the time to check for spelling and grammatical errors because they WILL affect your grade! Papers will be graded on content, thoroughness in answering the questions, organization, length, and professionalism. Please see me if you need any additional explanations of this grading criteria.</td>
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SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY AND COURSE CALENDAR

Note: The syllabus and/or course calendar will be adjusted to accommodate events that provide significant learning opportunities for students, weather conditions, etc. Additionally, a more detailed syllabus and/or course calendar may be issued at the instructor’s discretion.

Week 1
January 13 – Course Introduction & Overview

January 15 - _No Class – Southern Political Science Association Annual Meeting_  

Week 2
January 20 – US Race Relations post- Michael Brown and Eric Garner


Poll: 57 Percent of Americans Say Race Relations is the US are Bad http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/first-read/poll-57-percent-americans-say-race-relations-u-s-are-n269491

As a Major US Problem, Race Relations Sharply Rises http://www.gallup.com/poll/180257/major-problem-race-relations-sharply-rises.aspx

Here’s Why Obama Said the US is ‘Less Racially Divided’ http://www.npr.org/2014/12/22/372557632/heres-why-obama-said-the-u-s-is-less-racially-divided


Unrest over Race is Testing Obama’s Legacy http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/09/us/politics/unrest-over-race-is-testing-obamas-legacy-.html?_r=0

10 Ways That News Outlets Have Had to Contend with Race and Diversity in 2014 http://www.theroot.com/blogs/journalisms/2014/12/_10_ways_that_news_outlets_have_had_to_contend_with_race_and_diversity_in.html

January 22 – Why Study Black Politics? Does Black Politics Have a Future? 
_Boston Review - a forum on the power and potential of Black movements._

Dawson, Michael - http://bostonreview.net/forum/future-black-politics-dawson

Shelby, Tommie - http://bostonreview.net/forum/future-black-politics/solidarity-meets-cooperation

Gillespie, Andra - http://bostonreview.net/who-cares-about-race

O’Connor, Patrick - http://bostonreview.net/build-locally


Assignment Due – Black Politician Paper

January 27 – Beverly Tatum Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? Chapters 1, 2


Assignment Due – Social Construction

Week 3
February 3 – Walton, Jr. and Smith, Chapter 1 & Notes on the State of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h490t.html

February 5 – “Unsound Constitution” George P. Fletcher in Diversity in Contemporary American Politics And Government eds. Dulio, O’Brian, and Klemanski

Walton, Jr. and Smith – Appendix 1& 2

Assignment Due – We the People

Week 4

http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/abolition/walkerhp.html


http://washington.thefreelibrary.com/Up-From-Slavery/14-1

Assignment Due – Du Bois and Washington

Week 5
February 16 – Garvey, Marcus “Africa for the Africans” and “The Future As I See It”

Combahee River Collective, “Black Feminist Statement”


*Assignment Due* – Meet with Dr. Brown about your Presentations (can be done anytime throughout week 5)

Week 6
February 24 – **Black Political Thought Presentations Due (Part I)**

February 26 – **Black Political Thought Presentations Due (Part II)**

Week 7
March 3 – Walton, Jr. and Smith – Chapter 2: Freedom and Federalism


*Assignment Due* – **Race and Failures of Federalism - Hurricane Katrina**

Week 8
March 10 – Walton, Jr. and Smith – Chapter 3 – Political Culture
View and Listen


*Assignment due: Current Event Discussion

March 12 – MIDTERM
Movie - TBA

NO CLASSES – Spring Break

Week 10
March 23 – Walton, Jr. and Smith – Chapter 5: Public Opinion

March 26 – Walton, Jr. and Smith – Chapter 6: African Americans in the Media

*Assignment Due* – **Race, Public Opinion, and the Media**

Week 11
March 31 – Walton and Smith: Chapter 7: Social Movements
April 2 – Walton, Jr. and Smith Chapter 8: Interest Groups and Appendix 3

*Assignment Due – Framing Interest Groups and Social Movements

Week 12
April 7 — Walton, Jr. and Smith: Chapter 9: Political Parties and Elections

April 9 – Walton, Jr. and Smith: Chapter 10: Universal Freedom and Political Behavior
*Assignment Due

*Assignment Due - Black Politics in the Real World (Part I)

Week 13
April 13 – Walton, Jr. and Smith: Chapter 11 – The Congress and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom

April 16 - Brown – reading TBA
*Assignment Due – Black Politics in the Real World (Part II)

Week 14
April 21 – Walton, Jr. and Smith: Chapter 12 – The Presidency and The African American Quest for Universal Freedom

April 23 – Gillespie, Andra: Chapter 1 – Meet the New Class Theorizing Young Black Leadership in a “Postracial” Era
*Assignment Due – Black Politics Meets Mr. Obama

Week 15
April 28 – Walton, Jr. and Smith: Chapter 13- The Supreme Court and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom
*Assignment Due – The Supreme Court & Black Politics


*Assignment Due – Political Hip Hop

May 8 - Final Exam Essay