

African American Politics ¹

Spring 2018

The University of Florida

Instructor:

Mr. Armstrong, Brandon

Contact Information: ²

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Office:

Anderson Hall 317

Course Number:

POS 4077/AFA 4931

Class Periods:

M, W, & F: Period 2

Office Hours:

W 9:30-11am

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, we 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 criminal justice system’s impact on the black community. The format will be a combination of lectures and discussions.

The Required Textbooks:

1. Walton, H., Smith, R. C., and Wallace, S. L. (2017). *American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom*. Routledge.
2. Thomas, C. (2010). *My Grandfather’s Son: A Memoir*. Harper.
3. Harris, F. (2012). *The Price of the Ticket: Barack Obama and the Rise and Decline of Black Politics*. Oxford University Press.
4. Du Bois, W. E. B. (2011). *The Souls of Black Folk*. Tribeca Books.

The Reserve Articles: These readings are available via Canvas.

Attendance Policy and Missed Work: After three unexcused classes are missed, you will not receive points for attendance. In addition, 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, speak with me after the class session has ended. Also, get to class on time. If you arrive to class after the attendance sheet has been turned in, that will be considered as an unexcused absence. 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): 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. Laptops are only permitted to be used in class to take notes in exceptional cases. If students want to review readings or notes during class, they will need to bring a printed copy of these materials.

¹Acknowledgments: Thank you to Dr. Sharon Wright-Austin for her guidance in the development of this course.

²You can expect a response from the instructor within 48 hours through any of the aforementioned methods of communication. Please do not send multiple correspondences. You will be contacted as promptly as time allows.

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 will 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 75 points and one worth 50 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 – i.e., 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.

Du Bois Paper (Optional): You must write a 5-page, typed, double-spaced paper examining the major themes and arguments in the *Souls of Black Folk* book. Additional instructions can be found on the assignments tab on canvas. Upload this paper to canvas by midnight on the due date.

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, email me on the day that you have participated so that I can keep a record of it. Throughout the semester, I will notify 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 10 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 have discussed in class.

Your Grade will be Based on:

Attendance	50pts
Participation or Optional Paper	50pts
First Test	200pts
Second Test	200pts
Third Test	200pts
Obama Research Paper	150pts
Thomas Research Paper	150pts
Total	1000pts
Du Bois Research Paper	Extra Credit (optional)

Grading Scale: ³

940-1000 A	900-930 A-	870-890 B+	840-860 B	800-830 B-	770-790 C+
740-760 C	700-730 C-	670-690 D+	640-660 D	600-630 D-	Below 600 F

³A C- will not be a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule or College Basic Distribution credit.

Extra Credit Opportunities: There may be one (or two) additional extra credit opportunities throughout the semester. However, the opportunities are based on the discretion of the instructor.

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>.

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.

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/Topics: ⁴

Universal Freedom: Declared and Denied

Domestic Policy and the African American Quest for Justice

Congress and Political Parties

The Fourteenth Amendment and the Issue of Affirmative Action

Justice Thomas, Justice Marshall, and the Supreme Court

President Barack Hussein Obama

The Criminal Justice System and the Black Community

Disclaimer:

Please be aware that this syllabus is subject to change. Students will be notified in class and via email when, and if, any changes are made.

⁴Films will be shown at the end of classes.