

African American Politics (POS 4077/AFA4931)

Fall 2024

Dr. Sharon Austin

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The University of Florida

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Virtual and In-Person Office Hours:

Tuesdays 10:40am-1:40pm
Thursdays 10:40am-1:40pm
Online at: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/5186400829>.

Course Description:

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 and beyond. 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 in both the Democratic and Republican parties. Our course will then compare and contrast the events of the current justice and political movements to those of the past. This is a very exciting time for African American politics. In the past, our nation elected a Black president (Barack Obama) for two terms and the first African American/Caribbean/Asian American female vice president (Kamala Harris) who may well become the first female, Asian American, Caribbean, and multiracial president of the United States. We have also witnessed the swearing-in of three Black U.S. Supreme Court justices (Thurgood Marshall, Clarence Thomas, and Ketanji Brown-Jackson). In addition, African Americans have made strong bids in gubernatorial elections and witnessed the ascension of Representative Hakeem Jeffries (D.-NY) as the highest-ranking African American in Congress in American history. Black Republicans such as U.S. Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, U.S. Representative Byron Donalds of Florida, Virginia Lieutenant Governor Winsome Sears, and North Carolina Gubernatorial candidate Mark Robinson have also achieved political successes. These are only a few of the political milestones we will discuss this semester. Please keep in mind that all opinions are welcome in this course.

I am also excited to announce that students in the SAYDS Program (Systems Acumen for Youth-Development Solutions) that is based in Kenya, West Africa, will participate in some of our class sessions. This is a part of a virtual exchange program that allows UF students to learn from students in another country and vice versa. You can learn more about SAYDS here <https://www.sayds.co/>. Dr. Levy Odera, Ph.D. is a Kenya native and an alumnus of the UF doctoral program in political science. He is the founder and president of SAYDS. For more information on the SAYDS team, see <https://www.sayds.co/our-team/>.

Course Objectives:

The learning objectives for the course are:

- Trace the history of major actors, developments, and political movements in African Americans politics since the modern civil rights movement.
- Distinguish the ideological and other differences between Democratic and Republican candidates.
- Explain the campaign tactics that African Americans used to win local, state, and national political offices.
- Determine whether African American women have been disadvantaged by both their race and gender when running for and serving in political offices.
- Detail the impact of public policies, such as affirmative action, on African Americans.
- Analyze the role of the U.S. Supreme Court and the judiciary generally on American public policymaking.

The Required Textbooks:

American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom. Ninth Edition. Hanes Walton Jr., Robert C. Smith, and Sherri L. Wallace (New York: Routledge, 2021).

My Grandfather's Son: A Memoir. Clarence Thomas (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2007).

The Loneliness of the Black Republican. Leah Wright Rigueur (Princeton University Press, 2015).

Political Black Girl Magic: The Elections and Governance of Black Female Mayors. Sharon D. Wright Austin, editor. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2023).

The Reserve Articles can be found on the course reserves link on canvas. I have also included a file with some of the journal articles in the VPN and Reserve Readings folder. Click on the files tab on the left side of the page.

Your Grade will be Based on:

1) Class Participation (Worth 10% of Grade)

Class participation and attendance are extremely important in this seminar. Each student is expected to read the assigned materials before class and participate in class discussions. After three unexcused classes are missed, you will not receive the percentage points for class participation. It is your responsibility to sign an attendance roster that will be given out at the beginning of each class session. If you forget to, sign it during the next class. Also, try to get to class on time.

You must also upload an introduction to canvas on or before September 3rd. Your participation grade will also be based on your participation in the zoom discussion breakout sessions with the SAYDS students when they are indicated on the syllabus below.

2) Three Class Material Papers (Worth 60% or 20% each)

You must write a complete eight-page paper on the topics that we have covered. This paper will require an analysis of the assigned readings, lectures, and other class materials on this topic and answer the questions that are listed on canvas. Approximately one week before the papers are due, I will provide a review by going over the questions you'll have to write about and the readings that you'll have to analyze when answering the questions. Please don't forget to include parenthetical citations in your paper. These citations in the paper must include the person's last name, year of publication, and page number-i.e., (Wright, 2020, 20). Then, include a Bibliography page at the end of the paper that lists your sources. The sources can be formatted according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, *M.L.A.*, or the *American Psychological Association (A.P.A.)* format. See the sources in the textbooks for examples.

3) Justices Thurgood Marshall, Clarence Thomas, and Ketanji Brown Jackson Paper (Worth 20% of Grade)

You must write an eight page, typed, double-spaced papers examining the major themes and arguments in the *My Grandfather's Son* book and in the *American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom* book (and power point presentation given in class) that examines Thurgood Marshall. Approximately, one week before the paper is due, I will go over the questions with you.

4) Presentation Summary (Worth 10% of Grade)

Each graduate student in our course will give a presentation that examines an African American political issue or person of their choice. All students must take notes during each of these presentations so that you will have a deeper understanding of these issues/persons. Your analysis must answer the following questions for each graduate presentation: Why are these issues/persons important for our understanding of black politics? What did you learn from the presentation(s) about this issue/person? The analysis should be approximately five pages (not including a bibliography) and follow rubric included on canvas.

Grading Scale:

94-100 A	90-93 A-	87-89 B+	84-86 B	80-83 B-	77-79 C+
74-76 C	70-73 C-	67-69 D+	64-66 D	60-63 D-	Below 60 E

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

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](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc)

Academic Dishonesty:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code can be accessed at the link below and specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

[<https://archive.catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>]

Counseling Services:

For help from the university counseling services and mental health services, call (352) 392-1575, see <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, or call the University Police Department [(352) 392-1111] or 9-1-1 for emergencies. You can also find help at the U Matter We Care site [<https://umatter.ufl.edu/>].

The Office of Academic Support:

The Office of Academic Support (OAS) provides support and enrichment services to all University of Florida (UF) students. OAS works in conjunction with several integral offices including the Offices of Admissions, Dean of Students, Academic Technology, Student Financial Affairs, Housing and Residence Education, Promise, and the Academic Advising Center to offer a thorough introduction and orientation to UF.

<https://oas.aa.ufl.edu/about-us/>

Course Evaluation:

At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals.

Class Schedule:

Universal Freedom: Declared and Denied

8-22 Introduction

8-27 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, chapter 1 Universal Freedom Declared, Universal Freedom Denied

8-29 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, chapter 2 Federalism
Film: Eyes on the Prize: Bridge to Freedom (50 minutes) discusses the protests that resulted in the ratification of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

*9-3 Introduction post Due Today

The class will meet on zoom today at the link below. SAYDS Students Will Also Attend.

Zoom link for today's class:

[https://ufl.zoom.us/j/91434239101?pwd=O6oLdxiTanGcjuC7ga93LdYSa5TXbF.](https://ufl.zoom.us/j/91434239101?pwd=O6oLdxiTanGcjuC7ga93LdYSa5TXbF.1)

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Meeting ID: 914 3423 9101

Passcode: 38109

One tap mobile (if you're participating by phone): +16469313860, 91434239101#
US; Passcode: 38109

Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, pages 119-139 of chapter 6 Social Movements

9-5 NO CLASS (American Political Science Association Meeting)

The Black Power Movement: Then and Now

9-10 Reserve Reading: Moderate and Fragmented Black Political Incorporation in Miami-Dade County

Textbook Reading: *Political Black Girl Magic*, chapter 5 Black Female Mayors in Florida

9-12 Textbook Reading: *Political Black Girl Magic*, chapter 6 African American Female Mayors in Mississippi

Film: Mississippi: Is This America? (50 minutes) discusses the activities that took place during Freedom Summer 1964 including the activism of Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer and the murders of Medgar Evers and Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney.

9-17 First Class Material Paper Due

Textbook Reading: *Loneliness of the Black Republican*, chapter 1 Running with Hares and Hunting with Hounds

9-19 Textbook Reading: *Loneliness of the Black Republican*, chapter 3 The Challenge of Change
Film: *Nation of Law* (55 minutes) is an episode of the Eyes on the Prize civil rights documentary series that examines the 1968 murders of two members of the Illinois Black Panther Party Fred Hampton and Mark Clark and the attempts by Chicago policemen to cover up the crime. It also examines a 1971 prison uprising at the Attica State Prison in Attica, New York.

9-24 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, pages 140-156 of chapter 6
Textbook Reading: *Loneliness of the Black Republican*, chapter 2 A Thorn in the Flesh of the GOP

*9-26 We will hold class on zoom today to participate in the activity with Kenyan students. During our class session, American and Kenyan students will compare and contrast their experiences with youth-led protests and civic engagement in the countries in which they live in discussion sections. In breakout sessions consisting of approximately 10 students, you will discuss the questions below. Before the discussions, the graduate students will each give a 10 minute presentation about the challenges American youths encounter when trying to mobilize politically.

- What types of protests are typically led by young people in your country?
- What have your experiences been with these protests (that you have either participated in or witnessed others participate in)? Were the protests successful (in terms of young people getting what they wanted)?
- How do young people usually participate in civic engagement activities in their countries (voting, protests and demonstrations, interactions with elected officials, or something else)?

Zoom link for today's class:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/92424388962?pwd=llrMssF39UrTxaImVzJyUSGbJyo6AJ.1>

Meeting ID: 924 2438 8962

Passcode: 38109

To participate by phone: +13052241968, 92424388962# US; Passcode: 38109

10-1 Reserve Reading:
Contemporary Black Populism and the Development of Multiracial Electoral Coalitions: The 2018 Stacey Abrams and Andrew Gillum Gubernatorial Campaigns

The U.S. Supreme Court

10-3 Textbook Readings: *My Grandfather's Son*, chapters 1-5
Film: *The Justice Nobody Knows* (30 minutes) is a 60 Minutes interview with U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas shortly before the publication of his memoir, *My Grandfather's Son*.

10-8 **Second Class Material Paper Due**

Textbook Reading: *My Grandfather's Son*, chapters 6-10

10-10 *American Politics*, chapter 12 The Supreme Court and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom

Reserve Readings:

Ketanji Brown Jackson's Path to the Supreme Court Nomination Was Paved by Trailblazing Black Women Judges

Ketanji Brown Jackson vs. Clarence Thomas

Film: *A Question of Fairness (45 minutes)* examines the lawsuits challenging the undergraduate and law school admissions processes at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. In June 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court issues 2 landmark rulings in these cases that will have a major impact on the future use of affirmative action in university admissions.

*10-15 **The class will meet on zoom today. There will be no breakout sessions, but the SAYDS students will attend.**

Reserve Readings:

Regents of the U of California v. Bakke

Gratz v. Bollinger

SFFA v. Harvard (Justia Summary)

The One Florida Plan (Executive Summary)

Zoom link for today's class:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/96966116312?pwd=JVimlSWa787balUJyepkk8LHEPZmLU.1>

Meeting ID: 969 6611 6312

Passcode: 38109

To participate by phone: +16469313860, 96966116312# US; Passcode: 38109

*10-17 The class will meet on zoom today at the link below.

Textbook Reading:

Loneliness of the Black Republican, Chapter 7 The Time of the Black Elephant

Loneliness of the Black Republican, Chapter 4 Richard Nixon's Black Cabinet

SAYDS group meeting about Black conservatives. Why is there an age, religious, and ideological difference among young progressives and older Republicans?

Zoom link for today's class:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/94462440810?pwd=FkLO906yrJhJLqQxPDTlk1sbiWBAUt.1>

Meeting ID: 944 6244 0810

Passcode: 38109

To participate by phone: +13052241968, 94462440810# US; Passcode: 38109

10-22 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, chapter 8 Political Parties and chapter 11 The Presidency, Bureaucracy and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom

- 10-24 Textbook Readings:
American Politics, chapter 9 Voting Behavior and Elections
American Politics, chapter 5 The Media
- 10-29 Textbook Reading: *American Politics*, chapter 10 Congress and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom
- 10-31 Reserve Readings:
I Say We Fight from *The Truths We Hold* (chapter 5) by Kamala Harris
A Safety Net, Not a Hammock from *Time to Get Tough* by Donald J. Trump
Engage from *Promises to Keep* by Joe Biden
Film: The Choice 2024 investigates “the lives and characters of Kamala Harris and Donald Trump as they seek the presidency.”
- 11-5 **Justices Thurgood Marshall, Clarence Thomas, and Ketanji Brown Jackson Paper Due**
Reserve Readings:
Chapter 15 of *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance
The Lead Representative’s Vision for Minnesota from *Tim Walz Biography*
- *11-7 **Class will meet on zoom today to discuss U.S. presidential election results. Analysis of American results with the SAYDS students. Why do people around the world have such an interest in the winner of the American presidency? What are the implications for American domestic and foreign policy? Drs. Austin and Odera will mention information about the American and Kenyan presidencies.**
Zoom link for today’s class:
<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/93987018006?pwd=dz110hztGZY7nvBPwjMuz0fHZc8rfH.1>
Meeting ID: 939 8701 8006
Passcode: 38109
To participate by phone: 3052241968, 93987018006; Passcode: 38109
- 11-12 Textbook Reading: *Political Black Girl Magic*, chapter 8 The Improbable Election of Lori Lightfoot in Chicago
Political Black Girl Magic, chapter 9 Atlanta Mayors Shirley Franklin and Keisha Lance Bottoms
- 11-14 Textbook Readings:
Political Black Girl Magic, chapter 10 Black Female Mayors in the Age of #BlackLives Matter
Political Black Girl Magic, chapter 11 Washington, DC Mayors Sharon Pratt and Muriel Bowser

11-19 Textbook Readings:

American Politics, chapter 4 Public Opinion (Conservatism)

Political Black Girl Magic, chapter 3 Aja Brown and Acquanetta Warren

Graduate Student Presentations

11-21 **Graduate Student Presentations**

11-26 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

11-28 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

12-3 **Third Class Material Paper Due**

We will meet on zoom today.

SAYD Reflection Class Meeting: This will be our final class meeting. UF and SAYDS students will be able to reflect on what they learned from their interactions.

Zoom link for today's class:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/98196628761?pwd=XF15DI6jnTonJFL7HaVDC3Rccec12.1>

Meeting ID: 981 9662 8761

Passcode: 38109

To participate by phone: +16465588656, 98196628761# US; Passcode: 38109

Presentation Summary is due on December 10th.