

African American Politics (POS 6933)

Fall 2024

Dr. Sharon Austin

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The University of Florida

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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.

Your Grade will be Based on:

1) Attendance, Participation, and Weekly Discussion Questions (20%)

Class participation and attendance are extremely important in this seminar. Beginning on Tuesday January 24th, upload at least one discussion question from each reading to canvas so that we can discuss them in class. The questions must be uploaded onto canvas the day before class by 4pm. You must also upload an introduction to canvas on or before September 3rd.

You must also upload an introduction to canvas on or before September 3rd (along with the undergraduates and the SAYDS students). Your participation grade will also be based on the approximately 10-minute presentations you are required to give on

September 26th (Youth activism and civic engagement) and October 19th (Black conservatives). These are two of the days that we will have zoom discussion breakout sessions with the SAYDS students from Kenya.

2) Political Black Girl Magic and Black Women’s Political Leadership Paper (15%)

You must write an approximately six-page paper that examines the major themes of *Political Black Girl Magic: The Elections and Governance of Black Female Mayors*. I will provide the questions you’ll be required to answer. Each of these will allow you to examine the constraints that Black women encounter when serving in their cities’ highest office and how they attempt to over come them. Use parenthetical citations in the paper that 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.

3) Justices Thurgood Marshall, Clarence Thomas, and Ketanji Brown Jackson Paper (15%)

You must write an approximately six-page, typed, double-spaced paper examining the major themes and arguments in the *My Grandfather’s Son* book, in the *American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom* book, as well as in power point presentations, and other syllabus readings that examine Thurgood Marshall, Clarence Thomas, and Ketanji Brown Jackson.

4) Presentation 10%

Summarize the main points of your paper in your PowerPoint presentation. A brief discussion of the papers will take place at the end of the class in which you present your paper.

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 is due today.**

The class will meet on zoom today at the link below. SAYDS Students will also attend. During this class session, we will discuss the introduction posts by comparing and contrasting living conditions in the U.S. and Kenya.

Zoom link for today's class:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/91434239101?pwd=O6oLdxITanGcjuC7ga93LdYSa5TXbF.1>

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 **First Discussion Question Is Due Today.**

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 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 No Discussion Questions Due Today**

Presentation about the challenges to youth-led activism and civic engagement in America (with a focus on Black youths).

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 **No Discussion Questions Due Today (Examining Thomas, Marshall, or Brown Jackson)**

Textbook Readings: *My Grandfathers 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 **No Discussion Questions Due Today (Examining Thomas, Marshall, or Brown Jackson)**

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

10-10 **No Discussion Questions Due Today (Examining Thomas, Marshall, or Brown Jackson)**

Textbook Reading:

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 **No Discussion Questions Due Today**

Presentations about the challenges for Black conservative in America.

The class will meet on zoom today at the link below. The class will discuss the question, "Why is there an age, religious, and ideological difference among young progressives and older Republicans?"

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

We will meet with the SAYDS students to discuss the beliefs of Black conservatives. The question that students will examine in the breakout sessions is, "Why is there an age, religious, and ideological difference among young progressives and older Republicans?" In the breakout rooms, students will discuss their views of liberal and conservative politicians.

Zoom link for today's class:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/94462440810?pwd=FkLO906yrJhjLqQxPDTlk1sbiWBAUt.1>

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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 **No Discussion Questions Due Today**
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 **U.S. Supreme Court Paper is Due (No Discussion Questions Due Today)**
(My Grandfather’s Son Book, Thurgood Marshall, Ketanji Brown-Jackson)
Reserve Readings:
Chapter 15 of *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance
The Lead Representative’s Vision for Minnesota from *Tim Walz Biography*
- *11-7 **No Discussion Questions Due Today**
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 **Last Discussion Questions Are Due Today.**

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 About Black Women's Political Leadership

11-21 **Graduate Student Presentations About Black Women's Political Leadership**

11-26 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

11-28 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

12-3 **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=XF15DI6jnTonJFL7HaVDC3Rccecn12.1>

Meeting ID: 981 9662 8761

Passcode: 38109

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

Black Women's Political Leadership Paper and Presentations are due on December 10th.