

Professor Strickland

Fall 2009

Office Phone: 545-5167

Office Hours: TuTh 9:30-11:00 a.m. (or by appointment)

AFROAM 161 “Introduction to Black Politics”

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an historical survey of the ways in which race and racism have shaped American politics and undermined true racial democracy throughout American history. It will study the role of racial politics in the founding of the Republic, the unfolding of the Civil War and Reconstruction, the rise of Jim Crow and the modern Black Freedom Movement, the right-wing assault on racial equality that arose in the post-Civil Rights era, and the modern day subversion of black political rights which has proved to be an indispensable element of the Republican Right’s strategy for turning America into a right-wing pseudo-democracy. The question for us now is whether Barack Obama’s election as President of the United States represents a fundamental turning point in this history.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Read the following:

John Dean, *BROKEN GOVERNMENT*

Mark Crispin Miller, *FOOLED AGAIN*

Klinkner & Smith, *THE UNSTEADY MARCH*

Ron Walters, *WHITE NATIONALISM/BLACK INTERESTS*

Steven Lawson, *RUNNING FOR FREEDOM*

The Black Scholar, “Barack Obama 2009,” vol. 38, #4 (Winter, 2008).

(Books are available at the Food For Thought Bookstore across from the post office and next to the church.)

COURSE METHODOLOGY

This is a course with a great deal of reading and writing that emphasizes analyzing the role of race in shaping American politics. An important feature of the course will be its effort to relate contemporary political developments to the patterns and practices of the past. The historical readings and analyses will be supplemented by regular readings of the newspaper and in-class discussions of present-day politics. Students will be asked to keep a scrapbook of newspaper clippings on “racial matters” of political significance which occur this semester because this semester will further reveal how American citizens are reacting to a black man, Barack Obama, as President of the United States.

The course will seek to address this issue, and others, as it grapples with the political significance of race in today’s America. Thus if you decide to take the course, do not fall behind in the reading! If you read steadily, you will have no difficulty keeping up.

GRADES:

Grades will be based on one short and one medium-length paper, class attendance and class participation (through class reports), a mid-term exam, and a final exam.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

- Sept 8 Introduction: What Is the Difference Between “Black Politics” and Racial Politics?
1. Du Bois, BLACK RECONSTRUCTION, chpt. 1 (handout)
- Sept 10 The Black Political Body as the Balance of White Political Power from the Revolution to the Civil War
1. Dumond, ANTI-SLAVERY, chpt. 7 (handout)
2. McPherson, ORDEAL BY FIRE, Introduction (handout)
- Sept 15 The Slave Power Rules: From the Constitution to the Civil War
1. UNSTEADY, chpts. 1 & 2
- Sept 22 The Betrayal of Reconstruction & the Return of the Democrats (Dixiecrats) 1868-1945
1. UNSTEADY, chpts. 3 – 6
2. Film, “Birth of a Nation”
- Sept 29 The Civil Rights Era & the Politics of Protest
1. UNSTEADY, chpts. 7 & 8
2. RUNNING, chpts. 1 – 4
3. Film, “Mississippi: Is This America?”
- Oct 1 Scrapbook Discussion
- Oct 6 FIRST PAPER: From what you have read so far, how would you explain how-and why-race is embedded in the American political system?
- Oct 13 No Class! (Monday schedule)
- Oct 15 The Conservative Era: Republicans Appropriate the Racial Ploy
1. RUNNING, chpts 5 – 8
2. WHITE NATIONALISM, chpts. 1 - 4
- Oct 20 Election 2000
1. Strickland, “Has Duplicity Overcome Democracy?”
2. Film, “Unprecedented”
- Oct 22 Watergate: The Original “Dirty Trick”
Film, “All The President’s Men,” Part 1
- Oct 27 “All The President’s Men,” Part 2
- Oct 29 Mid-Term Exam
- Nov 5 Election 2004
FOOLED AGAIN, Preface & chpts. 1 – 4
- Nov 10 FOOLED AGAIN, chpts. 5 -7, Epilogue & Appendix

- Nov 12 Scrapbook discussion
- Nov 17 SECOND PAPER: Compare the tactics used to subvert black political rights after the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act with those used after the passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments.
- Nov 24 Conservatism as Racism
WHITE NATIONALISM, chpts. 5 – 10
- Nov 26 Thanksgiving Recess
- Dec 1 And How Has This Raceploitation Power Been Used?
BROKEN GOVERNMENT, Intro & chpts. 1 & 2
- Dec 8 BROKEN GOVERNMENT, chpts 3 & 4
- Dec 10 LAST CLASS!!!

FINAL EXAM: Date and place to be announced.

**NOTE: Dates on the syllabus indicate when assigned readings are due!!