Special Topics in American Politics: Race, Ethnicity, and Politics  
Spring 2020  
Monday, 3:30-6:15 pm  
Baldwin Hall 302

Instructor: Prof. Roberto F. Carlos  
Office: Baldwin Hall 380B  
Email: rcarlos@uga.edu  
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:00-3:30 pm

Course Description

This course will serve as an introduction to research on race, ethnicity, and politics (REP) in the United States. The course, while mainly focusing on work in political science, will take a multi-disciplinary approach to investigate the history of race in America and the political consequences that stem from that history. Students will be introduced to both canonical and contemporary work in the field of REP using a variety of methodological approaches. In addition to examining the substantive themes in the area of REP, we will review and discuss the different methodological approaches taken in each of the works to address the topic of race in America. The course begins by focusing on mechanisms and theory building in attempts to make us better consumers, and ultimately better producers of the research we are being introduced to in the readings. The course then transitions to theoretical conceptions of race and ethnicity and how they inform notions of citizenship and group membership. Subsequent topics focus on issues related to Representation, Racial Attitudes, Campaigns, Elections, Media, Political Participation, Partisanship, and Immigration.

Course Requirements:

1. Write a critical response memo (twice)  
2. Regular participation in seminar  
4. Attend class every week  
5. Author Presenter Role in the semester (twice)  
6. Assume Authors’ Defendant Role (twice)  
7. Research Proposal

Critical Response Memo:

The memo should be 6-8 double spaced pages and should focus on 2-3 readings from the week. **Memos are due by 6 pm on Sunday on the class website and should be circulated to the class by email.** Everyone in the course will be able to view the response papers. Memos should be analytical rather than summaries of the readings. Your goal is to develop an original argument (theoretical, empirical, or methodological), which improves our understanding of the underlying issues of the week’s topic. Memos cannot overlap with the weeks you present or assume the role of the author’s defendant. A sign-up will be circulated at the first-class meeting.
Attendance & Participation:

You are expected to attend every class, read all materials carefully, and contribute to all seminar discussions. In short, you are expected to participate in every single class actively. The quality of comments is valued over quantity. If students come to seminar unprepared, the quality of discussion will be radically diminished. Students will be required to both facilitate discussion (the week they are the Author Presenter) and be the authors’ defendant twice in the semester. There will be a sign-up at the start of the semester. I expect everybody to come to class prepared to discuss the following questions about each reading:

1. What are the research questions?
2. How has the author(s) defined and measured the concepts they are studying? Are these valid and/or reliable measures?
3. What’s the theory? What are the hypotheses?
4. What methodological strategy or strategies do they employ to test these hypotheses?
5. Key findings? How dependent on measurement and/or research design are the conclusions?
6. How do the findings from a given paper fit into the broader theme of a given week? In other words, how does the reader “speak” to other readings this week?
7. What questions remain unanswered?

Author Presenter:

Students will lead the discussion by presenting core aspects of one assigned reading in a 10-15-minute presentation using PowerPoint (however, they are in charge of facilitating discussion for all of the readings that week). Throughout the semester, students will be required to present twice. It will simulate a conference-style presentation, and the presenter will perform as if he/she is one of the authors of the work. Students in the class will then be able to ask questions about the work in a 10-minute discussion following the presentation. The presentation should include the following:

1. What is the research question?
2. What literature/work is this work contributing to?
3. What is the theory and hypotheses?
4. What is the methodological approach and research design?
5. What are the findings?
6. What is the central contribution of the work and implications?

Authors’ Defendant:

As the authors’ defendant, you must seek to defend the theory, method, and value of the readings for a given week. This role does not require any written work but rather is a type of participation. As is the case in many graduate seminars, critiques of work are plentiful; however, there is little praise or defense of work. Your job is to defend the value and merit of the readings from unjust attacks in order to keep the discussion balanced.
Final Presentation:

The final class is devoted to student presentations of research designs.

Research Proposals are due Monday, April 27, by 5:00 pm. The paper should be roughly 15 - 20 pages of double-spaced text with some combination of tables, figures, appendices, and references. Only electronic copies will be accepted. Late papers will be accepted only under extraordinary conditions. Your research proposal should include the following: Specific question (or set of questions) that you would like to examine and then develop a plan that will let you answer it. The paper must:

1. describe the research question(s) and explain why it’s important;
2. review the relevant literature and explain how your study contributes to it;
3. define the concepts, develop a theoretical framework, and derive testable hypotheses from this framework;
4. describe the data you plan to collect and how the key concepts will be measured; and
5. explain how you plan to analyze the data.

Required Books (order online; not available in campus bookstore).

Assigned shorter book selections and non-academic articles will be posted on ELC. Please note the reading schedule and reading selections are subject to change if the professor deems it necessary.


Grading:

The following are the areas in which you will receive points in this class and the weight that each area has on your final grade.

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Response Memos</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author Presentations</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author Defendant</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I use the following scale when assigning letter grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Course Policies:

1. Valid Absence Excuses

If you have a significant conflict that causes you to miss class (e.g., a personal, family, or medical emergency), you should email me within a week of the missed due date to make sure you can complete the assignment or exam in a timely manner.

2. Academic Honesty

The University of Georgia has an academic honesty policy. Academic integrity is required for a positive learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an F in the course. Additionally, I will forward your name to the University. You can read the policies in their entirety here: [https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Definitions_for_Purposes_of_this_Policy/](https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Definitions_for_Purposes_of_this_Policy/)

3. Disability Resource Center

If you anticipate needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, you must register for services with the Disability Resource Center. Additional information can be found here: [http://drc.uga.edu/](http://drc.uga.edu/)

**Week 1 No class, classes start January 7th**

**Week 2 January 13, 2020**

**Conceptualization, Measurement, and Mechanisms**


*Week 3* No class, MLK Holiday

*Week 4 January 27, 2020*

**Theory-Building and Theory-Testing and Introduction to Race and Politics**


*Week 5 February 3, 2020*

**Conceptualizing Race**


Prewitt, Kenneth. 2006. “Immigrants and the Changing Categories of Race.” In Taeku Lee, S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, and Ricardo Ramírez, eds. Transforming Politics, Transforming America (pp. 19-31)


**Week 6 February 10, 2020**

**Citizenship**


**Week 7 February 17, 2020**

**Identity Politics**


**Week 8 February 24, 2020**

**Representation**


**Week 9 March 2, 2020**

**Racial Attitudes**


**Week 10 Spring Break**

**Week 11 March 16, 2020**

**Campaigns, Elections, & Media**


Kinder, Donald and Lynn Sanders. 1996. Divided by Color Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press Chapters 7 & 8


**Week 12 March 23, 2020**
Political Participation


Week 13 March 30, 2020

Partisanship


Week 14 April 6, 2020

Immigration

Huntington, Samuel P. 2004. *Who Are We?: The Challenges to America’s National Identity*. Chapter 8


Week 15 April 13, 2020 MPSA Week

Week 16 April 20, 2020

Survey Experiments and Contextual Data focusing on Race


Week 17 April 27, 2020

Research Proposals Presentations (Papers Due)