POS 3173

Southern Politics

Fall 2021

Instructor: Jonathan Knuckey

Course Overview

Welcome to Southern Politics!

This class is designed to provide you with a comprehensive overview of politics in the American South. For a political scientist the South is the most interesting region in the United States to study. Why study and be concerned about southern politics?

- **First, the South continues to be the most distinctive region in the United States.** Although the South and the rest of the nation have converged in a number of important ways that we will study this semester, there is still much that sets the South apart from other regions. This continuing distinctiveness is demonstrated by the fact that the South is the only region of the United States to have developed its own subfield of study within political science.

- **Second, the post-World War II period in the South has been characterized by momentous changes with respect to race relations and economic development.** Thus, the South provides a compelling case study of the effects and consequences of these changes on political structures, attitudes and behavior. With respect to race, racial attitudes and civil rights, it also illustrates the need for further progress.

- **Third, anyone interested in developments in the American party system needs to comprehend the partisan changes that have taken place in the South.** The class is organized around the unifying theme of partisan transformation from the once Democratic "Solid South" to a region characterized by two-party competition, and increasingly Republican dominance. This is a fascinating and important story in its own right. However, it also has enormous implications for national party and electoral politics in the battle for the White House and control of Congress.

Although our focus we be primarily on southern politics since the mid-twentieth century we will spend some time at the start of the class talking about the history of the South, and some of the key events that shaped the "traditional" or "Old" South and the nature of politics in the one-party **Democratic "Solid South."**

We will then turn to an examination of the forces that began to transform the South with particular attention given to the **Civil Rights movement era (1954-1965) in the South.**

This leads to the next part of the course which focuses on the **rise of southern Republicans and the onset of two-party competition, and increasingly Republican dominance.**

We will end the course by addressing the question of **whether the South is still a distinctive region** and where the South might be heading - socially, economically and politically - over the next few decades.

Hopefully your study of southern politics this semester will not just serve an academic interest but help in shedding some light on recent party politics in the South and, indeed, the nation, especially as our class coincides with the 2020 election . Furthermore, the type of knowledge that you will acquire is exactly what campaign consultants across the South might be looking for. Maybe in the not too distant future you will be running a campaign where you can put into practice some of the material you learned about this semester.

I look forward to the class and hope you find it enjoyable and informative. I look forward to learning a lot from you!

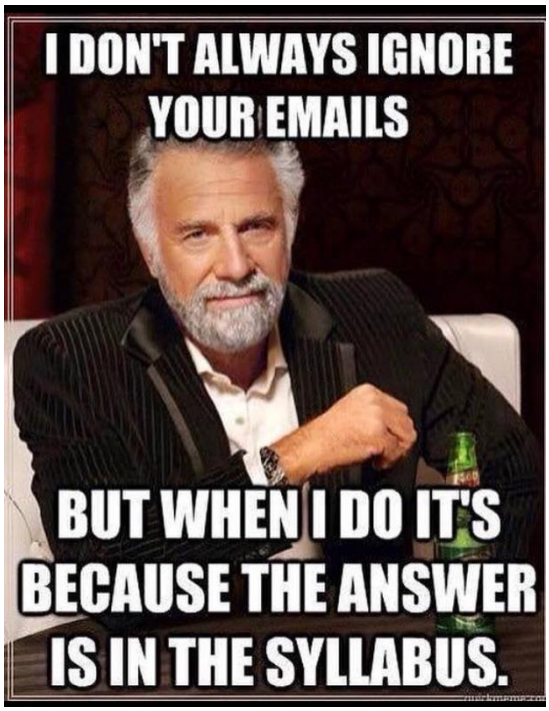
Office Hours & Contact Information.

Office hours: Via Zoom, Tuesday & Thursday, 10.30am-12.30pm

Email: Use email in Webcourses. If you write me M-F, I should get back to you within 24 hours. If I don't, please feel free to send me a reminder!

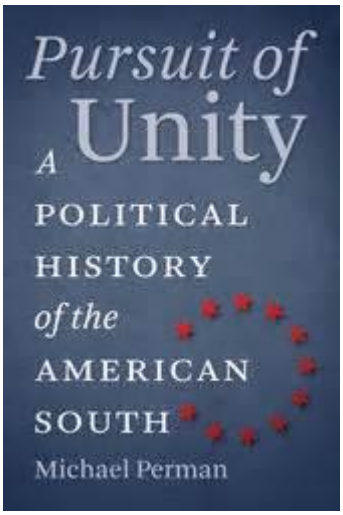
I will answer any message within 24 hours. Remember to allow adequate time for a reply to a question about an assignment. If you send a question a few hours before an assignment is due, I may not see it in time to provide help you out.

A note on etiquette: You are what you email, which means your instructors will often shape their opinion of you according to the quality of the email messages you are sending. To that end, be sure to please keep the tone of your emails professional, sign your emails with your name and include an appropriate salutation (Hint: you can't go wrong with "Dear Dr. Knuckey").



Textbook

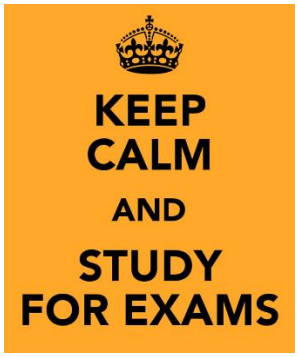
The textbook we will use is: Michael Perman, *Pursuit of Unity: A Political History of the American South.*



You will most definitely need to buy and read this book to do well in the class. Exam questions and assignments will partly be based on material from this textbook. I have also assigned some other readings, mostly book chapters, which can be accessed from the Course Schedule below.

Used copies of the textbook is fine -- and less likely to blow a hole in your budget. Ebooks are also fine, and probably a lot more convenient.

Exams



Three exams will be given during the semester, scheduled as follows:

- First midterm exam **Thursday, September 16th**
- Second midterm exam, **Thursday, November 4th**
- Final exam, Thursday, **December 9th (7.00am-9.50am)**

Midterm Exams Format

Both midterm exams are non-cumulative and will consist of:

- 20 multiple-choice questions with 4 choices per question (2 points per question = 40 points)
- 10 true/false questions (2 points per question = 20 points)
- 10 fill-in-the-blank questions (1 points per question = 10 points)
- 1 essay (30 points). Essay questions will be posted in Webcourses. On the day of the exam I will randomly choose **one** of these essay questions from this list on which you will write. An essay question consists of three parts, so you will be writing the equivalent of three solid paragraphs in answering the essay.
- You will have 75 minutes to complete each midterm exam.

Final Exam Format

- 20 multiple-choice questions with 4 choices per question (2 points per question = 40 points)
- 10 true/false questions (2 points per question = 20 points)
- 10 fill-in-the-blank questions (1 point per question = 10 points)
- 1 essay (40 points). The essay section will consist of four parts rather than three. However, there will only be a single essay topic, so you'll know for sure what the essay questions are going to be on the final exam!
- Time allowed is 2 hours and 50 minutes to complete the final exam

Exam Policies

- Midterm and final exam questions will come from the textbook, other assigned readings, and the Power Point lectures lectures; in other words, just about anything we discuss or read is fair game for testing. The exams are not cumulative, although the essay on the final exam will integrate material from throughout the course;

- You must take each exam in order to receive a passing grade in this class.

Refer to "Exam Guidelines" on "Modules" tab on the left for further exam details as well as the essay questions from which I will choose for each exam (Note: At the start of the semester only the essay questions for the first exam will be displayed).

Student Conduct

All students are expected to adhere to the UCF Golden Rule, which includes conducting oneself in a professional manner both in the classroom and in written and verbal communication with me and to other students. Violations of the Golden Rule -- both academic and non-academic -- can result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Unauthorized Use of Class Materials

There are many fraudulent websites claiming to offer study aids to students but are actually cheat sites. They encourage students to upload course materials, such as test questions, individual assignments, and examples of graded material. Such materials are the intellectual property of instructors, the university, or publishers and may not be distributed without prior authorization.

Students who engage in such activity are in violation of academic conduct standards and may face penalties.

Group Chats

Group chats -- via GroupMe, Whats App, etc -- are increasingly common and can be used positively for collaboration and connection with your peers. They can also be used for nefarious purposes such as sharing answers and other forms of cheating. Recently I've had to deal with instances where students are reporting other students for sharing information via the class group chat. **Any students on a group chat where cheating is occurring will all be included in any disciplinary action that results from content shared on the chat.** How can this be avoided, you ask? Just do you own work and don't cut corners. It's pretty easy to avoid.

Attendance

This is fairly straightforward. Arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. Some quick points on attendance:

- I will pass the attendance roll around a few minutes after our class start time. On the very rare occasion you are late to class, please enter the classroom as quietly and with as minimal disruption as possible.
- Constant tardiness will quickly get my attention and a written warning. I reserve the right to reduce an overall grade by one letter grade and not apply the exceptional attendance bonus (see below) when tardiness continues to be evident after this warning
- Attendance Bonus. This will be the only extra credit grading opportunity. If you have no more than **two** absences during the semester you will be eligible for **3 points** added to your overall grade, e.g., an overall grade of 87% becomes 90% if you have no more than two absences during the semester.

Start of Semester Meetings with Students

I would like to meet with each of you for a brief meeting in via Zoom during the first few weeks of the semester. Please make your appointment using the "Schedule" function using the Calendar in Webcourses.

Hopefully these meetings will give you a chance to ask me any questions you may have about the course. Likewise it will help me put names to faces, especially in a large class.

Grades

My philosophy of grading is decidedly against what is generally known as "competitive grading" or "grading on the curve." You are not competing against fellow students for grades in this class. You are competing against yourself at all times, hopefully pushing yourself to excel against my objective standards of what students should reasonably get out of this class.

Average mastery of those standards is the baseline for earning an "average" grade of C. Do above-average work, you earn a B. Do excellent work, you earn an A…. and so on. In any case, please understand that the points you earn toward a final grade will not be jerked around up or down to fit some predetermined grade curve.

our final grade will be weighted as follows:

- Assignments: 25%
- Two Midterm Exams, 35% (each exam is weighted equally)

- Final Exam, 40%

Grade boundaries are as follows:

A, 90%+

A-, 89-89.9%

B+, 86-88.9%

B, 82-85.9%

B-, 80-81.9%

C+, 76-79.9%

C, 72-75.9%

C-, 70-71.9%

D, 62-69.9%

D- 60-61.9%

F, 59% and below.

You will be able to access your grades in Webcourses. Please make sure that grades entered here are correct. While every effort is made to ensure grades are correct, from time-to-time errors can occur (incorrectly add/subtract, miss points, and even fail to understand what a student wrote).

A time limit of **1 week** is imposed on all change of grade requests after the grade has posted for a completed piece or work. This is sufficient time to identify any errors. After that prior grades will not be reviewed. This is to bring the course grade to completion and to minimize "end of semester" opportunism.

When grades fall exactly on the borderline of letter grades (91.9%, 89.9%, 85.9%, etc., etc.), I'll take the overall performance of a student throughout the semester into account when deciding whether to round up, i.e., has all work been submitted throughout the semester, and has there been an attempt to answer all questions on a quiz or assignment.

All work in this course will be graded by me, not a Graduate Teaching Assistant. If you have any questions about grades please don't hesitate to touch base with me directly.

Grade grievance policies are outlined under the UCF Golden Rule.

Make-up Policy

The time and dates for all assignments are fixed in krypton-coated granite encased in a hydrogen bomb-proof vault! These dates are also known at least one week ahead of time. As noted above you always get a grace period on any assignment. An extension on any assignment will only be given in the most exceptional circumstances that are beyond the control of a student and will require documentation.

Please note that requests for an assignment extension after an assignment deadline will not be granted, unless a student was unable to make such a request prior to the deadline.

Here are some unacceptable excuses for late-work, and it is by no means an exhaustive list:

- *"My computer is broken...."*
- *"My computer was stolen...."*
- *"I accidentally deleted the file....".*
- *"My computer magically deleted my homework from the hard drive. I do not understand it myself...."*
- *"The internet is broken...."*
- *"I forgot to attach the assignment...."*
- *"I could not find the assignment...."*
- *"I did the quiz but forgot to submit it..."*
- *"I was on holiday..."*
- *"It was my birthday so I never got around to the assignment..."*

The above are all **actual excuses** I have received. Many, as you can see, are computer-related, which are the "dog ate my homework" excuses of the technology age and will not fly. So secure ample time at a computer, make backups of your work, check you did not submit a blank assignment, check you correctly submitted the right assignment and generally plan ahead. Completing an assignment the day before it is due is always a wise move as that provides a cushion for anything that might come up that is unexpected.

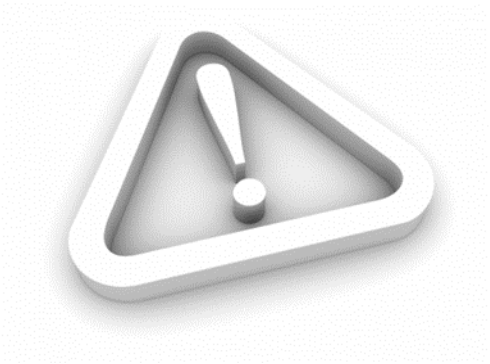
Accessibility Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Accessibility Services before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Deployed Active Duty Military Students

If you are a deployed active duty military student and feel that you may need a special accommodation due to that unique status, please contact me at the start of the semester to discuss your circumstances.

Disclaimer



I reserve the right to change, add or modify any part of the syllabus. Of course, advance notice will be given of any such changes.

Course Schedule

Part 1: An Introduction to the South and Studying Southern Politics

Readings for Part 1

- Perman, *Pursuit of Unity*, Introduction and chapter 1 (read pp. 21-32 on "The Virginia Dynasty")
- John Shelton Reed, **"Southerners as an American Ethnic Group"**

Assignment for Part 1

- Identifying Famous Southerners (due 8/26) *(Note: this assignment will be used to document student engagement in the course during the first week of class)*
- Defining the South *(8/29)*
- *In the Heat of the Night (quiz is based on watching the movie due 8/31)*

Part 2: The Road to the South's Secession and the Civil War

Reading for Part 2

Required Readings:

- Perman, *Pursuit of Unity,* chapters 1 (read from p.32 "The Missouri Crisis"), 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8

Part 3: Reconstruction & the "Solid South"

Readings for Part 3

- Perman, *Pursuit of Unity,* chapters 7 and 8

Assignment for Part 3

- Reconstructing the Reconstruction of the South (9/12)

First Exam, September 16th

The exam will cover the Power Point lectures and assigned readings for **Parts 1, 2 and 3.** Look at the "First Exam Guidelines" link on the "Modules" page for further details. Essay questions will be available here too.

You will have **75 minutes** to complete the exam.

Part 4: The South's Economic Development; The "Solid South" Cracks; the Emergence of the Civil Rights Agenda

Required Readings for Part 4

- Perman, *Pursuit of Unity,* chapters 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 (read up to p. 319)
- **Earl Black and Merle Black, *The Vital South*, "White Revolt in the Deep South."**
- **Earl Black and Merle Black, *The Vital South*, "The Republican Breakthrough in the Peripheral South."**

We will also watch "Eyes on the Prize," which is probably the single best documentary made on the America's Civil Rights years.

Assignments for Part 4

- **September 30th:** *Eyes on the Prize - "Awakenings"* (Assignment will be completed in class)
- **October 7th:** *Eyes on the Prize - "Fighting Back"* (Assignment will be completed in class)
- **October 14th:** *Eyes on the Prize - "A'int Scared of Your Jails"* (Assignment will be completed in class)
- **October 16th:** *Eyes on the Prize - "No Easy Walk"* (Assignment will be completed in class)

- ***October 23*rd:** *Eyes on the Prize* - "Mississippi: Is this America?" (Assignment will be completed in class)
- **October 28th**: *"Bridge to Freedom"* (Assignment will be completed in class)

Second Exam, November 4th

The exam will cover the Power Point lectures and assigned readings for **part 4** Look at the "Second Exam Guidelines" link on the "Modules" page for further details. Essay questions will be available here too.

You will have **75 minutes** to complete the exam.

Part 5 - The Republican South

Required Readings for Part 5

- Perman, *Pursuit of Unity,* chapters 14 (read from p. 319) and 15
- **Earl Black and Merle Black,*The Rise of Southern Republicans,* "Reagan's Realignment of Southern Whites."**

Assignments for Part 5

- Battleground Florida!

Part 6: Where is the South Heading Politically? Is the South Still Distinctive?

Required Readings for Part 6:

- **Seth McKee, "The Future of Southern Politics"**

Assignment for Part 6

- The Ghost of Jim Crow? Voting Rights in the Contemporary South

Final Exam - December 9th, 7.00am-9.50am

The exam will cover the Power Point lectures and assigned readings for **Parts 5 & 6.** Look at the "Final Exam Guidelines" link on the "Modules" page for further details. The essay question will be available here too.

You will have **2 hours and 50 minutes** to complete the exam.