POS 6079 - The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class in the United States

Section: 0001

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Spring 2025
Class Meeting Days: M
Class Meeting Time: 06:00PM - 08:50PM
Class Meeting Location: BA1 O209
Modality: P
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Alexander Jensen
Office Location: HPH 305E
Office Hours:
2:00-5:00pm, Mondays
Email: alexander.jensen@ucf.edu

Course Description

POS 6079 COS 3(3,0)The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class in the United States: PR: Admission to graduate program or C.I. Examines the political consequences of race, ethnicity, gender, and class in the US. Even Spring

This course provides students with a graduate-level introduction to political science research on race, gender, and class in the context of the United States. Throughout the semester, we will examine many of the major questions that scholars have asked about such social groups and their connections to American politics and government; we will explore major theories and findings from these literatures and consider the tradeoffs of varied methodological approaches to the these big questions.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain how race/ethnicity, gender, and class relate to American political institutions and mass political behavior.
- Understand, trace, and evaluate the development of the study of American politics connected to race/ethnicity, gender, and class.
- Independently conduct interdisciplinary research, utilizing empirical methods.
- Leverage their skills gained in class to understand and seek applicable real-world career opportunities working in these areas.

Course Materials and Resources

See Webcourses for PDFs

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

1% - Required Academic Activity

Please log onto Webcourses during the first week of the semester (by Jan. 10) to complete this activity to ensure that you are being counted as a participant in this course.

19% - Participation

Contributing to class discussions, asking questions, actively listening to your classmates and professor, upholding classroom standards, and showing up to office hours are all

forms of participation that I will take note of throughout the semester. I expect that you will speak up and jump into the dialogue with comments at every class session.

If you have questions that were not answered in class or want to talk through course material further to aid your understanding a concept, please do not hesitate to show up to my office hours (listed on first page of this syllabus) to speak with me in-person. If you are unable to attend office hours in-person, you can schedule a virtual office hours appointment with me. I ask that you send me an email (alexander.jensen@ucf.edu) and I will reply with a private Zoom link. Showing up to office hours shows me that you are engaging with the material and allows me to get to know you better. If you are in another class during my office hours or have work responsibilities that prevent you from attending, you may request to make an appointment with me at another time during the week. I will do my best to accommodate such requests; however, if you break a scheduled office hours appointment without prior notice, this will count negatively toward your participation grade.

15% - Weekly Reading Questions

Each week, you are required to submit three questions or puzzling observations about that week's readings (not 3 per reading, but 3 for the whole week's reading list). These reading questions are due by 2:00pm on Monday afternoons prior to our class session. These discussion boards can be located in the "Discussions" tab of the course's Canvas page.

10% - Leading Discussion

You will co-lead an activity with one of your colleagues at one of our class meetings at some point during the semester. Your goal is to ensure that the class works together to *engage in a thoughtful reflection about what we can learn from that week's readings.* How you do this is up to you and your fellow activity leader – however, you need to submit your activity plan (a ½ to 1-page memo) to me by 2:00pm on the Monday that you are going to lead the activity for review and approval. Your grade will reflect the quantity and quality of the discussion generated, as well as the preparation you demonstrate. During the second week of the semester, you will sign up for your slot.

15% - Research Proposals (3 at 5% each)

Throughout the course of the semester, you will submit 3 short (3–5 pages, double spaced) research proposals related to the topic we are covering in class. Essentially I want you to pitch a project to me that you see as contributing to a particular week's literature. Your proposal should include the following elements. 1) What is the research question? Be as clear and precise as possible. 2) What is your theory? Describe some process-based explanation for how you expect actors to behave in the setting being considered. 3) Describe the analytical/methodological approach you would hope to pursue. How would you convince a reader to believe your theory, in contrast to other obvious alternatives? This section can describe potential data sources, but should focus centrally on research design issues. 4) Why bother? Why should I or anyone else want to read your proposed paper? Here you should address the potential contribution of the paper. You should address both the normative importance of your question as well as (to the extent you are able) its novelty within the relevant literature. Research proposals are due at the beginning of class on the day we discuss the relevant topic.

40% - Final Paper and Presentation

Over the course of the semester, you will complete an original piece of research relating to the politics of race/ethnicity, gender, and/or class in the U.S. This project will culminates in a final research paper and in-class presentation. The methodological approach that you take in your paper (quantitative, qualitative) is up to you.

You will submit a brief project prospectus (details will be distributed in class) by Wednesday, February 12 at 11:59pm. In the following week or two, I will provide you with feedback. The final paper is due by the start of our final class on Monday, April 21th, and you will present your research during our final classes with a brief 10 minute presentation. The research prospectus is worth 5%, the final paper is worth 25%, and presentation is worth 10% of your grade.

Rubrics for these components will be posted in Webcourses.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-69%
D	64-66%
D-	61-63%
F	0-60%

Policies for Course Grade

Missed/Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit their assignments and weekly reading questions by the assigned due dates. Sometimes, however, life gets in our way. I am a reasonable man and I understand that sometimes life throws wrenches at us that prevent us from meeting the deadlines that were originally set. If you encounter a situation where you find yourself unable to turn an assignment in by the deadline, please email me as soon as possible so that we discuss an appropriate course of action. For those who communicate ahead of deadlines with legitimate extenuating circumstances, I may consider small extensions. However, if you do not communicate ahead of time or do not have a legitimate excuse as to why a deadline will be missed, your assignment is considered late and can only receive half credit. I will only accept late assignments for one week past the original deadline (i.e. if you miss the deadline on Monday before class, you must have the assignment submitted by our next class meeting). The final paper cannot be turned in late.

Attendance

Simply put, you cannot afford to miss a graduate seminar because of the breadth and depth of the material we will cover week-to-week. It is expected that any student enrolling in the course is committed to attending every class session and completing course tasks. Excused absences apply to when a student experiences an emergency (e.g., hospitalization, family emergency, religious observance, military service, emergency medical provider visit)—any students in this category should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss a plan of action to catch up within the week. If you miss a class, you should borrow notes from classmates and book an Office Hours appointment to ensure you can catch back up before the next class. More than 1 unexcused absence will negatively impact your attendance grade.

Notes on Course Readings

All course readings will be posted as PDFs in our course's Webcourses (Canvas) site. Please ensure that you have read the assigned texts before class. Plan to prepare for our discussions in class by taking notes as you are reading and jotting down questions/observations from the readings as they arise - posting at least 3 in the Discussions tab by Monday morning before class.

In addition, I want to note that this course engages with some foundational texts in the study of race/ethnicity, gender, class and American politics, written in the mid-20th century. As such, certain readings may include language and terminology that are now considered outdated, offensive, or harmful - unacceptable by today's standards. ***In our class discussions, we will not use or reproduce such language.*** I want to encourage respectful engagement with the content, critically considering both the context in which these works were written and their impact today.

Respectful Classroom Conduct

Students are expected to maintain a respectful and collaborative environment. I expect all students to interact with each other and with me in a respectful manner. If you ever feel disrespected or uncomfortable, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Contacting Professor Jensen

Beyond contacting me in class or at office hours, feel free to send me your written questions anytime via email at alexander.jensen@ucf.edu - I strive to reply promptly to your emails, but sometimes situations will arise where I don't have the chance to get back to you on the same day. I ask that you give me 24 hours before following up during the week and 48 hours before following up on weekends. If you do not receive a response from me during those timeframes, please send a polite follow-up - I would never intentionally ignore your messages! Please write your emails professionally, including pertinent information, such as the class you are in and the specific course material you are asking about.

Prof. Jensen's AI Policy

Students may not use ChatGPT or any equivalent AI to generate any written part of the assignments submitted in this class - doing so is considered plagiarism. A major part of the purpose of written assignments in higher education is to develop your own voice and enhance your critical thinking skills about these ideas that you’re studying - to enhance your ability to generate ideas and to strengthen the expression of these ideas. Generative AI undermines this important process. We will discuss responsible AI usage in class.

Special Accommodations and Disability

While this course is designed to be accessible for everyone in the campus community, I am more than happy to make special arrangements for students with disabilities. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed as soon as possible. To ensure that you have accommodations up to date through Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at UCF, please follow this link to SAS' "start here" page. There, you can find the Student Application link to get the ball rolling with your accommodations. Once your accommodations are in place, you should follow this link to set up a time to complete your exams at the SAS Testing Center. You must certify with this office before using formal accommodations; however, I am also happy to discuss additional ways I can make this course more accessible to you.

Expectation of Privacy

Our classroom is an active learning environment. For true learning to take place, we must all be willing to take risks, which requires a foundation built on trust. I aspire for our classroom to be an intellectually safe space where we trust that the views expressed will remain private. We must trust that everyone is trying to speak with the intention of advancing ideas and not causing offense, and that together we can work to help each other find ways to improve how we talk about complex ideas to foster productive exchanges. To preserve my intellectual property rights, protect the privacy interests of all students, and encourage an open and fair exposition of all perspectives during class discussions, I ask students to not make or distribute audio/video recordings, screen captures, or livestreams of any class-related activity without my explicit permission.

Changes to This Syllabus

I reserve the right to adjust this syllabus as I see fit throughout the course of the semester. Any adjustments to the syllabus will be announced in advance via email, Webcourses, and a verbal announcement in class.

Course Accessibility

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.
b. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.
c. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.
d. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to

prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an “F” letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a “Z” designation on one’s transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let’s avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF’s complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE – Office of Institutional Equity & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu

- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced abusive or discriminatory behavior by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Institutional Equity online or at 407-823-1336. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.
    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and

remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.

  - **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.

- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Class Schedule

Week	Topic
1	**Monday, January 6:** *Introductions, Syllabus and Course Overview* 1. *(AFTER CLASS REFRESHER)* "How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps," Green, 2013. Drexel University. *Complete the Required Academic Activity in Webcourses by Friday, Jan. 10 to ensure that you are being counted as a participant in this course.*

Week	Topic
2	**<u>Monday, January 13:</u>** *Contextualizing the Course – An Overview of the American Politics Subfield and the Study of Social Identity* 1. Chapters 1 and 2 of *The American Voter*, Campbell et al., 1960. 2. “The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior,” Tajfel and Turner, 1986. 3. Chapter 1 of *Uncivilized Agreement*, Mason, 2018. 4. “The Centrality of Race in American Politics,” Hutchings & Valentino, 2004. *Annual Review of Political Science.* 5. “Chapter 23: Identity Experiments,” Spry, 2021. Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology.
3	**<u>Monday, January 20:</u>** *NO CLASS (MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY)* While we don't have class this week due to Martin Luther King Jr Day, you should begin brainstorming ideas for your Final Paper.
4	***Part I: Class and American Politics*** **<u>Monday, January 27:</u>** *Overview of Class in American Politics* 1. "Class and American Politics," Brewer, 2016. *Oxford Bibliographies*. 2. "Socioeconomic Class Bias in Turnout, 1964-1988: The Voters Remain the Same," Leighley and Nagler, 1992. *American Political Science Review*. 3. "Class Voting in Capitalist Democracies Since World War II: Dealignment, Realignment, or Trendless Fluctuation?" Manza, Hout, and Brooks, 1995. *Annual Review of Sociology.*

Week	Topic
5	**<u>Monday, February 3:</u>** *Class, Institutions, and Political Behavior* 1. "Testing Theories of American Politic Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens," Gilens and Page, 2014. *Perspectives on Politics*. 2. "The Psychology of Social Class: How Socioeconomic Status Impacts Thought, Feelings, and Behaviour." Manstead, 2018. *British Journal of Social Psychology.* 3. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," Putnam, 1995. *Journal of Democracy.*
6	**<u>Monday, February 10:</u>** *Contemporary Questions of Class and Their Political Consequences* 1. "The Democrats Loss of the White Working Class: Another Look at the Evidence," Stonecash, 2024. *Political Research Quarterly.* 2. Selections from *The Politics of Resentment*, Cramer, 2016. 3. Selections from Hetherington on Worldview and Political Attitudes/Behavior
7	***Part II: Gender & Politics in the United States*** **<u>Monday, February 17:</u>** *Overview of Gender & the Study of American Politics* 1. "What is Gender, Anyway? A Review of the Options for Operationalising Gender," Lindqvist, Sendén, & Renström, 2021. *Psychology & Sexuality.* 2. "Gender in Politics," Paxton, Kunovich, & Hughes, 2007. *Annual Review of Sociology.* 3. "Gender Backlash in American Politics," Sanbonmatsu, 2008. *Politics & Gender.* 4. Selections from *Masculinity, Femininity, and American Political Behavior*, McDermott, 2016.

Week	Topic
8	**<u>Monday, February 24:</u>** Gender & Political Behavior/Attitudes 1. "Masculine Republicans and Feminine Democrats: Gender and Americans' Explicit and Implicit Images of the Political Parties," Winter, 2010. *Political Behavior.* 2. Selections from *Masculinity, Femininity, and American Political Behavior*, McDermott, 2016. 3. "Americans' Complex Views on Gender Identity and Transgender Issues." Parker, Horowitz, and Brown. 2022. *Pew Research.*
9	**<u>Monday, March 3:</u>** Gender & Political Institutions 1. "When Are Women More Effective Legislators Than Men?" Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer. 2013. *American Journal of Political Science* 2. "Nice Girls? Sex, Collegiality, and Bipartisan Cooperation in the US Congress." Lawless, Theriault, and Guthrie, 2019. *Journal of Politics.* 3. Can't Buy Them Love: How Party Culture among Donors Contributes to the Party Gap in Women's Representation," Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman, 2018. *Journal of Politics.*
10	***Part III: Race/Ethnic Politics in the United States*** **<u>Monday, March 10:</u>** Overview of Race and Ethnic Politics 1. "The Centrality of Race in American Politics," Hutchings & Valentino, 2004. *Annual Review of Political Science.* 2. A Racial/Ethnic Diversity Interpretation of Politics and Policy in the States of the U.S," Hero & Tolbert, 1996. *American Journal of Political Science.* 3. "Intergroup Prejudice in Multiethnic Settings," Oliver & Wong, 2003. *American Journal of Political Science.*
11	**<u>Monday, March 17:</u>** *NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)*

Week	Topic
12	**Monday, March 24:** Race/Ethnicity & Political Behavior 1. Selections from *Steadfast Democrats*, White and Laird, 2020. *Princeton University Press.* 2. Selections from *White Identity Politics*, Jardina, 2019. *Cambridge University Press.* 3. "The Spillover of Racialization into Health Care: How President Obama Polarized Public Opinion by Racial Attitudes and Race." Tesler, 2012. *American Journal of Political Science.* 4. "The Influence of Country of Origin in the Process of Party Identification Acquisition," Castro Irizarry, 2020. Working paper.
13	**Monday, March 31:** Race & Political Institutions 1. "Meeting the Challenge of Latino Voter Mobilization," Michelson, 2005. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.* 2. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent "Yes"," Mansbridge, 1999. *The Journal of Politics.* 3. Political Consequences of the Carceral State," Weaver & Lerman, 2010. *American Political Science Review.*
14	**Monday, April 7:** Tying it All Together 1. "Research: Trump gained some minority voters, but the GOP is hardly a multiracial coalition," Frey, 2024. *Brookings* 2. "A Rural-Urban Political Divide Among Whom? Race, Ethnicity, and Political Behavior Across Place." Brown et al., 2025. *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 3. "Understanding anti-Asian Sentiment and Political Behavior in the Wake of COVID-19," Nam et al., 2024. *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 4. "Voting For Mom: The Political Consequences of Being a Parent for Male and Female Candidates," Stalsburg, 2010. *Politics & Gender*
15	**Monday, April 14:** Final Project Presentations

Week	Topic
16	**Monday, April 21:** Final Project Presentations