



## Race and Voting in the United States - Fall, 2024

Instructor: Chelsea N. Jones, PhD, MPP

### Course Description

This course will introduce students to the history of and contemporary fight for voting rights in the United States. We will begin with a brief overview of historical struggles over citizenship and access to the ballot box, up to the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The course will largely focus on the contemporary context of voting rights, looking specifically at implicit and explicit barriers to voting for voters of color and exploring how voting laws both reflect and codify structural racism. The course will end with a discussion of the many ways people of color have organized and fought for their right to vote.

The readings include academic articles, book chapters, and news media to ensure a well-balanced perspective of the issues at hand. As this course is being offered during a general election campaign season, themes that emerge in the news media may be incorporated into the discussion. Students are encouraged to bring their academic and personal perspectives into discussion, for a rich exchange of opinions. However, the course will not engage in personal opinions of candidates nor tolerate incivility.

### Assignments

This course is designed for thoughtful, vigorous discussion. As such, there are relatively few formal assignments, freeing you up to prepare thoroughly for classroom discussions. It is imperative however, that you both keep up with the course readings, and with election news, as both will be central to our discussion.

### Participation and Discussion (50%)

- By 5PM on the Wednesday prior to class, please submit a brief response to the week's readings to Brightspace. Responses should be 250 - 500 words. Below are a few *example* questions that may guide your response:
  - What themes in the readings do I want to explore further and why?
  - What concepts in the readings am I finding challenging?
  - What examples do the readings bring up for me and how do they connect?
  - What questions am I left with after completing the readings?
  - Where do I see myself/my ancestors in the readings?
- **5 Responses Total:** Responses are not required on week 1 and on the week of your debate response (see below).

### Discussion Leader (10%)

- Depending on the size of the class, either groups or individuals will be responsible for leading the discussion each week. Discussion leaders are expected to read their classmate's responses posted on Brightspace and synthesize these responses. You are not expected to formally present on any of the readings, but please come prepared to tell the class the concepts that your classmates found the most interesting and challenging and prepare a few questions to initiate the discussion.

### Debate Immediate Response (10%)

- As our class occurs during campaign season, I look forward to our discussion of how our course content is reflected in today's issues and political campaigns. One way we will do so is through discussion of presidential and vice-presidential debates, in a non-partisan and civil manner. The second presidential debate is slated to take place on *Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>*, and the first vice-presidential debate will take place on *October 1<sup>st</sup>*.
- Each student should **choose one debate** and take notes on implicit and explicit themes of racial identity, the racialized undercurrent of public policy, and the implications of the way these themes are presented by both candidates. Responses should not include a student's personal opinion of a candidate, but instead discuss how both candidates are engaging with race, ethnicity and public policy, and what the implications of these perspectives may be. Reflections should pay particular attention to the way voting rights is discussed (if it is discussed) during the debate. Responses should be no more than 2 pages double spaced.
- Due dates depend on the debate one is responding to, and are as follows:
  - Presidential Debate: **Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 7pm**
  - Vice Presidential Debate: **Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7pm**
  - You are exempt from writing a response on the week of the debate that you are responding to.

### Policy Analysis (30%)

- Your final assignment will be to pick a policy/issue regarding voting access that impacts a specific voter group – be it a racial group or other demographic. You will 1) place the issue/policy in its historical context and 2) discuss how the issue impacts a specific voter group and 3) more broadly, how the particular policy restricts or expands boundaries around who is considered a citizen deserving of political voice. Lastly, 4) you should provide recommendations to the appropriate governing body on how to resolve this issue ahead of the upcoming election, or when appropriate. The analysis should be roughly **5 double-spaced pages**.

## Schedule

### Week 1 (Sept 5<sup>th</sup>): [American Identity and Racial Oppression](#)

- Douglass, Frederick. "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" 1852.
- Hannah-Jones, Nikole. "America Wasn't a Democracy, Until Black Americans Made It One." *The New York Times*, August 14, 2019.
- Epperly, Brad, Christopher Witko, Ryan Strickler, and Paul White. "Rule by Violence, Rule by Law: Lynching, Jim Crow, and the Continuing Evolution of Voter Suppression in the U.S." *Perspectives on Politics* 18, no. 3 (September 2020): 756–69.
- Lowndes, Joseph, Julie Novkov and Dorian Warren. 2008. *Race and American Political Development*, Routledge, 1 - 10

### Week 2 (Sept 12<sup>th</sup>): [The Voting Rights Act in Context](#)

- [ACLU History of the VRA](#)
- Anderson, Carol. *One Person, No Vote – How Voter Suppression is Destroying Our Democracy*. Bloomsbury Publishing, USA, 2018. **Chapter 1**
- Berman, Ari. *Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America*. First edition. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015. **Prologue and Chapter 1**.
- Engstrom, Richard L. 2014. "Shelby County v. Holder and the Gutting of Federal Preclearance of Election Law Changes." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 2 (3): 530–48

### Week 3 (Sept 19<sup>th</sup>): **NO CLASS MEETING**

Watch: [Suppressed 2020 – Brave New Films](#) on YouTube

### Week 4 (Sept 26<sup>th</sup>): [The Aftermath of Shelby County v. Holder](#)

- Berman, 2015. **Chapter 9**.
- Komisarchik, Mayya, and Ariel White. "Throwing Away the Umbrella: Minority Voting after the Supreme Court's Shelby Decision." 2024
- Lopez, Tomas. "'Shelby County': One Year Later." Brennan Center for Justice, 2014.
- Morris, Kevin and Coryn Grange, "Growing Racial Disparities in Voter Turnout, 2008 – 2022." Brennan Center for Justice

### Week 5 (Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>): [Shelby's Impact on Voters of Color](#)

- Grumbach, Jacob. "Laboratories of Democratic Backsliding." *American Political Science Review*, 2022.
- Schroedel, J., & Aslanian, A. (2015). Native American Vote Suppression: The Case of South Dakota. *Race, Gender & Class*, 22(1–2), 308–323. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26505340>
- Herron, M. C., & Smith, D. A. (2016). Race, Shelby County, and the Voter Information Verification Act in North Carolina. *Florida State University Law Review*, 43(Issue 2), 465–506.

Week 5 CONT:

- Root, Danielle & Barclay A. "Voter Suppression During the 2018 Midterm Elections." Center for American Progress. 2018
- Jardina, Ashley, and Robert Mickey. 2022. "White Racial Solidarity and Opposition to American Democracy." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 699 (1): 79–89.

Week 6 (October 10<sup>th</sup>): **Implicit Racial Disenfranchisement**

- Fraga, Bernard L, and Michael G Miller. "Who Does Voter ID Keep from Voting?" *The Journal of Politics*, July 15, 2021.
- Kuk, John, Zoltan Hajnal, and Nazita Lajevardi. "A Disproportionate Burden: Strict Voter Identification Laws and Minority Turnout." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2022): 126–34.
- Ura, Alex. "Texas' oldest Black university was built on a former plantation. Its students still fight a legacy of voter suppression." *The Texas Tribune*. 2021
- Uggen, C. Behrens, A., Manza, J. "Criminal Disenfranchisement." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* (1) 307-322
- Cheng, Amrit. "Crystal Mason Thought She Had The Right to Vote. Texas Sentenced Her to Five Years in Prison for Trying." *American Civil Liberties Union*

Week 7 (October 17<sup>th</sup>): **Fighting Back, Inspiring Hope**

- Towler, Christopher C., and Christopher S. Parker. "Between Anger and Engagement: Donald Trump and Black America." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* 3, no. 1 (March 2018): 219–53.
- Gutierrez, Angela, Angela X. Ocampo, Matt A. Barreto, and Gary Segura. "Somos Más: How Racial Threat and Anger Mobilized Latino Voters in the Trump Era." *Political Research Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (December 1, 2019): 960–75.
- Walker, Hannah L. "Targeted: The Mobilizing Effect of Perceptions of Unfair Policing Practices." *The Journal of Politics* 82, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 119–34.
- Anderson, Carol. *One Person, No Vote – How Voter Suppression is Destroying Our Democracy*. Bloomsbury Publishing, USA, 2018. **Chapter 5 and Conclusion**

## **Brightspace**

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the Brightspace site. I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website.

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

## **Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility**

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\)](#) website and click the "Get Started" button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or [mosecsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosecsd@nyu.edu)) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

## **NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays**

NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations.

## **NYU's Wellness Exchange**

NYU's Wellness Exchange has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.