

San José State University
Department of Political Science
POLS 110: Race and Politics (Spring 2021)

Instructor:	Dr. Sara M. Benson
Office Location:	Virtual (via Zoom)
Email:	sara.benson@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Mondays, 10:30 – 11:30 via Zoom https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/91088094738 Password: 306955
Class Days/Time:	Mondays 1:30 – 2:30
Classroom:	Remote (via Zoom) Join URL: https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/85444630599

Course Catalogue Description

This course examines race and politics in America by focusing on political participation and social movement strategies among minoritized groups. The course explores theories of equality, diversity, and justice, and the changing legal relationship between states and citizens.

Course Overview

This course is about the history of race as an idea and about movements for justice that have worked across difference. The course begins by historicizing how race, as a system of meaning, was communicated in law, science, popular culture, and theories of the state. It then moves to a focus on the histories of political participation among *minoritized* groups, on the social movement strategies of working across racialized differences, on the emergence of multiculturalism and diversity as competing frameworks for justice. It examines race as both an illusion and a very real ordering principle in U.S. society, and holds space for students to ask critical questions about democracy, citizenship, power, and justice.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

This course is designed for political science majors. Student success in this course is dependent on an active engagement with course materials. Students will learn methods for reading race alongside law and legal thinking through course assignments designed to situate race as the background of conventional ideas about democracy and civic membership.

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

CLO1: Discuss and critically evaluate in written work the history and historiography of “race” as a social category that changes over time.

CLO2: Explain, by way of reference to key texts where appropriate, the significance of major debates, theoretical approaches, and critical interventions in the study of race.

CLO3: Describe and analyze in writing the existing and potential political power of differently racialized groups under certain conditions, including (but by no means limited to) Native American and Indigenous, Black/African-American, Chicana/Latina, Asian-American and Pacific Islander, variously located “white” American peoples.

CLO4: Distinguish and work with primary and secondary source materials in the study of past and present movements for social justice that work across difference, as well as the contradictory legacies of inclusion, exclusion, disfranchisement, and citizenship.

Political Science Program Learning Outcomes

Department/Program Learning Outcomes:

The Department of Political Science has the following goals in mind for this course:

Breadth Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

Application and Disciplinary Methods Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political texts. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.

Communication Skills Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

Citizenship Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

Required Texts/Readings

Required Textbooks

W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*

***Additional articles available on Canvas**

Course Workload Expectations: Succeeding in a Four-Unit Course

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. Because this is a **four-unit course**, you can expect to spend a minimum of nine hours per week, in addition to time spent in class, on scheduled tutorials, assignments, or activities. This additional unit will allow for more in-depth investigation and engagement with course topics. Careful time management will help you keep up with readings and assignments and enable you to be successful in all of your courses. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

Course Requirements, Assignments, Grading Policy

1. Critical Synthesis Papers (3-4 pages) 30% of course grade (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4)

These assignments are designed to get you thinking critically about a set of readings. Your task is to “put the readings in conversation” by offering comparative accounts and analyses of the

texts as well as reflections on your own learning process (this is meta-analysis, or thinking about your own thinking). To synthesize means to put it all together, so use these assignments to really think through a major theme from the class. *Although these can be informal in terms of content, they are formal in terms of structure. Your writing should be clear and polished and you need to cite the readings directly using a legitimate system of citation.*

2. Reading Quizzes, Mapping Exercises, Discussion Posts 20% of course grade (CLO 2, 3)

These short assignments are designed to improve your reading comprehensions skills and to gauge your understanding of particular concepts and arguments.

3. Midterm 20% of course grade (CLO 2, 3)

This exam consists of multiple choice and open ended questions with passage identifications. You may use all of your notes and reading materials to take the exam. Students should only consult course materials and demonstrate knowledge of key authors, legal cases, critical concepts, and theoretical frameworks.

4. Final Exam 30% of course grade (CLO 1, 2, 4)

The take-home final exam will consist of three short essays (2-3 pages each), but will be cumulative and comprehensive. Students should cite a minimum of three sources in each of the three essays and include a works cited page at the end of the exam. Students should explain, referring to key texts where appropriate, the significance of major debates, theoretical approaches, and critical interventions in the study of race.

*One of the three questions will require a close engagement with W.E.B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction*. Students should synthesize the ideas by presenting a set of themes and showing how certain quotes and arguments illustrate the broader themes that connect the chapters; the purpose of this assignment is to deeply engage *Black Reconstruction*'s idea about histories, alliances and strategies.

Grading Information and Policies

No late papers will be accepted.

No extra credit is available.

Grading Scale

93 to 100	A
90 to 92	A minus
87 to 89	B plus
83 to 86	B
80 to 82	B minus
77 to 79	C plus
73 to 76	C
70 to 72	C minus
63 to 69	D
60 to 62	D minus
less than 60	F

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>.

Please review the information about university policies on plagiarism contained above. Plagiarism in this course may result in a failing grade. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

Classroom Protocol

Students should attend all class meetings and participate in class exercises. Please be respectful of your colleagues in class discussions and during peer review exercises. Discussion board discourse should always be professional, respectful, and even generous in this writing community.

If you have to miss class for any reason, you are expected to view any recordings in the relevant modules to get caught up. I will not record the workshops themselves, but I may record portions of the class when I explain upcoming assignments. Any videos remain protected by the instructor's copyright, and students are prohibited by university policy (S12-7) from recording, distributing, or posting any part of these videos. Students who violate this policy can be referred to Student Conduct.

You are required to use your full name as your Zoom name and there will be days of discussion when you will want to have your camera on. Consider sitting in front of empty wall space to minimize distractions for others when you are on camera. Be professional in choosing your background. Please do your best to also minimize background noise. You will always be on mute by default. Note that I can see all "private" exchanges in the chat feature of Zoom and that they become part of the official transcript of the class. Finally, always be respectful of your colleagues during class discussions.

Political Science Departmental Writing Policy and SJSU Writing Center

Students of political science should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count. Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks and a specific reference to the page in the source from which it was taken. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct which carries with it serious sanctions. A tutorial on citations is available at the library website at http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.htm.

For assistance with writing, please see me or visit the SJSU Writing Center located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment, visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>.

Political Science 110: Race and Politics

The schedule is subject to change with fair notice.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	2/1	Course Introductions
2	2/8	Race as a Project Omi and Winant, “The Theory of Racial Formation”
3	2/15	The End of Racism: Equality, Sameness, Difference Angela Y. Davis, “Gender, Class, and Multiculturalism” Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex”
4	2/22	Moments When Things Could Have Been Otherwise W.E.B. Du Bois, “The General Strike” & “Founding the Public School,” both from <i>Black Reconstruction</i>
5	3/1	Race, Politics, Reconstruction W.E.B. Du Bois, “Counterrevolution of Property” & “The Propaganda of History,” both from <i>Black Reconstruction</i>
6	3/8	Racial Transformations Gloria Anzaldua, excerpts from <i>Borderlands</i> Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo
7	3/15	Social Movements Chela Sandoval, excerpt from <i>Methodology of the Oppressed</i>
8	3/22	Social Movements <i>Black Power Mixtape</i>
9	3/29	Spring Break
10	4/5	Midterm
11	4/12	Equal Rights Frameworks and the Meaning of Democracy <i>Chicano! Volume 3: Taking Back the Schools / Dolores</i>

12	4/19	Equal Rights and Social Justice King, "The Power of Nonviolence" Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet" John Lewis, "Together..."
13	4/26	How to Move Mountains: Revolutionary Frameworks <i>Mountains That Take Wing</i> <i>Alcatraz Is Not an Island</i> Angela Y. Davis, "Before I Knew Elizabeth Martinez" Erika Huggins, "Revolutionary Women, Revolutionary Education"
14	5/3	Social Movements and Unlikely Alliances "The Cowboy Indian Alliance" Kim Geron et al, "Asian Pacific Americans' Social Movements and Interest Groups"
15	5/10	Ending Racism Natalie Havlin, "'To Live a Humanity under the Skin'"
16	5/17	Course Closing

Final Exam Due Wednesday, May 19th by 2:30 pm