Department of Political Science

POLS 236, Black Leadership, Organization, and Movements
Wednesdays @ 5:10PM

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30PM to 2:45PM, Wednesdays from 3:30PM to 4:45PM, and by appointment
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Course Description

This course is dedicated to the study of Black political leadership and policy agenda setting, i.e. how Black leaders and organizations catalyze movements that set, or attempt to set, the public agenda. It does so by focusing on the theory and practice of the political behavior of individuals and institutions contextualized by the constraints and opportunities presented by national politics. We operate from the thesis that Blacks have sought to influence the process of national agenda setting. That influence would eventually lead to the acquisition of public goods which would improve the general condition of the “Black community.” Our approach begins with agenda setting theory and moves to a review of the various periods of Black political development. We then examine more closely Black political leadership in a number of various settings.

Course Goals

1. Gain a better understanding of key concepts and literature on Black leadership, organizations, and movements particularly agenda setting, organizational development, and collective action.

2. Develop ability to construct well organized, clearly written, informatively presented, and persuasive arguments on issues related to Black leadership, organizations, and movements.

3. Improve ability to engage in oral debate and dialogue on issues and ideas concerning Black leadership, organizations, and movements.

Course Objectives

1. Students will be better, more confident writers and thinkers.

2. Students will analyze critical concepts in a variety of settings.

3. Students will improve their ability to analyze historical and contemporary political events and claims.
**Instructional Methods**

This course will have a hybrid format—part lecture, part seminar. A premium is placed on high quality writing and class participation. You are expected to ask and answer questions and offer informed analysis in class. Please be civil to and respectful of your colleagues, particularly if they express opinions that are unpopular. Make sure that your commentary is relevant to the discussion and literature.

**Textbooks**

**Required**


**Recommended**


Grading

Your final grade will be the result of your performance in the following areas:

1. Three literature reviews, which will require written assessments of assigned and unassigned readings. See final page of this syllabus for details (75% of your final grade).
2. Student presentations (10%).
3. Informed discussion of assigned reading (15%).

Each student is expected to complete all of the assigned readings for each class session, and be prepared to summarize, offer assessments, or both, of the literature as well as the comments of fellow classmates. Instructions for research paper and literature reviews will be provided.

*Please Note:* For this course, an A grade is reserved for sustained outstanding performance in all aspects of the course – **writing assignments and class participation.** A B grade is assigned to those who demonstrate mastery of the course readings and above average performance in all aspects of the course. The grade of C denotes average/marginal performance.

*A few words on class participation:* Class participation encompasses questions and comments that demonstrate knowledge of – though not necessarily agreement with – assigned course readings or other information that sheds light on a topic relevant to the course. Expert scholars must be able to speak effectively in small groups and to make presentations of their work. The only way to learn these skills is to practice, so students are expected to contribute to discussions and will be required to present summaries of selected readings. **I place a heavy emphasis on class participation.** Please note that it is likely that a student who earned an “A” on the writing assignments will end up with a final grade of “B” if he or she does not regularly participate in class discussions.

**Class attendance** is considered in student assessments. While it is understandable you will occasionally conflict with class times, missing more than two class sessions will make it virtually impossible to earn a grade of A for the course. **Missing more than three sessions will make a grade of C likely.**

Policies

**Laptop Computers:** Permissible, though I prefer that you take notes by hand.

**Mobile Phones:** Please respect your colleagues and instructor by turning off your phone before entering the classroom.

**Extra Credit:** No extra credit assignments will be given in this course.

**Late Submission of Research Papers:** All papers should be submitted on time. Any paper submitted after the deadline will be penalized one full letter grade (no exceptions).

**Incomplete Grades:** No incomplete grades will be assigned at the end of this semester.
Academic Accommodation for a Disability: Howard University is committed to providing an educational environment that is accessible to all students. In accordance with this commitment, students in need of accommodations due to a disability should contact the Office of the Dean for Special Student Services for verification and determination of reasonable accommodations as soon as possible after admission to the University, or at the beginning of each academic semester. Contact the Office for Special Student Services, Howard Center Suite 725, 2225 Georgia Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20059, at 202-238-2420 for more information. Please notify me within the first two weeks of class if you require such accommodation.

Howard University Academic Code of Student Conduct

(Revised 2010)
Approved by the Board of Trustees, June 29, 2010

Howard University is a community of scholars composed of faculty and students both of whom must hold the pursuit of learning and search for truth in the highest regard. Such regard requires adherence to the goal of unquestionable integrity and honesty in the discharge of teaching and learning responsibilities. Such regard allows no place for academic dishonesty. To better assure the realization of this goal any student enrolled for study at the University may be disciplined for the academic infractions defined below.

Definitions of Academic Infractions

- **Academic Cheating**—any intentional act(s) of dishonesty in the fulfillment of academic course or program requirements. This offense shall include (but is not limited to) utilization of the assistance of any additional individual(s), organization, document, or other aid not specifically and expressly authorized by the instructor or department involved. (Note: This infraction assumes that with the exception of authorized group assignment or group take-home assignments, all course or program assignments shall be completed by an individual student only without any consultation or collaboration with any other individual, organization, or aid.)

- **Plagiarism**—to take and pass off intentionally as one’s own the ideas, writings, etc. of another without attribution (without acknowledging the author).

- **Copy Infringement**—Copy infringement occurs when a copyrighted work is reproduced, distributed, performed, publicly displayed, or made into a derivative work without the permission of the copyright owner.

Administration of the Code

This Academic Code of Student Conduct applies in all schools and colleges. In professional schools and colleges that have adopted honor codes, the honor code may supersede this Code. The authority and responsibility for the administration of this Academic Code of Conduct and imposition of any discipline upon any particular student shall vest in the Dean and faculty of the School or College in which the student is enrolled but may be delegated by the faculty to the Dean of the School or College in which the student is enrolled. The Dean shall be assisted in this responsibility by any faculty members and administrative
officers in the School or College the Dean shall consider appropriate. Any student accused of an infraction of this Code shall have a right to a limited hearing, as described herein, of the charges against him before a committee of faculty members, at least three in number, none of whom shall be the accuser or witness to the alleged infraction. The committee may be either a standing of the School or College, whose responsibilities are considered appropriate by the Dean to conduct a hearing under this code, or a committee appointed by the Dean for the special purpose of conducting only a particular hearing or all such hearings that may arise during an annual period. The hearing committee shall be chaired by a member designated by the Dean and the chairperson shall have the right to vote in cases of a tie vote.

Procedure

Any faculty member who has knowledge of an infraction of this Code shall assemble all supporting evidence and identify any additional witnesses to the infraction and make this information known to the Dean of the School or College in which the student is enrolled at least ten (10) business days after the date of the infraction.

Upon being notified of an alleged infraction of this Code, the Dean shall, as soon as possible, consider the weight of the assembled evidence and, if the Dean considers the evidence sufficient to warrant further action the dean shall notify the alleged offender of the charge(s) against him/her together with a designation of a hearing time and place where the accused may respond to the charge(s). The hearing date shall be no later than ten (10) business days after notification to the accused of the charge(s) against him/her. The Dean shall similarly notify the hearing committee members of the time and place of the hearing together with identification of the accuser and accused.

The “limited hearing” authorized by this Code is not an adversarial proceeding. Constitutional principles of “due process” are not applicable to these proceeding. The faculty member concerned shall present the case for the University. Both shall be allowed to present witnesses and evidence in support of their positions concerning the charge(s). However, no legal counsel for either side shall be allowed. The members of the hearing committee may question the accused and the accuser and examine all evidence presented. The standard of proof for the proceeding under this Code shall be the standard of “substantial evidence.” The proceedings may be tape recorded but will not be transcribed.

After the hearing of the charge(s) against the accused, the hearing committee shall, in closed session, vote by secret ballot to sustain or reject the charge(s). If the charges are sustained, the committee shall transmit the results and recommendation of the hearing committee to the Dean five (5) business days after the hearing.

Upon receipt of the results and recommendations of the hearing committee, the Dean may sustain the recommendation of the Committee concerning the penalty or may reduce or increase the severity of the penalty, and shall, within five (5) business days, notify the student of the Dean’s determination. The student may appeal directly to the Provost and Chief Academic Officer or Senior Vice President for Health Sciences (Health Science students) for reconsideration of any disciplinary penalty. The student shall have five (5) business days to make such appeal from date of receipt of notification.
After hearing any appeal from a student, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer or Senior Vice President for Health Sciences shall make a decision that shall be communicated to the student within ten (10) business days. This decision shall be final.

**Penalties**

The minimum disciplinary penalty imposed upon a student found to have committed an infraction(s) of this Code shall be no credit for the course assignment or examination in which the infraction(s) occurred; however, a more severe penalty, such as failure in the course involved or suspension from the University, may be imposed depending upon the nature and extent of the infraction(s).

**Additional Thoughts on Plagiarism**

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of political science inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the Department of Political Science. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.

Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.
The following poem offers some food for thought about the importance of politics. It is called “Why You Should Be Involved in Politics”.

Politics and politicians decide
the wars you fight
the interest you pay
the speed you drive
the taxes you pay

Politics and politicians control
the purity of your food
the schooling of your children
the value of your money
the weights and measures you use
the floor under your wages

Politics and politicians use taxpayer money to hand out
subsidies to farmers
subsidies to airlines
subsidies to oil companies
subsidies to magazines and newspapers
subsidies to bankers
subsidies to builders

Politics and politicians protect or destroy
your right to speak freely
your right to worship freely
your right to organize
your right to vote

Politics and politicians control your life

The author of this poem is unknown to me, but his or her words strike at the core of my professional and political interests. There may well be very few things in this world you can do that are not shaped, directly or indirectly, by politics. To sit on the sidelines and not be involved could literally be hazardous to your health.
Course Outline

1. Course Overview (August 28)

Discussion Questions

- What is leadership and what are its characteristics?
- What is a Black leader?
- Is there a difference between Black and other kinds of leaders?
- How does one become a leader?
- What qualifies someone to be a leader?
- What do leaders do?
- What is the purpose of leadership?
- How do we know when leaders are successful?
- Is failing to meet with success still leadership?
- What, if any, are the unique challenges faced by Black leadership?

2. Agenda Setting Theory (September 4)

Required Reading–


Recommended Reading–


**Discussion Questions**–

- What is “the agenda”?
- What is agenda setting?
- Is there a preferred way to set the agenda?
- Does agenda setting for African American interests differ from other kinds of agenda setting?
- What role does context play in exhibiting or assessing leadership?
- To what extent do Taylor’s findings regarding domestic agenda setting still hold?

3. **Black Leadership: An Introduction (September 11)**

**Required Reading**–


**Recommended Reading**–


August Meier and John Hope Franklin, eds., *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982).

Discussion Questions –

- What is your assessment of Dierenfield and White’s contention that only recently have African Americans had opportunities to select their own leaders?
- What were among the divisions between Black and White abolitionists?
- Summarize Lester Seligman’s discussion on leadership studies.
- How do Walters and Smith discuss the Black leadership dichotomy?

4. Theoretical Foundations of Black Leadership (September 18)

Required Reading–

Walters and Smith, Chapters 1-5.


Recommended Reading–


Discussion Questions–

- Gunnar Myrdal presented a typology of Negro leaders that has, in various forms, persisted to this day. What was his typology? Is his typology still relevant? How does it compare with those from Burgess, Thompson, Matthews and Protho, Ladd, and Wilson?
- Walters and Smith discuss a variety of Black leadership typologies. What are among those classifications? To what extent do you think they are fair and appropriate?
- What are the factors that contributed to the change from “Negro” to “Black” leadership?
- What is the preferred political style of Black leadership, according to Walters and Smith?
- What does Robert C. Smith conclude about the relevancy of Black leaders? Do you agree?

5. Abolitionist Black Leadership (September 25 and October 2)

Required Reading–


Frederick Douglas, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”


**Recommended Reading**–


**Discussion Questions**–

- What are the major characteristics of abolitionist Black leadership?
- What is the context in which these leaders operated?
- What are the prominent examples of leadership during this period?
- What was Martin Delany’s vision for Black freedom?
- What was Delany’s counsel to freedmen?
- What were Delany’s two nationalisms?
- How do you view Frederick Douglass and his contributions?
- What were the National Negro Conventions and what leadership did they provide?
- What schisms developed between Black and White abolitionist leaders?
6. **Reconstruction Black Leadership (October 9)**

**Required Reading—**


**Recommended Reading—**


**Discussion Questions—**

- What were the major issues Black leaders had to deal with during this period?
- What was Reconstruction’s impact on Black life and leadership?
- Which organizations were active during Reconstruction? Were they effective?
- To what extent were Black leaders involved in creating the Reconstruction?
- Who were the major Black politicians to emerge during Reconstruction?
- What were the “Reconstruction Amendments” to the Constitution?
- What were among the Black political successes during this period?
7. Jim Crow Black Leadership (October 16 and 23)

Required Reading–

Dierenfield and White, chapters 2-4.


Recommended Reading–


Discussion Questions–

• How would you characterize the conflicts among and between leaders of this period?
• What were among the main issues confronted by leaders during this period?
• What were the most important leadership contributions of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, and Marcus Garvey?
• How did Washington, DuBois, and Garvey gain legitimacy in the Black community?
• What were the disputes between Washington, DuBois, and Garvey?
• How should we view Washington’s Atlanta exposition speech?
8. Civil Rights Era Black Leadership (October 30 and November 6)

**Required Reading**–

Dierenfield and White, chapters 5-6.

Public Statement by Bishop C. C. J. Carpenter *et. al.* To Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter From a Birmingham Jail”.


**Recommended Reading**–


**Discussion Questions**–

- How did the major leaders of this period emerge? To what extent were they independent?
  - To what extent were they compromised?
- What were the main points of King’s letter?
To what extent do his points still resonate?

Describe the role played by religious leaders during this period.

9. Post-Civil Rights Era Black Leadership (November 13)

**Required Reading**–

Dierenfield and White, chapters 8-9.

Walters and Smith, chapters 7-9.


**Recommended Reading**–


**Discussion Questions**–

- To what extent do the issues in the post civil rights era differ from those of the civil rights era?
- How do you characterize Black conservatism in the framework of Black leadership?
- What was the purpose of the National Black Political Convention? Did the event meet its goals?
- What was the Fairmont Movement?
10. **Post Racial Black Leadership (November 20 and December 4)**

**Required Reading–**


**Recommended Reading–**


**Discussion Questions–**

- What is post racial?
- To what extent has the rise of Latino/a Americans impacted Black Leadership?
- What are the differences between “racial” and “post-racial” Black leadership?
- Who are the post racial leaders?
- Are they effective?
Black Leadership, Organizations, and Movements

Literature Review Assignment

What

You are to prepare a review of important literature on Black leadership, organizations, and movements. The literature must be in book or journal form (no blogs, newspaper, or magazine articles). Each review should explore at least one book and five journal articles. While you are not obligated to do so, I encourage you to consider the citations in the recommended readings section of your syllabus. Items in the required readings section cannot be used for these reviews. While you are free to choose which area you will review each month, please be sure to talk with me as you begin preparing each document. We need to be on the same page regarding what is considered important literature. Each review should not exceed 12 pages.

- The first review will examine the literature on one of the following areas: a general introduction on Black leadership, the theoretical foundation of Black leadership, or agenda setting.

- The second review will examine the literature on one of the following areas: abolitionist Black leadership, Reconstruction Black leadership, or Jim Crow Black leadership.

- The third review will examine the literature on one of the following areas: civil rights era Black leadership, post-civil rights era Black leadership, and post-racial Black leadership

Why

- To more deeply immerse the student in the extant literature on Black leadership, organizations, and movements

- To prepare students for a portion of their comprehensive examinations; and

- To give students training on how to prepare the literature review section of the dissertation or master’s thesis

- To identify possible voids in the literature that present opportunities for your own research and publishing

When?

- The first review is due not later than 5:00PM on Wednesday, September 25.

- The second review is due not later than 5:00PM on Wednesday, October 30

- The third review is due not later than 5:00PM on Wednesday, November 27