

University at Buffalo
PSC 293: Race and the Law

Spring 2017

MWF 9-9:50 AM

Capen 262

Instructor: Daniel Myers

Office: 515 Park Hall

E-mail: danielmy@buffalo.edu **Office Hours:** Wednesday 10:30am-12pm or by appointment

Textbooks:

Shaw, Todd, Louis DeSipio, Dianne M. Pinderhughes, and Toni-Michelle C. Travis. *Uneven Roads: An Introduction to U.S. Racial and Ethnicity Politics*. CQ Press. Thousand Oaks, CA. ISBN#: 978-16042-6544-6 (**REQUIRED**)

Watson, Bruce. *Freedom Summer: The Savage Season of 1964 That Made Mississippi Burn and Made America a Democracy*. Penguin Books. ISBN#: 9780143119432 (**REQUIRED**)

Course Description

This course explores that part of U.S. law that has dealt with the human and civil rights of African Americans (and by implication other racial ethnic groups in U.S. society: Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, etc.) Special attention will be given to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's and contemporary issues/topics such as stop and frisk, Black Lives Matter, police shootings, and drug laws to name a handful.

Class Expectations

1. **BE PREPARED.** Please come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. The class will flow much better if students have done the reading and have exposed themselves to the information before the class discussion on that specific topic. In addition, you should come to class with note-taking materials.
2. **ATTENDENCE.** Please attend class on a regular basis. I would rather you show up to class late than not at all. However if you must show up late, or leave early, please sit close to the door of the classroom so as to not distract anyone. Consistently skipping class will result in your grade dropping below what you are capable of achieving. A good rule of thumb: Missing 2-3 classes, unexcused, will most likely not affect your grade. Any misses after that will result in your grading dropping. I retain full discretion on this matter.
3. **CHECK E-MAIL.** Please regularly check your UB e-mail. This is how you will receive updates about the class, such as if I need to cancel a class, post an assignment, or make changes to due dates. Using the "I did not check my e-mail" excuse for missing an

assignment or an update will fall on deaf ears. With easy e-mail access on smartphones, checking your e-mail consistently is a no-brainer. If you do not have a smartphone, there are plenty of computers all around campus. If you e-mail me, PLEASE put "PSC 293" in the subject line to ensure I read your e-mail in a timely manner. E-mails should be professionally written.

4. **USE OF TECHNOLOGY.** Please keep laptop, tablet, and cell phone use to a minimum in class. In this new technology age, I understand that many students use these devices to take notes. This is fine, however you should not be consulting Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or playing Pokémon Go during class. At a minimum, all devices should be set to silent. Do not distract me or your classmates with a device. I strongly encourage using pen and paper to take notes.

Requirements and Evaluation

- **Class attendance and participation (20%)**
This portion of your grade will be subjective based upon how you do in relation to your peers. If you show up to class on a regular basis and participate, you will get all or most of the points. However, if you skip a fair amount of classes and/or do not participate, you will lose many of the points. To be safe: Show up and contribute. After 2-3 absences, you will start losing points.
- **Exams (40%)**
There will be 2 non-cumulative exams during the semester. Each exam will be worth 20%. It is your responsibility to take the exams when they are scheduled. There will be no make-up exams, except in emergencies such as a family death or a serious medical condition for the student beyond "not feeling well". These excuses will require documentation. In addition, those of you on sports teams out of town may make-up an exam with documentation from the Athletic Department. As the semester progresses, I may decide to provide you with a study guide for the exams. The decision will be made as the first exam draws closer.
- **Homework/Presentations (40%)**
Throughout the semester I will assign a few short homework assignments. Each assignment should take you no more than 30-60 minutes to complete (if that). You will have ample time to complete the assignments and specifics about the formats will be announced at the time assignments are given. You will also be expected to give one short presentation during the semester. Details will be given in the first week of class.

Grading

Letter Grade	Percent	Interpretation
A	94-100	Stellar
A-	90-93	Awesome
B+	88-89	Very Good
B	84-87	Good
B-	80-83	Good/Average
C+	78-79	Just Below Average
C	74-77	Okay
C-	70-73	Poor
D+	68-69	Very Poor
D	60-67	Terrible
F	<60	Fail

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with and follow the University at Buffalo's academic integrity policies. These are available in the undergraduate catalog. Punishment for cheating will be swift and severe. Plagiarism shall be dealt with in the same manner. When in doubt, cite! It's not that hard! DO NOT PLAGERIZE! If you are not sure, ask me!

Accessibility Resources

If you need classroom or testing accommodations because of a disability, you should contact Accessibility Resources. They can be reached by phone at (716) 645-2608 or by e-mail at stu-accessibility@buffalo.edu. If you will need special accommodations, please inform me ASAP so that we can coordinate in a timely manner.

Course Schedule

The following schedule serves as a tentative course outline. You should complete assigned readings before class. If I need to make changes to the syllabus as the semester continues, you will be notified of the changes well in advance. Any readings I assign in addition to the textbook or our novel will be provided to you.

Week of 1/30: Course Introduction: Race as an Uneven Road---Ch. 1

Week of 2/6: Native Americans: The Road from Majority to Minority, 1500s-1970s—Ch. 2 and relevant readings TBA

Week of 2/13: The African-American Political Journey, 1500s-1965---Ch. 3 and relevant readings TBA

Week of 2/20: The Road toward Contemporary Latino Politics, 1500s-1970s---Ch. 4 and relevant readings TBA

Week of 2/27: Asian Americans---Ch. 5 and relevant readings TBA

Week of 3/6: Defining and Redefining Whiteness in Immigrant America, 1780s-1960s---Ch. 6 and relevant readings TBA

Week of 3/13: Exam 1

Week of 3/20: SPRING RECESS, NO CLASS

Week of 3/27: Voting Rights in American Life---Ch. 7 and relevant readings TBA

Week of 4/3: Group Identity, Ideology, and Activism---Ch. 8 and relevant readings TBA. **NO CLASS 4/5 and 4/7 due to MPSA conference in Chicago**

Week of 4/10: Political Behavior and Representation: Minorities Growing Voice---Ch. 9 and relevant readings TBA. ****TBD-NO CLASS 4/10 due to MPSA conference in Chicago**

Week of 4/17: Education and Criminal Justice Policies: Opportunity and Alienation---Ch. 10 and relevant readings TBA

Week of 4/24: Immigration Policy: The Road to Settlement and Citizenship---Ch. 11 and Diasporic Politics and Foreign Affairs---Ch. 12 and relevant readings TBA

Week of 5/1: Beyond Race: Intersections of Race, Class, Gender, and Sexual Orientation---Ch. 13, relevant readings TBA, and begin presentations

Week of 5/8: Continue presentations and Exam 2

Additional Information:

Assigned readings- The chapters in the textbook are to be read for the first day of the week they are assigned. The first day of the week will be devoted to class lecture on the relevant chapter. The rest of the week will include class discussions on relevant U.S Supreme Court cases and relevant contemporary issues/topics. Some contemporary issues/topics that will be discussed during the semester will be stop and frisk, Black Lives Matter, police shootings, Native American treaties, and drug laws to name a handful.

Homework- Throughout the semester I will assign small homework assignments. Assignments will be given out to students at least one week prior to the due date. Assignments will generally take no longer than one hour to complete. More details will be given as each assignment approaches.

Presentations- Each student will be required to make a short presentation using Power Point near the end of the semester. Presentations should be no longer than five minutes. More details will be given as the presentation dates move closer.

Jeopardy- At times throughout the semester, it is likely that the class will take part in jeopardy games. These games are meant to be a fun way for students to learn the material while taking a break from the class lecture format.

Class discussion- Class periods where we go over the textbook will be lectures and the class will be shown notes and power point slides. Other class periods, when the class discusses contemporary issues and U.S Supreme Court cases, will be discussion based (seminar-style) and not lectures. On these days, I expect heavy class participation.

Novel- This semester, we will read “Freedom Summer: The Savage Season of 1964 That Made Mississippi Burn and Made America a Democracy” authored by Bruce Watson. Throughout the semester, I will assign dates by which you are to have read certain parts of the book. The book will be read and discussed during the civil rights era section of the class.

*****General note-** This class will focus on Native Americans, African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Immigrants, sexual orientation, and gender in regards to past and contemporary law. **However, special emphasis will be placed on the Civil Rights Movement and the 1960’s at every relevant point throughout the semester.**