Multicultural America: Minority Voting Rights and Representation
POLI SCI 150-001
Fall 2016
T/TH 11-12:15pm
RiverView Res Hall 254

Prof. Paru Shah
BOL 676
shahp@uwm.edu

Inclusive Excellence Center
Warren Scherer
wscherer@uwm.edu

Peer Mentor
Cassie Siedschlag
Siedsch4@uwm.edu

Service Learning Contact
Kika Meraz
femeraz@uwm.edu

Resident Assistant
Sara Villarreal
Villar32@uwm.edu

Course Overview
While the United States often boasts of its extensive franchise, the right to vote for all citizens has had a slow evolution in our country. In this course, we will begin with a historical overview of the quest for voting rights for the four largest racial/ethnic minority groups in the US: African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native American. Next, we will examine closely the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the subsequent reauthorizations. We will address two primary topics related to the application of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 today: (1) redistricting and minority representation; and (2) the protection or suppression of the right to vote. Last, we will examine two current debates in voter disenfranchisement that disproportionately impact minority voters – voter ID laws, and laws barring felons from voting.

Political Science 150-001 may be used to satisfy the Core Course requirement for the UWM Cultures and Communities Certificate Program. The Certificate is an opportunity to earn the equivalent of a Minor in multicultural studies and community engagement while also completing your General Education requirements. For more information visit the Program home page at www.cc.uwm.edu.

Course Learning Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
• Identify the major racial/ethnic groups in American political history and discuss their distinct contributions and principal conflicts, especially as these illustrate the impact of inequalities of political power.
• Analyze critically voting rights laws in the US, and their use in enfranchising and disenfranchising particular racial and ethnic groups.
• Understand how community service in a pluralistic society can reinforce the values of democratic citizenship and cross-cultural understanding.

Required Texts:
Assigned readings will be available on D2L.
Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation (50 pts)
This includes being on time to class, being present in class, but also participating in class discussion, class projects, and sometimes in-class writing assignments, as well as interaction with the instructors during office hours. **Attendance is mandatory.** Two unexcused absences will result in a full-grade reduction of your final course grade.

Participation is based on how interactive students are with class discussion and incorporating the day’s readings into that discussion.

Discussion Assignments (50 pts)
Discussion activities are designed for you to demonstrate what you have learned from the reading and apply the knowledge in various contexts. It is also an area where you can demonstrate your skills as a critical analyzer - break down the ideas, analyze the parts, and make a coherent argument.

Upload you discussion assignments in D2L in the Dropbox. These should be 350-400 words in length. Full credit (10pts) will be give to answers that are complete, refer to readings/lecture notes, and free of grammatical and spelling errors. **Discussion assignments are always due before class (before 11am) on the day they are due.**

Quizzes (150 pts)
There will be three (3) quizzes (50pts each) during the term that serve as checkpoints for course readings, and include multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Students will be asked questions that require them to define major critical terms and connect various facets of the course including lectures, readings, films, and class discussion.

Service Learning (50pts)
An important component of this course is service learning, which is designed to deepen your understanding of the course material through participation in community-based activities. Service learning is meant to ground course material and objectives in contemporary, real and local experiences. Each student is required to spend **15 hours** during the semester working with a local organization working on voter registration and education. Students will also be required to track their service hours using a formal timesheet.

Service Organizations:
ACLU
League of Women Voters
UW-Milwaukee Center for Community-Based Learning, Leadership, and Research

Service Learning Journal (40pts)
All journal entries should be electronic and posted to D2L on their assigned days. In your journal you should log your service learning hours and reflect informally on your observations and experiences with service learning. In this space you should allow yourself to think openly without the typical self-censoring that accompanies a more formal paper.

It is a clear expectation that students produce entries following each Service Learning session, and during moments of reflection (please don't make the mistake of thinking you will remember ideas well after they come to mind).
Upload your journal entries in D2L under “Dropbox” These should be 350-400 words in length. Full credit (10pts) will be given to answers that are complete and free of grammatical and spelling errors.

Journal entries are always due on before class (before 11am) on the day they are due.

**Presentations of Learning (50pts)**

Students will present their learning through the course at the end of the semester. More details will be provided in class.

**Professionalism and Late Work**

You will be expected to behave professionally in this class. That is to say, you will be expected to arrive on time and to attend all class meetings. You will be prepared for each class and actively participate in discussion. I will not tolerate disruptive behavior, including, but not limited to, reading newspapers, conversing during lectures, insulting classmates or the instructor, or leaving early.

**Late work will not be accepted for credit** (unless there is a major and substantiated complication which prevents completion of which I am aware immediately and prior to the due date, and the determination about whether or it is “major and substantiated” will be made solely at the discretion of the instructor.) Do note that full documentation of illness or death in the family is necessary for excused absences and extensions. To repeat, I require notification BEFORE the missed assignment/exam unless that is impossible due to documented emergency. Sincerely-held religious beliefs are exempt from the documentation policy, though I still require advance notification of absence/conflict with a religious observance.

**Work Load**

This is a three-credit course, and as such you should average about nine hours of work per week to achieve the learning goals of this course. You will work more in some weeks than in others, but you should average about nine work hours per week.

**Special Needs**

Any students with special needs due to a physical or learning disability should see me as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to accommodate your needs.

**Other University Policies**

Other University guidelines (including policies on sexual harassment, grade appeals, incompletes, and military call-ups) can be found here: [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf).

**Grading Scale**

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Students are encouraged to keep track of their progress in the course and consult with me in person should they have questions or concerns about their performance. Please note I will not discuss grades via email or telephone.
**Topics and Readings**

**Week 1**
Tuesday, September 6: Introductions and Course overview
- Video: Voting: Last Night with John Oliver

Wednesday, September 7: Special Registrant Deputies (SRDs) Training by the Milwaukee Election Commission, 5-6:30pm (1.5 SL hours)

Thursday, September 8: ACLU Election Voting Rights Training

**Week 2**
Tuesday, September 13: Service Learning Contracts Presentation

Thursday, September 15: LWV Training
- Peer Mentor Presentation 1

Friday, September 16: Special Registrant Deputies (SRDs) Training by the Milwaukee Election Commission, 1:30-3pm (1.5 SL Hours)

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**Part 1: Voting Rights Before the VRA**

**Week 3**
Tuesday, September 20
Native Americans: The Road from Majority to Minority, 1500’s-1970s
Readings: Shaw et al, Chapter 2
- **Service Learning Journal Entry #1 Due**

Thursday, September 22
Different and Common Asian American Roads, 1800’s-1960’s
Readings: Shaw et al, Chapter 5
- **Discussion Assignment #1 Due**
- Peer Mentor Presentation 2

**Week 4**
Tuesday, September 27
The African American Political Journey, 1500’s – 1965
Readings: Shaw et al, Chapter 3

Thursday, September 29
The Road toward Contemporary Latino Politics, 1500’s to 1970s
Readings: Shaw et al, Chapter 4
- **Discussion Question #2 Due**
- Peer Mentor Presentation 3

Friday, September 30
CCBLLR Beyond Service Training, Union Room 191, 2-3:30pm (1.5 SL Hours)
Week 5
Tuesday, October 4: Quiz 1 Review

Thursday, October 6: Quiz 1

Imaging America Conference October 6-8. More details to follow.


Week 6: The Civil Rights Movement and VRA of 1965

Tuesday, October 11
Shaw et al, Chapter 7 (pp. 199-209)
Movie: “Selma – the Bridge to the Ballot”

Thursday, October 13
- Peer Mentor Presentation 4

Distinguished Lecture Series: Black Lives Matter – 7pm Union Wisconsin Room (1.5 SL Hours)
- Service Learning Journal Entry #2 Due

Week 7: Sections 5
Tuesday, October 18

Thursday, October 20
- Peer Mentor Presentation 5
- Discussion Question #3 Due

Week 8: Section 2
Tuesday, October 25
Guest Speaker – State Representative David Bowen

Thursday, October 27
Common Reading Experience: “Fear of a Black President” – Ta-Nehisi Coates
- Peer Mentor Presentation 6
- Service Learning Journal Entry #3 Due
Week 9: Extending protections to Language Minorities – Section 203
Tuesday, November 1

• Discussion Question #4 Due

Thursday, November 3: Quiz 2

Week 10: Election!
Tuesday, November 8: Election Day!

Thursday, November 10:
Recap from the Election
• Peer Mentor Presentation 7
• Service Learning Journal Entry #4 Due

Part 3: New Threats to Voter Disenfranchisement

Monday, November 14: Social Justice Conference (2 SL Hours)

Week 11: Voter ID Laws

Tuesday, November 15

Thursday, November 17
Guest Speaker: Karyn Rotko, ACLU Attorney
• Peer Mentor Presentation 8
• Discussion Question #5 Due

Week 12: Thanksgiving!

Week 13: Felony Convictions

Tuesday, November 29
Video: “Mission Critical”

Thursday, December 1
• Peer Mentor Presentation 9

Week 14
Tuesday, December 6: Quiz 3
Part 4: Presentations of Learning

Thursday, December 8
Presentations of Learning

Week 15

Tuesday, December 13
Presentations of Learning