

Politics of the American South

PS 4170

Instructor: L. Marvin Overby

Office: 305 Professional Building
Voice: 573.882.2130; e-mail: overby@missouri.edu

Teaching Assistant: Christine Spillson

Office: 319 McAlester Hall
Voice: 573.882.6088; e-mail: caswdf@mizzou.edu

Course Description

This course focuses on the politics of the American South in the 20th century and the early years of the current millennium. In attempting to make sense of this region's unique, fascinating, and often frustrating politics, we will explore a series of related topics. After placing the region's politics in theoretical context, we will explore the economic and historical factors that shaped the "old" South and led to revolutionary transformations in the region during the middle decades of the 20th century. In the second half of the semester, we will turn our attention to more contemporary matters, examining presidential and sub-presidential level politics in the South, surveying the political landscapes in selected deep and rim South states, and considering several contemporary topics in greater depth (including the dynamics of racial representation).

Texts

- Black, Earl and Merle Black. 1987. *Politics and Society in the South*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (Referred to as *P&S* in the reading assignments.)
- Black, Earl and Merle Black. 2002. *The Rise of Southern Republicans*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (Referred to as *Rise* in the reading assignments.)
- Davidson, Chandler and Bernard Grofman. 1994. *Quiet Revolution in the South: The Impact of the Voting Rights Act, 1965-1990*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Referred to as *D&G* in the reading assignments.)
- Wright, Gavin. 1986. *Old South, New South: Revolution in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War*. Baton Rouge: LSU Press. (Referred to as *Wright* in the reading assignments.)

In addition, at various times during the semester I will make additional reading assignments that will either be available on the course blackboard site (blackboard.missouri.edu).

Grading

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

- First Midterm Examination = 20%
- Second Midterm Examination = 20%
- Essay = 15%
- Weekly Quiz Average = 20%
- Final Examination = 25%

Unless otherwise noted, the weekly quizzes will be given at the end of class on Thursdays; you will be responsible for all course material covered (in readings, in lectures, and in discussion) that week. They are designed to give you an added incentive to stay current with the readings and to aid you in preparation for the examinations. I will drop your three lowest quiz grades before computing your quiz average. Missed quizzes may not be made-up, but if you have a valid (and documented) excuse, a missed quiz will not lower your quiz average. Extra credit questions will be given at my discretion and will usually be drawn

from current events. The first quiz will be given at the end of class on **Thursday, January 25th**.

The short papers, which should be approximately five pages in length, are due **at the beginning of class on Thursday, April 19th**. They will address a topic that will be assigned in class on Thursday, April 12th. Papers **must** be typed, double spaced, and use reasonable margins (1" on all sides, more or less) and font sizes (10-12). Papers submitted after the assigned deadlines will be reduced one letter grade for each day (in whole or in part) they are late. (N.B. Things get lost. Students are **REQUIRED** to keep copies of their papers in case there is any question about whether they have been turned in or not.)

The examinations will consist primarily of essay and identification questions. The final will be comprehensive. The first midterm is scheduled for **Tuesday, February 20th**; the second midterm is scheduled for **Thursday, April 5th**; the final will be given during the University-assigned time slot: **Friday, May 11th, 8:00-10:00 a.m.** Make-up examinations will be given only in the case of valid and well documented excuses. If you are participating in university-sponsored extracurricular activities on an exam date, please inform me during the *first two weeks* of the semester if at all possible.

You are entitled to a review of any grade you think does not accurately reflect the quality of your work. All appeals must first go through the TA; if you cannot resolve the issue with him, you may bring the matter to me. On quizzes, you may appeal a grade immediately and verbally. For papers and exams, there is a more formal procedure:

- 1) There is a 24-hour rule. You may not discuss a paper or exam grade with the TA until at least 24 hours after the assignment has been returned.
- 2) Appeals of paper and exam grades must be made in writing. The appeal must spell out explicitly why you think you deserve a higher grade than you got.
- 3) What goes up can also come down. When you appeal a grade, you open up the assignment to re-grading. If the TA or I decide that your answer was *worse* than originally thought, we will lower your score.
- 4) Time limit. Except when there are extenuating circumstances, you should file a grade appeal within two weeks of an assignment's return. After two weeks, I reserve the right to refuse to reconsider a grade.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct — defined as appropriating the words or ideas of others and using them as your own through cheating or plagiarism — is something I will not tolerate. I will prosecute cases of academic misconduct to the fullest extent of MU policy, and that will certainly involve a failing grade *for the course* and can mean expulsion from the University. I advise you to speak with me if you have questions concerning what constitutes academic misconduct.

Attendance, Policies, etc.

While attendance is not obligatory, you will get much more out of this course (including, I would wager, a higher grade) if you attend class regularly, do the week's reading in advance of class, participate in class discussions, and pay attention to both the instructor and your classmates.

Turn off your cell phones and/or pagers *before* class begins. If you come to class late, or plan to leave early, please sit towards the back of the classroom to minimize distractions to other students.

If you have a disability and need academic accommodations, it is your responsibility to notify me as soon as possible. Please see me privately after class within the first two weeks of classes. You must also

register with the Office of Disability Services, especially if you are requesting any kind of class or testing accommodations. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your needs.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

- Week 1 (January 16th and 18th) — Administrivia and Introduction
Themes: What is the South? Why study Southern politics?
Readings: *Rise*, chapter 1; Reed, “The South: Where Is It? What Is It?” (available on the blackboard.missouri.edu site)
- Week 2 (January 23rd and 25th) — Introduction, continued
Themes: An introduction to Southern economic history
Readings: Wright, preface, chapters 1 and 2
N. B.: First quiz given at the end of class on January 25th.
- Week 3 (January 30th and February 1st) — Old South I: Economic Bases
Themes: Land and labor; agriculture in the post-bellum South
Readings: Wright, chapters 3 and 4
- Week 4 (February 6th and 8th) — Old South II: Economic Bases, continued
Themes: Industrial development in the post-bellum South
Readings: Wright, chapter 5 and 6
- Week 5 (February 13th and 15th) — Old South III: Politics of Segregation
Themes: “Black belt” politics; color lines; foundations of segregation; the “Democracy” and one party politics; the old South in presidential politics
Readings: *P&S*, pp. 3-22, 75-97; *Rise*, chapter 2
- Week 6 (February 20th and 22nd) — 1st Midterm and Transformation of Southern Politics I: Economy
Tuesday, February 20th: 1st Midterm
Thursday, February 22nd: Industrialization and urbanization; rise of the middle class
Readings: *P&S*, pp. 23-72
N.B. Quiz as usual at end of class on February 22nd.
- Week 7 (February 27th and March 1st) — Transformation of Southern Politics II: Economy, continued
Themes: Migration, Federalism, Taxes
Readings: Wright, chapters 7 and 8
- Week 8 (March 6th and 8th) — Transformation of Southern Politics III: Racial Politics
Themes: Outer and intermediate color lines; the politics of civil rights
Readings: *P&S*, pp. 98-151
- Week 9 (March 13th and 15th) — Transformation of Southern Politics IV: Race and Partisanship
Themes: “Generations of Southern black leadership,” partisan changes
Readings: *P&S*, pp. 152-194
- Week 10 (March 20th and 22nd) — Transformation of Southern Politics V: Partisan Politics
Themes: Democrats and Dixiecrats; GOP growth in the rim South
Readings: *Rise*, chapters 3 and 4
- Week 11 (March 27th and 29th) — No Classes — Spring Break

Week 12 (April 3rd and 5th) — Catch-Up and 2nd Midterm Examination

Tuesday, April 3rd: Catch-Up and Review Session

Thursday, April 5th: 2nd Midterm Examination

N.B. No quiz on Week 12.

Week 13 (April 10th and 12th) — Presidential Politics in the Modern South

Themes: Electoral realities and the Electoral College; Republican dominance and Democratic interludes; the vital South?

Readings: *P&S*, pp. 195-275; *Rise*, chapter 5, 6, and 7

N.B.: Essay assignment made in class on Thursday, April 12th.

Week 14 (April 17th and 19th) — Sub-presidential level politics in the modern South

Themes: Continuing Democratic strength; emerging Republican majority; 1994& beyond

Readings: *P&S*, pp. 276-291; *Rise*, chapters 8-12

N.B.: Essay assignment due at beginning of class on Thursday, April 19th.

Week 15 (April 24th and 26th) — Selected Topics I: Election of Southern Black Officials

Themes: Structural, socio-economic, and political factors; impact of the VRA

Readings: D&G, all (pay particular attention to chapters 1, 5, 6, and 10-13)

Week 16 (May 1st and 3rd) — Selected Topics III: Representation of Black Interests

Themes: Blacks representing blacks; whites representing blacks; symbolic vs. substantive representation

Readings: TBA (check course website on blackboard)

FINAL EXAMINATION: Friday, May 11, 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.