

COLBY COLLEGE
GO228: Introduction to Race, Ethnicity, and Politics

Instructor, Carrie LeVan
Fall 2024
T/H: 1:00 – 2:15
Room Number: Lovejoy 213

Email: calevan@colby.edu
Student Hours: T/H 11:00 to 12:00
T/H 2:30 to 3:30
And, by Appointment
Office: Diamond 267

“Through clearer understanding of our racial history and the nature of our racial dynamics and interactions, we have a far better chance of moving toward a society with greater social justice.”

~Cherise A. Harris and Stephanie M. McClure

Course Description

As the United States is rapidly diversifying—the US Census predicts that by 2050 the United States will become a majority-minority country—it is critical that students understand the central role that race and ethnicity has/continues to play in American Politics. This course seeks to examine how the past is in fact prologue.

In order to accomplish this, the course will examine the ways in which racial and ethnic minorities influence and are influenced by American politics and public policy. The course is organized in three parts. Part I will explore the historical and often uneven pathways towards access to rights and opportunities for each major racial/ethnic groups in the United States (Native Americans, Black/African Americans, Latino(a)(x)(e)/Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and white Americans). Part II will focus on contemporary issues of race and political behavior, paying close attention to minority education, housing, employment, criminal justice, immigration, public opinion, participation, activism and representation. Part III will examine the future of race and ethnicity in American politics.

Course Learning Outcomes/Goals

There are two types of Learning goals in this class. The first is “Substantive,” which describe the content I hope you learn by the end of this class. The second is “Skill-Development,” which describe the critical skills that I hope you develop or improve upon by the end of this class. They are as follows:

Substantive Outcomes:

1. To synthesize how past policy—Federal, State, and Local—continues to shape racial/ethnic minorities access to political rights and opportunities today.
2. To evaluate contemporary policies that Federal, State, and Local governments develop to determine what potential consequences, whether positive or negative, may occur.
3. To differentiate between the historically pathways towards access to rights and opportunities that different racial/ethnic groups have and continue to endure
4. To identify and critique contemporary political behaviors of both the majority and minority racial/ethnic groups: public opinion, ideology, participation, policy preferences, etc.

Skill-Development Outcomes:

1. To apply the theories explored in the reading and in class to the contemporary political climate
2. To improve the clarity—Planning, Organization, Language Choice—of writing
3. To practice public speaking skills
4. To develop evidence collection and analysis skills

Requirements

The course will have the following requirements:

Class Attendance and Participation: We will meet twice a week as a class to discuss that week's substantive material. Students are expected to participate in discussion and in-class activities. In order to be prepared for class discussion and participation, students must complete the following prior to attending class:

- Assigned reading for that week
- Homework assignments for Thursday classes

Homework: Every Friday before homework is due, I will post a homework assignment to the course Moodle Page in the following week's corresponding folder. The assignment is typically due on the Thursday of the following week and should be uploaded to the Course Moodle page before class starts in PDF format (there are a couple exceptions; so, pay attention to the syllabus). Students should be able to access their homework during that Thursday's class (either bring a virtual or physical hardcopy for your own reference), as we will use the homework assignment in Thursday's class discussion. *NOTE: I will drop the lowest homework grade from the total grade.*

The purpose of the weekly homework is multiple: (1) to incentivize students to complete the course reading, (2) to stimulate active engagement with the course reading, (3) to enhance in-class discussion on challenging topics, and (4) to practice critical thinking skills—drawing connections between course reading, lived experiences, current events, historical events, campus climate, other courses, popular culture (art, film/television, music, dance, literature).

Course Project: I will distribute the course project description week 8. It will be due on the day of our final exam (TBD), which is Week 15/16 and falls between December 11—16 .

Course Paper: I will distribute the paper topic week 8. It will be due week 14 on Tuesday, December 3rd. Students should upload the final draft before class to the Course Moodle in PDF format.

Exams: The midterm exam will be an essay exam that will allow you the ability to demonstrate the substantive knowledge you have learned in the course. It will ask you to read/watch a current event and then to analyze the event by applying what you have learned in the class. The midterm will be held in class during Week 8, on Tuesday, October 22nd. The final exam will also be held in class during our assigned final exam period. The date and time are TBD. During the final exam, students will give their final presentations.

Grade Distribution

The weights of grades are distributed as follows:

Participation	10%
Homework	35%
Midterm	20%
Individual Paper	15%
Final Project	15%
Final Presentation	5%

Grading Scale:

94-100 = A
90-93.9 = A-
87-89.9 = B+
84-86.9 = B
80-83.9 = B-
77-79.9 = C+
74-76.9 = C
70-73.9 = C-
67-69.9 = D+
64-66.9 = D
60-63.9 = D-
Below 60 = F

Required Texts

Uneven Roads: An Introduction to U.S. Racial and Ethnic Politics. Third Edition. Todd Shaw, Louis DeSipio, Dianne Pinderhughes, Lorrie Frasure, and Toni-Michelle C. Travis

-Reading Abbreviation: UR

Getting Real About Race: Hoodies, Mascots, Model Minorities, and Other Conversations.

Third Edition. Editors, Stephanie M. McClure and Cherise A. Harris

-Reading Abbreviation: GRAR

Additional readings will be posted to the course website

Student Hours/Office Hours

Student hours (a.k.a. Office Hours) are available in-person and virtually on Tuesday/Thursday from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM and on Tuesday/Thursday from 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM. My door will be open during these times; so, feel free to just drop by. I will also have a recurring Zoom Link that you can use to “attend” student hours. If another student is already meeting with me, you will be sent to the virtual “waiting room. Students may also schedule a time to meet with me via email, if you cannot meet during these times.

Student hours are an opportunity for you to discuss with me the following: (1) questions about course content, (2) conflicts with class schedule, (3) opportunities for internships, research, jobs, etc. (4) graduation requirements, (5) crazy stuff happening in the news, (6) problems with campus climate, (7) struggles with physical/mental illness, (8) drama with roommate/partner/friends/teammates, (9) just to say, “What up”, (10) all of the above and anything in between.

In other words, you don’t need a reason to stop by and talk; just do it.

Late Work

Assignments should be handed in when they are due in order to avoid penalties. Most assignments should be uploaded through the Course Moodle on the day they are due. Students should not email copies of assignments to me, unless otherwise told. Any work handed in late receives a *penalty of one-third of one letter grade* for every day it is late (starting immediately after the work is due).

If you need an extension for any reason, both legitimate (illness, injury, family emergency, etc.) or illegitimate (mismanaged time, partied too hard over the weekend—doghead came to town—sports team was traveling—you know the schedule in advance and should plan accordingly—, family wedding—you know this in advance and should plan accordingly—,etc.), please come talk to me and we can try and make a plan. But know, that I schedule due dates to correspond with my other classes, so that I can return assignments in a timely manner. When you delay submission, you sabotage my schedule and my ability to grade and return assignments in a timely manner.

Academic Dishonesty

All work completed in this course is expected to be your own. If you are unfamiliar or have questions regarding the College's policy on academic dishonesty, see <https://www.colby.edu/academics/academic-integrity/>

A couple notes about Academic Dishonesty:

1. It is okay to use other people's ideas and/or words, just give them credit when you do. That is not cheating. Use proper citation to do this. You should do this for major assignments and on smaller assignments as well. You should do this in tweets, and Instagram posts too just by tagging/hyperlinking the original author or creator.
2. It's okay to work together with classmates on assignments, when a professor has explicitly given permission. When in doubt, ask. When a professor explicitly says you should work independently on an assignment, you should ALWAYS do the work alone.
3. If you are unsure whether you should cite something, ask. Transparency is always the best policy.
4. Lying to a professor is considered academic dishonesty.
5. People turn to cheating when they lack confidence or mismanage their time. Avoid both by using the resources provided at Colby: go to tutoring, the writing center, library office hours, professor office hours, TA office hours, create study groups, block out time in your schedule dedicated to completing assignments.
6. Ask for help, everyone else is and you should to. Asking for help is NOT cheating, it is how you are successful.

Policy on the Use of Generative AI (i.e., Chat GPT)

Generative AI is increasingly becoming a part of our day-to-day lives and it is a tool that can “potentially” help us master content and skills more efficiently. Not learning to use generative AI tools, like Chat GPT, is not an option; we must and we should.

In this course, you *may* use generative AI programs in particular stages of your work: preparatory—brainstorming, outlining, prewriting, idea generating—and proofing—editing, spell checking, grammar checking, creating works cited, etc. This, however, comes with some caveats and warnings:

1. Be aware that the use of these tools may also stifle your own independent and creative thinking by causing you to constrain your ideas to the ones the tool has produced and to not include your own unique lived experience, your own learning from across campus, this course’s specific content, and your discussions with classmates and peers.
2. Know that material produced by these tools tend to be inaccurate, incomplete, and/or problematic (racist, sexist, homophobic, antisemitic, Islamophobic, etc.). You are responsible for the final product you present and will be graded based on what you have submitted.
3. These tools have a tendency to “hallucinate” references (present seemingly plausible sources/citations as real when they are not). Do NOT trust any references until you have cross-listed and read them.

Like any other source, you **MUST** disclose the use of generative AI and appropriately cite all use. For example, you must place in quotation marks any sentences or suggestions written by the tool. Failure to do so will be considered a violation of our academic integrity policy and will be reported as plagiarism. *If you are unsure whether you should cite, just ask me.* Transparency is the best policy. You are not breaking the rules by using generative AI; so, let me know when you are. Do not take credit for ideas that are not your own.

Last note: Generative AI is here forever; you must learn to use it. However, you *must* remain more creative, critical, analytical, inventive, intuitive than the model. Do not make yourself obsolete; be better than ChatGPT!¹

Students with Disabilities

Students with College documented disabilities should inform me as soon as possible, so that I can help meet their needs. If you receive exam accommodations (i.e. extra time), please be sure to reserve a space in the testing center at least **72 hours prior** to an exam through the **AIM portal**. You can find the portal using the link below and clicking on the “Using The Alternative Testing Center” button.

If you have question or concerns about your disability or suspect that you may qualify for services, you should use this link and follow the instructions for how to apply for services <https://life.colby.edu/get-support/access-disability-services/> or by calling at (207) 859-4000 or by emailing accommodations@colby.edu

¹ Used language and ideas from [here](#) to construct this policy around generative AI

Schedule of Course

PART I: HISTORY MATTERS

- **Week 1—September 4-6: Introduction to the Course and Why Talk About Race**
Thursday, September 5th: Introduction to Course Syllabus and Requirements
 - *Reading:* GRAR, “Talking About Race Just Makes Everybody Uncomfortable”: Why We Need to Discuss Race in the United States” Cherise A. Harris and Stephanie M. McClure

- **Week 2— September 9-13: What is Race and What is Political About It?**
Tuesday, September 10th: Defining Key Terms and Speaking the Same Language
 - *Reading:* UR, Chapter 1: Introduction: Race as an Uneven Road

Thursday, September 12th: What Does Racism Look Like?

- *Reading:*
 - GRAR, “What is Racism Anyway?”: Understanding the Basics of Racism and Prejudice,” Beverly Daniel Tatum
 - GRAR, “If Only We Could Return to the Pre-Trump Era’: Nostalgia and Color-Blind Racism” Ted Thornhill
- *Homework:* Course Moodle—Week 2 Folder
Due: HW Uploaded to Moodle before class

- **Week 3— September 16-20: Native American Political Road**
Tuesday, September 17th: Exploring the Native American Path to Rights and Opportunities
 - *Reading:* UR, Chapter 2: The Native American Political Journey

Thursday, September 19th: Discuss Homework—It’s Just a Mascot

- *Reading:* GRAR, “But It’s Honoring! It’s Tradition!”: The Persistence of Racialized Indian Mascots in Sports”, Dana M. Williams
- *Homework:* Course Website: Week 3 Folder
Due: HW Uploaded to Moodle before class

- **Week 4— September 23- 27: African American Political Road**
Tuesday, September 24th: Exploring the African American Path to Rights and Opportunities
 - *Reading:* UR, Chapter 3: The African American Political Journey
-ONLINE: 1619 Project, “Opening Essay”

Thursday, September 26th: Discuss Homework—Where are We Now?

- *Reading:*
 - GRAR, “If Only They Hadn’t...[Been Black]’: Race, Implicit Bias, and Stereotype Maintenance” Rashawn Ray and Jasmon Bailey
 - GRAR, “Black People Could Make It If They Just Worked Hard’: The Myth of Meritocracy,” Paula Ioanide
 - ONLINE: [“Ten Years Since Trayvon: The Story of the First Decade of Black Lives Matter”](#)
 - ONLINE: [White Backlash is a Type of Racial Reckoning, Too](#)
- *Homework:* Course Website: Week 4 Folder
Due: HW Uploaded to Moodle before class

• **Week 5—September 30- October 4: Latino American Political Road**

Tuesday, October 1st: Exploring the Latino American Path to Rights and Opportunities

- *Reading:* UR, Chapter 4: The Road Toward Contemporary Latino Politics

Thursday, October, 3rd: Discuss Homework—My Spanish

- *Reading:* GRAR: “My Family Had to Learn English When They Came, so Why Is Everything in Spanish for Them?” Jennifer Domino Rudolph
- *Homework:* Course Website: Week 5 Folder
Due: HW Uploaded to Moodle before class

• **Week 6— October 7- 11: Asian American Political Road**

Tuesday, October 8th: Exploring the Asian American Path to Rights and Opportunities

Reading: UR, Chapter 5: Different and Common Asian American Roads

Thursday, October 10th: Discuss Homework—Myth Busting

- *Reading:*
 - GRAR, “Asians are Doing Great, So That Proves that Race Doesn’t Matter Anymore: The Model Minority Myth and the Sociological Reality,” Min Zhou and Victoria Tran
 - ONLINE: “Model Minority Myth Again Used As a Racial Wedge Between Asians and Blacks,” Kat Chow
- *Homework:* Course Website: Week 6 Folder
Due: HW Uploaded to Moodle before class
NOTE: Next week’s homework is due on Tuesday, because midterm is on Thursday.

- **Week 7— October 14- 18: Fall Break and White Ethnic Pathway**
Tuesday, October 15th: Fall Break—No Class

Thursday, October 17th: White Ethnic Pathway and Midterm Review

Reading:

- UR, Chapter 6: Whiteness and the Shifting Roads of Immigrant America
- ONLINE: "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," Peggy McIntosh (1998).
- ONLINE: "Why are prominent Los Angeles Latinos saying such racist things?" Efrén Pérez, et. al (2022).
- *Homework:* Course Website: Week 7 Folder
Due: HW Uploaded to Moodle before class

Week 8— October 21- 25: Midterm Exam and Final Project Description

Tuesday, October 22nd: Midterm Exam in-class Today

No Reading Today

Thursday, October 24th: Distribute the Final Project Description

No Reading Today: But you should look at the following assignments

- Final Project Topic Posted Today to Moodle under the "Assignment" Header
- Final Project Rubric Posted Today to Moodle under the "Assignment" Header
- Final Project Proposal Assignment Posted Today to Moodle under the "Assignment" Header

In-Class: Will have time to brainstorm possible ideas for the project and discuss possible collaborations with classmates.

PART II: CONTEXT MATTERS—CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

- **Week 9— October 28- November 1: Group Identity, Public Opinion, and Activism**

Tuesday, October 29th: Clarifying Theory and Looking at the Data

- *Reading:* UR, Chapter 8: Group Identity, Ideology, and Activism
- ONLINE: "[How the Two Party System Obscures the Complexity of Black Americans' Politics](#)" - Hakeem Jefferson and Alan Yan
- Online: "Implicit Bias as a Cognitive Manifestation of Systemic Racism" - Manuel J. Galvan & B. Keith Payne (Optional)

Thursday, October 31st: Discuss Homework—Black Lives Matter

- *Reading:* ONLINE, "What's the Point of 'Black Lives Matter' Protests?": BLM as a Movement, Not a Moment, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor
- ONLINE: (optional) "The Persistent Effect of U.S. Civil Rights Protests on Political Attitudes"
- *Homework:* Course Website: Week 9 Folder
Due: HW Uploaded to Moodle before class

Friday, November 1st: Final Project Proposal Due—Upload to Moodle under the “Assignments” Header.

- **Week 10— November 4 - 8: Participation and Representation**

Tuesday, November 5th : Who Participates and Who is Represented?

- *Reading:* UR, Chapter 9: Political Behavior and Representation: Minorities’ Growing Voice

- **ELECTION DAY: VOTE!!!**

Thursday, November 7th : Discuss Homework—Voting in America, Whose Right?

- *Reading:*
 - ONLINE: “How Explicit Racial Prejudice Hurt Obama in the 2008 Election,” Spencer Piston
 - ONLINE: “The Racial Implications of Voter Identification Laws in America,” Matt Barreto, Stephen Nuno, Gabriel Sanchez, and Hannah Walker
- *Homework:* Course Website: Week 10 Folder
Due: All Discussion Forums and Quizzes for this week complete by today

- **Week 11— November 11- 15: Criminal Un-justice System**

Tuesday, November 12th

Watch Documentary 13th

- *Reading:*
 - UR, Chapter 10: Education and Criminal Justice Policies: Opportunities and Alienation
 - ONLINE: (optional) “The Unjust Burden: The Disparate Treatment of Black Americans in the Criminal Justice System,” Elizabeth Hinton, LeShae Henderson, and Cindy Reed
 - ONLINE: (optional) [“Pay to Stay: Florida inmates Charged for prison cells long after release”](#)

Thursday, November 14th: Finish 13th and Discussion Guide

- *Reading:*
 - GRAR, If Black People Aren’t Criminals, Then Why are So Many of Them in Prison?” Sara Buck Doude and Vanessa Rodriquez
 - ONLINE: (optional) “Prisoners in the US are part of a hidden workforce linked to hundreds of popular food brands”
 - ONLINE: (optional podcast/transcript) [“How race makes us less punitive on opioid policy”](#) by Matt Grossman interviewing Tanika Raychaudhuri
 - ONLINE: (optional Journal Article) “The Political Effects of Opioid Addiction Frames” by Tanika Raychaudhuri, Tali Mendelberg, Anne McDonough
- *Homework:* Course Website: Week 11 Folder
Due: HW Uploaded to Moodle before class—or Bring to Class, this homework we’re completing in class as we watch the documentary

- **Week 12— November 18- 22: Housing and Immigration**

Tuesday, November 19th: Why are we so segregated?

- *Reading:*
 - GRAR, “They Don’t Want to Be Integrated; They Even Have Their Own Organizations,” Stephanie McClure and Kailah Jefferies
 - Listen to Terry Gross’s interview with Richard Rothstein on his Book [*The Color of Law*](#)

Thursday, November 21st: Myth Busting, Citizenship Past and Present

Immigrants of the Past and Today

- *Reading:* UR, Chapter 11: Immigration Policy: The Road to Settlement and Citizenship
- GRAR, “If They Cared About Their Kids They Wouldn’t Have Broken the Law’: Historical and Contemporary Implications of Citizenship and Immigration,” Kara Cebulko
- *Homework:* No Homework
- **PROJECT Check-In Due: At this point, you/your group have met with Professor LeVan and made a plan for your project deliverable.**

PART III: DIALOGUE MATTERS

- **Week 13— November 25-29: THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Tuesday, November 26th: NO CLASS

Thursday, November 28th: NO CLASS

- **Week 14— December 2- 6: Racist v. Antiracist and Final Exam Review**

Tuesday, December 3rd: Changing the Conversation—From Not Racist to Antiracist

- *Reading:*
 - GRAR, “I’m Not Racist. Some of My Best Friends and Family Are...” Cherise A. Harris
 - ONLINE: “Bias Awareness Predicts Color Conscious Racial Socialization Methods Among White Parents,” Sylvia P. Perry, et al.

!! INDIVIDUAL PAPER DUE TODAY!!—Upload to Course Moodle before class

Thursday, December 5th: Final Exam Review and Course Reflection

- *Reading:* (ONLINE) “Political Hobbyists Are Ruining American Politics,” Eitan Hersh
- *Homework:* Course Website: Week 14 Folder
Due: HW Uploaded to Moodle before class

- **Week 15/16— December 11th – 16th: Final Exam Window**
 - In-Class Final Exam: Time and Date—TBD
 - Final Projects and Final Presentations Due in-class today