

# Government 98nm – Race and Representation

Professor Matthew Platt

Fall 2009

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Class: Mon. 2-4pm  
TBD  
Office hr.: Thur. 10am-12pm

The aim of this course is to research the basic question of whether it matters for black Americans to be represented by black elected officials. This question will be explored in terms of the normative concerns of what representation should entail in a democracy, the impact of descriptive representation on the realization of black policy aims, and the effects of black elected officials on the behavior of their constituents. Although the primary focus is Congress and black politics, state and local representatives along with other types of descriptive representation will be incorporated into the discussion as appropriate. Our goal in this course is not only to be exposed to arguments and evidence on all sides of these questions about the quality of black representation, but more importantly, to conduct original research so that we might draw our own conclusions.

## 1 Weekly Assignment

The course is intended to run as a seminar. As such, students are expected to participate in class discussions. Students are required to submit one of the following assignments each week.

- **Research Critique:** Offer a critical assessment of the research design used in one of the week's readings. These critiques should consist of the following elements:
  1. A concise statement of some flaw with the research design in terms of conceptual definitions, measurement, sources of data, statistical analysis, etc.
  2. A brief statement of how the problem affects the findings in the article.
  3. Suggestions for how the research design can be improved.
- **Research Extension:** Offer an idea for how future research projects can build on one or more of the week's readings. These extensions should consist of the following elements:
  1. Concisely state a research question and how it relates to the readings.
  2. Write a hypothesis to address the research question.
  3. Briefly state how that hypothesis could be tested.

The assignments are due as email attachments by 7am on Mondays. These assignments are not to exceed one typed, double-spaced page with standard margins. Each weekly assignment counts for 3 pts (1.5% of the final grade). A separate handout on how weekly assignments are graded will be distributed during class in Week 1. The Course Schedule specifies which type of assignment is due for any given week.

## 2 Research Project

Each student will write a 10-15 page research paper on a topic of their choice that relates to the central question of the course. Final papers will be due by December 11 at 5pm to my mailbox in the Government Department office located on the first floor of CGIS Knafel. Research topics do not have to be limited to black representation or to Congress; they can address similar themes about the representation of other minority groups (Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, etc.). These papers are expected to demonstrate a grasp of some segment of the literature, thorough investigation of an original question, and serious engagement with data. Students are required to schedule appointments with me and/or take advantage of office hours to discuss their projects. In order to facilitate completion of the research projects, students are required to complete the following assignments that will be due during the course of the semester:

1. **Research Question:** Students will submit no more than one page stating 1) the question to be investigated in their project and 2) how answering this question will contribute to our understanding of representation. Due in class September 28.
2. **Annotated Bibliography:** Students will submit an annotated bibliography that contains ten sources that are *not* included on the class syllabus. Due via email October 9.
3. **Literature Review:** Students will submit 3-5 pages reviewing the literature that is relevant for addressing their research questions. Due in class October 19.
4. **Research Design:** Students will submit 2-3 pages outlining how they plan to answer the research question and/or test any hypotheses that were developed as a result of the literature review. These papers should discuss the type of data and/or analytical methods that will be used for the final project. Due in class November 2.
5. **Presentation:** Students will deliver an in-class presentation of their research project. These presentations should tell the audience why the question is important, state the student's contribution, and preview/discuss some preliminary results. Presentations will take place in Week 13 of class.
6. **Final Paper:** Students will submit the final 10-15 pages of their completed research paper. Due in mailbox December 11.

Additional handouts will be distributed to provide greater details about the expectations for each of these assignments.

### 3 Course Assessment

Requirement	Due Date	Points	Percent of Grade
Weekly Assignments	7am Mondays	30 pts	15%
Research Question	September 28	10 pts	5%
Annotated Bibliography	October 9	10 pts	5%
Literature Review	October 19	30 pts	15%
Research Design	November 2	30 pts	15%
Presentation	November 30	10 pts	5%
Final Paper	December 11	80 pts	40%

### 4 Course Policies

- **Email Assignments:** Students should email every assignment to the professor – even assignments that require a hard copy. It is incumbent upon the student to ensure that emails and the attachments are received. The professor will reply to all emailed assignments to signify receipt. Without such a receipt, students should assume that their email has not been received.
- **Late Policy:** Accepting late assignments is unfair to students who meet the posted deadlines, and unfair to all students by delaying feedback from the professor. With that in mind, Research Extensions/Critiques, Research Presentation, and the Final Paper assignment will not be accepted after the due dates under any circumstances. The Research Question, Annotated Bibliography, Literature Review, Research Design, and Final Paper will be accepted up to two days after the due date. However, assignments will be penalized by 4 pts for each day they are late.

## 5 Course Schedule

### 9/8 Week 1: Who Cares about Black Representation?

1. Introduction to the class, go over the syllabus, and a brief lecture to answer the basic “so what?” question of race and representation.

### 9/14 Week 2: What are Black Interests?

1. **Research Extension due by 7am Monday.**
2. Shelby, Tommie. *We Who are Dark*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University. Chapter 4.
3. Reed, Adolph Jr. 2000. “The Curse of ‘Community’” in *Class Notes: Posing as Politics and Other Thoughts on the American Scene* New York: the New Press.
4. Kinder, Donald R. and Nicholas Winter. 2001. “Exploring the Racial Divide: Blacks, Whites, and Opinion on National Policy.” *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 439-456.
5. Cohen, Cathy. 1999. *The Boundaries of Blackness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2.

### 9/21 Week 3: What is Quality Black Representation?

1. **Research Extension due by 7am Monday.**
2. Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent Yes.” *Journal of Politics* 61: 628-657.
3. Dovi, Suzanne. 2002. “Preferable Descriptive Representatives: Will Just Any Woman, Black, or Latino Do?” *American Political Science Review* 96: 729-743.
4. Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. “Rethinking Representation.” *American Political Science Review* 97: 515-528.
5. Guinier, Lani. 1994. *The Tyranny of the Majority: Fundamental Fairness in Representative Democracy*. New York: The Free Press. Chapter 3 – “The Triumph of Tokenism”.

### 9/28 Week 4: How does Racial Redistricting Impact Black Representation?

1. **Student choice of Research Extension or Research Critique due by 7am Monday.**
2. Thernstrom, Abigail. 1997. “More Notes from a Political Thicket.” In *Affirmative Action and Representation: Shaw v. Reno and the Future of Voting Rights*, ed. Anthony A. Peacock. Durham: Carolina Academic Press pp. 97-126.
3. Shotts, Kenneth W. 2003. “Does Racial Redistricting Cause Conservative Policy Outcomes? Policy Preferences of Southern Representatives in the 1980s and 1990s.” *Journal of Politics* 65: 216-226.

4. Sharpe, Christine Leveaux and James C. Garand. 2001. "Race, Roll Calls, and Redistricting: the Impact of Race-Based Redistricting on Congressional Roll-Call." *Political Research Quarterly* 54: 31-51.
5. Lublin, David. 1997. *The Paradox of Representation: Racial Gerrymandering and Minority Interests in Congress*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 5-6.

### **10/5 Week 5: What are the Racial Differences in the Representation of Black Interests?**

1. **Research Critique due by 7am Monday.**
2. Baker, Andy and Corey Cook. 2005. "Representing Black Interests and Promoting Black Culture: The Importance of African American Descriptive Representation in the U.S. House." *Du Bois Review* 2: 227-246.
3. Gamble, Katrina L. 2007. "Black Political Representation: An Examination of Legislative Activity within U.S. House Committees." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 32: 421-448.
4. Whitby, Kenny J. and George A. Krause. 2001. "Race, Issue Heterogeneity and Public Policy: The Republican Revolution in the 104th U.S. Congress and the Representation of African-American Policy Interests." *British Journal of Political Science* 31: 555-572.
5. Rocca, Michael S. and Gabriel R. Sanchez. 2008. "The Effect of Race and Ethnicity on Bill Sponsorship and Cosponsorship in Congress." *American Politics Research* 36: 130-152.
6. Tien, Charles and Dena Levy. 2008. "The Influence of African Americans on Congress." *Du Bois Review* 5: 115-135.

### **10/12 Week 6: Columbus Day**

1. No class.

### **10/19 Week 7: What is the Role of the Congressional Black Caucus?**

1. **Student choice of Research Extension or Research Critique due by 7am Monday.**
2. Singh, Robert. 1998. *The Congressional Black Caucus: Racial Politics in the U.S. Congress*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications. Chapter 4.
3. Whitby, Kenny J. 2002. "Bill Sponsorship and Intraracial Voting Among African American Representatives." *American Politics Research* 30: 93-109.
4. Pinney, Neil and George Serra. 1999. "The Congressional Black Caucus and Vote Cohesion: Placing the Caucus within House Voting Patterns." *Political Research Quarterly* 52: 583-608.
5. Tillery, Alvin B. 2006. "Foreign Policy Activism and Power in the House of Representatives: Black Members of Congress and South Africa, 1968-1986." *Studies in American Political Development* 20: 88-103.

## **10/26 Week 8: How do Electoral Strategies Shape Black Representation?**

1. **Student choice of Research Extension or Research Critique due by 7am Monday.**
2. Canon, David T. 1999. *Race, Redistricting, and Representation: The Unintended Consequences of Black Majority Districts*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 3-4.
3. McCormick, Joseph P. and Charles E. Jones. 1993. "The Conceptualization of Deracialization: Thinking Through the Dilemma." In *Dilemmas of Black Politics*. Georgia A. Persons ed. New York: Harper Collins. 66-84.

## **11/2 Week 9: How does Descriptive Representation Impact Constituents' Attitudes?**

1. **Research Critique due by 7am Monday.**
2. Gay, Claudine. 2002. "Spirals of Trust? The Effect of Descriptive Representation on the Relationship between Citizens and Their Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 46: 717-732.
3. Griffin, John D. and Patrick Flavin. 2007. "Racial Differences in Information, Expectations, and Accountability." *Journal of Politics* 69: 220-236.
4. Schaffner, Brian F. and Mark Gadson. 2004. "Reinforcing Stereotypes? Race and Local Television News Coverage of Congress." *Social Science Quarterly* 85: 604-623.
5. Marschall, Melissa J. and Anirudh V.S. Ruhil. 2007. "Substantive Symbols: The Attitudinal Dimension of Black Political Incorporation in Local Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 51: 17-33.

## **11/9 Week 10: How does Descriptive Representation Impact Constituents' Participation?**

1. **Research Critique due by 7am Monday.**
2. Bobo, Lawrence and Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. 1990. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment." *American Political Science Review* 84: 377-393.
3. Washington, Ebonya. 2006. "How Black Candidates Affect Voter Turnout." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 121: 973-998.
4. Gay, Claudine. 2001. "The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 95: 589-602.
5. Griffin, John D. and Michael Keane. 2006. "Descriptive Representation and the Composition of African American Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 50: 998-1012.
6. Barreto, Matt A., Gary M. Segura, and Nathan D. Woods. 2003. "The Mobilizing Effect of Majority-Minority Districts on Latino Turnout." *American Political Science Review* 98: 65-75.

## **11/16 Week 11: Descriptive Representation in Other Contexts**

1. **Student choice of Research Extension or Research Critique due by 7am Monday.**
2. Hawkesworth, Mary. 2003. "Congressional Enactments of Race-Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced-Gendered Institutions." *American Political Science Review* 97: 529-550.
3. Preuhs, Robert R. 2006. "The Conditional Effects of Minority Descriptive Representation: Black Legislators and Policy Influence in the American States." *Journal of Politics* 68: 585-599.
4. Swers, Michele L. 2005. "Connecting Descriptive and Substantive Representation: An Analysis of Sex Differences in Cosponsorship Activity." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 30: 407-433.
5. Hajnal, Zoltan L. 2001. "White Residents, Black Incumbents, and a Declining Racial Divide." *American Political Science Review* 95(3): 603-617.

## **11/23 Week 12: How has the Nature of Black Representation Changed Over Time?**

1. **Research Extension due by 7am Monday.**
2. Gerber, Alan. 1996. "African Americans' Congressional Careers and the Democratic House Delegation." *Journal of Politics* 58: 831-845.
3. Smith, Robert C. 1990. "Recent Elections and Black Politics: The Maturation or Death of Black Politics?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 23: 160-162.
4. Gillespie, Andra. 2009. "The Third Wave: Assessing the Post-Civil Rights Cohort of Black Elected Leadership." *National Political Science Review* 11: 139-161.
5. Bai, Matt. 2008. "Is Obama the End of Black Politics?" *New York Times* August 10.

## **11/30 Week 13: Student Presentations**

## **12/7-11 Week 14: Reading Period**