

# **Race, Crime, and Public Policy**

BRANDON DAVIS, PhD

## THE POLITICAL THEORY PROJECT

### **Content:**

Despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and the Voting Rights Act (1965) fifty years ago, and the recent election of an African American president in 2008, racial inequality persists across many dimensions of American life, including earnings, wealth, educational and occupational attainment, health and longevity, and access to political power and influence. Despite claims of a “post-racial” America, the events in Ferguson, Missouri and the recent movement that they have sparked, serve to remind us that racial inequality, and its impact on race relations, continues to play a central role in American politics. Today, African Americans and Latinos comprise approximately a quarter of the U.S. population. In many cities and some states, white Anglo citizens actually comprise a minority of the population, and demographic projections over the next two decades suggest that the white share of the population will continue to decline. Thus, it seems clear that race relations will remain central to understanding American politics at all levels of government in the years to come. In this course we will examine theories and related research on the role of race relations and racial stratification in American politics. The course is divided into three major sections. The first section of the course examines race and American politics. In this section we will examine some of the most important debates in the literature, including the possible existence and precise definition of a “new racism,” innovations regarding the measurement of prejudice to overcome social desirability bias, and the effects of increasing diversity on racial attitudes and race relations. In part two of the course we will examine the interaction between race, crime, and public policy. We will examine state power, race, Jim Crow policies, the criminalization of blackness, and the formation of what some call the “new” Jim Crow. In part three of the course, we turn our attention to the causes and consequences of mass incarceration. What factors contribute to its growth? What policies enable its development? In this section we will examine how we went from a war on poverty to a war on drugs and, ultimately, to a state of mass incarceration. We will begin by examining policy design and the policy adoption process that shifted the efforts away from poverty and toward black crime. We will then turn our attention to understanding policy implementation and policy outcomes of mass incarceration.

### **Learning Goals and Objectives:**

This course seeks to empower students to think critically about the relationships between race, crime, and the state. Students will learn key components of American politics, public policy, and race. They will enhance their knowledge and familiarity of the relevant empirical literatures surrounding racial disparities and criminal justice. Students will increase their working knowledge regarding various theoretical frameworks through which to think critically about race and public policy.

### **Course Time Allocation:**

Course time allocation is a new requirement on all syllabi, hence these numbers are relatively new “estimates” and will vary according to students’ various previous experiences with relevant materials, personal reading speeds, and study habits. I suggest students look most closely at the reading schedule, writing assignments, and in class examinations to gauge their personal levels of expected time commitment accordingly.

Over 14 weeks students will spend three hours per week in class (42 hours total), two hours bi-weekly preparing for and participating in discussion section (14 hours), five hours per week doing course reading, weekly assignments, and other out-of-class work (70 hours total). In addition, there are four short reflection papers, each of which require a minimum of five hours of work (20 hours total) and two in-class 1.5 hour exams for which 14.5 hours of studying are assumed (32 hours total).

**Academic Freedom:**

Students have the right to engage in reasoned, polite disagreement with the instructors with no penalty to their grades whatsoever. Everyone has the right to participate in a learning environment that emphasizes mutual respect, tolerance, and free inquiry. The classroom is a forum for critical discussion in the pursuit of truth. The instructors have the right to challenge any beliefs, world-views, ideology, or attitudes held by the students, even world-views that students hold sacred. Students likewise have this right against the instructors and each other. Everyone, including those students with opinions in the intellectual minority here on campus, has the right to express his or her philosophical views without fear of bullying or reprisal.

**Office Hours:**

8 Fones Alley 1<sup>st</sup> floor  
Office 004

I have frequent conference and research travel responsibilities. Hence, traditional scheduled office hours are subject to cancellation from week to week. To assure that you receive the feedback needed and/or to secure additional office hour time, it is best to send an email to confirm my availability, and if needed, schedule an alternative meeting time. [Brandon\\_davis@brown.edu](mailto:Brandon_davis@brown.edu)

As a general rule of thumb, I am in my office at the PTP during regular business hours, apart from lunch times, this class, and conference travel. You are welcome to stop by unannounced to discuss class materials or ideas in general.

**Required Books:**

Hinton, E. (2016). *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*. Harvard University Press.  
Burch, T. (2013). *Trading Democracy for Justice: Criminal Convictions and the Decline of Neighborhood Political Participation*. University of Chicago Press  
Lerman, A. E., & Weaver, V. M. (2014). *Arresting citizenship: The democratic consequences of American crime control*. University of Chicago Press.

**Grading:**

12 Writing Assignments:	<b>Due weekly in class:</b> a typed one page reaction	(10pts each)	120pts
One mini paper (5 pages):	This paper can be a prelude to the final paper		50pts
Final paper (10 - 15 pages):			100pts
Participation:			<u>30pts</u>
Total possible:			300pts

The course is divided into three main segments. I expect your writing assignments will be sophisticated reactions to class discussions and readings. You are required to adhere to the due dates outlined in the syllabus for each segment. Assignments submitted after the due date will not be accepted. Papers turned in late will incur a penalty of a third of a grade per day late.

**\*\*\*Journal Articles:** When reading the academic articles you are to omit the method sections. Read the introduction, theory and conclusion/discussion sections.

## **Class Schedule:**

### **UNIT ONE: RACE AND AMERICAN POLITICS**

#### **Introduction**

- Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> \*(REVIEW ESSAY) Schneider, A., and H. Ingram. (1993). "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." *American Political Science Review*, 87(2):334-47.
- \*(REVIEW ESSAY) Lincoln Quillian. (2008). "Does Unconscious Racism Exist?" *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 1, 6–11.

#### **Race and Public Policy**

##### *Required:*

- Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> Hutchings and Valentino. (2004). "The Centrality of Race in American Politics." *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 2004. 7:383–408.
- Quillian, L. (2006). New approaches to understanding racial prejudice and discrimination. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 32, 299-328.
- Gregory A. Huber and John S. Lapinski. (2006). "The 'Race Card' Revisited: Assessing Racial Priming in Policy Contests." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50, No. 2, April 2006, Pp. 421–440.
- Ismail K. White. (2007). "When Race Matters and When It Doesn't: Racial Group Differences in Response to Racial Cues." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 101, No. 2.

#### **Race and Criminal Justice Policy**

##### *Required:*

- Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> Weaver, V. M. (2007). Frontlash: Race and the development of punitive crime policy. *Studies in American political development*, 21(2), 230-265.
- Hurwitz, J., & Peffley, M. (1997). Public perceptions of race and crime: The role of racial stereotypes. *American journal of political science*, 375-401.
- Murakawa, N., & Beckett, K. (2010). The penology of racial innocence: The erasure of racism in the study and practice of punishment. *Law & Society Review*, 44(3 - 4), 695-730.
- Murakawa, N. (2012). Phantom racism and the myth of crime and punishment. *Studies In Law, Politics, And Society*, (59), 99.

### **UNIT TWO: THE CARCERAL STATE**

#### **Policy Outcomes**

##### *Required:*

- Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> National research Council. (2014). *The growth of incarceration in the United States: Exploring causes and consequences*. National Academies Press.
- Chapter 2 - 3**

#### **The Growth of Incarceration in the United States**

##### *Required:*

- Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> National research Council. (2014). *The growth of incarceration in the United States: Exploring causes and consequences*. National Academies Press.
- Chapter 4 – 5**

## **From The War on Poverty to the War on Drugs**

*Required:*

- Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> Hinton, E. (2016). *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*. Harvard University Press.  
**Chapter 1, and 2**
- Oct. 20<sup>th</sup> Hinton, E. (2016). *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*. Harvard University Press.  
**Chapter 3 and 4**
- Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> Hinton, E. (2016). *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*. Harvard University Press.  
**Chapter 7 and 8**

## **UNIT THREE: RACE, CRIME AND DEMOCRACY**

### **Race, Crime, and Citizenship**

*Required:*

- Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> Hurwitz, J., & Peffley, M. (2005). Explaining the great racial divide: Perceptions of fairness in the US criminal justice system. *Journal of Politics*, 67(3), 762-783.
- Peffley, M., & Hurwitz, J. (2007). Persuasion and resistance: Race and the death penalty in America. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(4), 996-1012.
- Weaver, V. M., & Lerman, A. E. (2010). Political consequences of the carceral state. *American Political Science Review*, 104(4), 817-833.
- Burch, T. R. (2014). Effects of imprisonment and community supervision on neighborhood political participation in North Carolina. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 651(1), 184-201.
- Burch, T. (2015). Skin Color and the Criminal Justice System: Beyond Black - White Disparities in Sentencing. *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, 12(3), 395-420.

### **Arresting Citizenship**

*Required:*

- Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> Lerman, A. E., & Weaver, V. M. (2014). *Arresting citizenship: The democratic consequences of American crime control*. University of Chicago Press.  
**Chapter 1, 2, 3, and 4**
- Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> Lerman, A. E., & Weaver, V. M. (2014). *Arresting citizenship: The democratic consequences of American crime control*. University of Chicago Press.  
**Chapter 5, 6, 7, and 8**

### **Trading Democracy for Justice**

*Required:*

- Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> Burch, T. (2013). *Trading democracy for justice: Criminal convictions and the decline of neighborhood political participation*. University of Chicago Press.  
**Chapter 2, 3, and 4**
- Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> Burch, T. (2013). *Trading democracy for justice: Criminal convictions and the decline of neighborhood political participation*. University of Chicago Press.  
**Chapter 5, 6, and 7**