

GOV 1314: Race in American Society*

Professor Marcel F. Roman

Spring 2026

Professor: Dr. Marcel F. Roman

Class Time: Monday and Wednesday, 10:30-11:45am

Classroom: TBD

Office: CGIS-Knafel 422

Email: mroman@fas.harvard.edu

Office Hours: Fridays, 9-11:30AM (use calendly link to make appointment)

Calendly Link: <https://calendly.com/mroman-fas/new-meeting>

Teaching Fellow: TBD

Office: TBD

TF Office Hours: TBD

TF Email: TBD

Section 1 Location: TBD

Section 1 Time: TBD

Section 2 Location: TBD

Section 2 Time: TBD

Calendly Link: TBD

Course Description

This course will teach prospective students on how race structures American politics. The course will briefly chart the history of anti-Black chattel slavery and the colonization, displacement, and removal of indigenous populations in the pre-independence period. Then, we will briefly examine the role race played and continues to play in the development of the United States' founding political institutions. We will then survey how race and racism historically shaped American political behavior, touching on the American Civil War, the Age of Mass Migration, the Depression and the World Wars. Finally, we will thoroughly investigate the role of race in post-World War II American politics, touching on the Cold War, the Black Rights movement, the post-1965 immigration wave, the conservative backlash to Black Rights, Clinton's triangulation, the rise of Barack Obama, the rise of Donald Trump, and thinking through the future (and sustainability) of the United States' increasingly ethno-racially diverse democracy. This class will explicitly focus on the political behavior of non-dominant ethno-racial groups to garner an exhaustive understanding of American politics and democracy.

*This syllabus is preliminary and subject to slight changes.

Although this course is by no means exhaustive, and the readings will not be sufficient to cover the wide array of preexisting literature on the subject of racial politics, we will be able to learn some answers to these questions from the assigned readings, and, as a class, we may begin to generate our own answers to relevant questions posed by the assigned readings.

Learning Goals

Throughout the class, students will:

- Learn how to read and evaluate academic texts
- Learn how to synthesize arguments based on threads of ideas across multiple texts
- Learn how to use data to support arguments based on insights from readings
- Get a stronger sense of how academic research is conducted on the subject of ethno-racial politics
- Garner a stronger substantive expertise on ethno-racial politics in the United States

Class Structure

Lecture will be held in person. Attendance will be taken and will count toward your course grade. Reading quizzes will also be provided in person during the first few minutes of lecture, which count toward your course grade. I strongly encourage coming to lecture. The lectures will provide background information on the readings, additional sources, and answers to the questions that may be posed on the short exams, reading response prompts, and final paper prompt.

Readings

You are expected to have read all the assigned reading prior to class for each week. All readings will be posted on canvas in .pdf format. You will not need to purchase reading materials in this class. If there are any issues with the posted pdfs, please let myself or the TF know immediately so we can quickly resolve potential problems.

Requirements and Assignment Details

Beyond presence and participation, there are 15 assignments for the course. Ten weekly reading in-class quizzes, two reading exams, three reading responses, and a final paper that will require analysis of public opinion/survey data on racial politics in the United States.¹

Weekly Reading Quizzes (10) are meant to encourage you to read the reading assignments closely and prepare you for both the reading responses and short exams. These are not meant to be “trick” exams. They will be a few questions that test core ideas that signal you have read the readings. *Reading quizzes on a particular week will be on the reading material assigned for that particular week, so please make sure to read all readings prior to class each week.*

¹Although you may choose to analyze data that is not necessarily public opinion/survey data, but this decision should be done in consultation with myself and the TF.

Reading Responses (3) are meant to prepare you for the final paper by encouraging you to synthesize arguments based on the readings and lecture. Prompts and rubrics for each reading response will be posted on the Canvas website two weeks ahead of time. No more than 3 pages for each reading response, so you may need to be concise in your argumentation and writing.

Reading Exams (2) will further quiz you on core concepts and ideas that we will be learning throughout the class. Reading Exam 1 will be on weeks 1-6. Reading Exam 2 will be on weeks 7-13. Study guides will be provided the week prior to the reading exams to help you prepare for them.

The Final Paper will require you synthesize a number of core ideas across the full class. There are several themes across this class: a) the resistance to changes in racial hierarchies; b) the political mobilization of marginalized and underresourced ethno-racial groups; and c) how non-dominant ethno-racial groups negotiate their relationships with each other. Your final paper will touch on these themes or a related theme while also supplementing your argument in relation to one of these themes with an analysis of public opinion data. There are several sources of “off-the-shelf” data you can use to execute this project. You may use other datasets than the ones that we will include in the final paper prompt + rubric, but be sure to communicate to myself and the TF about the feasibility of using the dataset you may want to use for the purposes of the final project. Rubric and prompt will be posted on Canvas on Week 7. Myself and the TF will hold a session on how to conduct basic data analysis for the purposes of completing the final paper. This is a flexible final project that will allow students to explore their own questions of interest regarding racial politics. Some examples of final papers could include: analyzing how feelings of anti-white discrimination motivate support for Trump among Anglo whites; analyzing how anti-immigrant attitudes affect partisan identity between white people and Black people; analyzing how anti-Black attitudes among Latinos shape vote choice; analyzing how group consciousness shapes political participation among non-white groups; analyzing how generational status affects pro-immigrant beliefs among Asian and Latino immigrant-origin groups.

Grading

Your final grade is composed of the following components:

- Participation and attendance (10%)
- Reading Quizzes (10%)
- Reading Exam 1 (10%)
- Reading Exam 2 (10%)
- Reading Response 1 (11.6%)
- Reading Response 2 (11.6%)
- Reading Response 3 (11.6%)
- Final Paper (25%)

The following scale will be used to determine your overall grade in the course: A: $\geq 94\%$, A-: 90-93%, B+: 87-89%, B: 84-86%, B-: 80-83%, C+: 77-79%, C: 74-76%; C-: 70-73%; D+: 67-69%; D: 64-66%; D-: 60-63%; F: <60%.

The responsibility for missed materials is yours to make up; I'll help as I am able to and as is appropriate. **You have one unexcused absence.** More than one unexcused absence will affect your course grade. *Participation grades entail active and respectful talking and listening.*

Rights and Responsibilities

GOV 1314 will flourish only if our rights and responsibilities are transparent, understood, respected, and adhered to. The instructor should be prepared for class, professional in attitude, constructive about feedback, and accessible and responsive to course-related issues. Students in turn are expected to be prepared for class, professional in attitude, attentive to course requirements and deadlines, willing to share their views with others, open to being challenged, and active and serious about your own learning.

Generally, everyone is expected to act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others and no one should tolerate harassment, disrespect, or an environment unconducive to learning. Please also follow a few "house rules" critical to an equitable and effective learning environment:

- Deadlines: Incomplete grades, changes or extensions on written assignments need to be approved. The best way to avoid scheduling conflicts, heavy workloads, and last-minute deadlines is to plan ahead!
- Plagiarism and cheating: Representing someone else's work as your own or borrowing someone else's insights and arguments without proper acknowledgment and citation, or having your work done by someone else (or AI), or other form of plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Avoid an automatic "F" for the class and further disciplinary action. Honor your name and take pride in the work that you associate with it.
- Accommodations: All necessary and reasonable requests for accommodations will be addressed; every student should have the fullest access and opportunity to participate and thrive in this class regardless of visible or invisible disability. If you require accommodations, please notify me as soon as possible and no later than the third week of class.
- Names and Pronouns: Let me know your preferred name, pronunciation, and what pronoun you go by or prefer (e.g., he/she/they/ze).

Artificial Intelligence

This course encourages students to explore the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools such as ChatGPT for all assignments and assessments. Any such use **must be appropriately acknowledged and cited**. It is each student's responsibility to assess the validity and applicability of any GAI output that is submitted; you bear the final responsibility. Violations of this policy will be considered academic misconduct. We draw your attention to the fact that different classes at Harvard could implement different AI policies, and it is the student's responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.

- If you use AI, cite it and report that pieces of your writing/assignments are Chat-GPT output. If you do not cite the usage of AI, it may be grounds for academic misconduct. Be as cautious as you can, when in doubt, cite the use of AI.
- If you rely entirely on AI without generating original ideas, it may be difficult to get an A in the writing assignments, which are meant to encourage critical thinking and the development of new arguments influenced by text yet simultaneously divorced from what you have already read and saw in lecture. Getting an A requires more than rote regurgitation of text material.
- If you rely on AI for coding, be very careful, it can make mistakes.

Email and Office Hours

For administrative questions and clarifications, the best way to contact me is via email. For substantive issues related to course materials, please attend my office hours. I aim to answer e-mails within 24 hours during the week. If you have not received a response in 24 hours, feel free to remind me and send another email.

I have regular office hours on Fridays 9-11:30AM unless otherwise communicated via e-mail or in-class. Meetings are 15 minutes, so make sure to be prepared to focus on key questions you may have. If these times do not work for you, for whatever reason, send me (or the TF) an email and we may be able to figure out an alternative solution.

Lecture Topics and Reading Assignments

Week 1 (1/26, 1/28): Social Science on Race, and the Persistent Effects of Slavery

This week, we will ask: what is race? Then, we will ask: how does race and ethnicity matter for politics? We will then discuss how a foundational institution in the United States, the chattel enslavement of Black people, still shapes American politics today.

1. Sen, Maya, and Omar Wasow. "Race as a bundle of sticks: Designs that estimate effects of seemingly immutable characteristics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19, no. 1 (2016): 499-522.
2. Acharya, Avidit, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. "The political legacy of American slavery." *The Journal of Politics* 78, no. 3 (2016): 621-641.

Week 2 (2/2, 2/4): Indigenous Displacement

This week, we will examine the distributional consequences of indigenous displacement and the contemporary political effects of anti-indigenous beliefs. **Reading Quiz #1** (on Weeks 1 and 2) **Reading Response 1 Prompt + Rubric Distributed (2/4)**.

1. Beauvais, Edana. "The political consequences of Indigenous resentment." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* 7, no. 1 (2022): 37-64.
2. Akee, Randall. "Land titles and dispossession: Allotment on American Indian reservations." *Journal of Economics, Race, and Policy* 3, no. 2 (2020): 123-143.

Week 3 (2/9, 2/11, NO CLASS on 2/11, I will be out but will record lecture ahead of time and post to Canvas): Reconstruction and Jim Crow

This week will touch on how reconstruction and Jim Crow shaped racial violence, the political behavior of both whites and Black people, and the distribution of goods and power between whites and Black people. **Reading Quiz #2.**

1. Logan, Trevon D. "Do black politicians matter? evidence from reconstruction." *The Journal of Economic History* 80, no. 1 (2020): 1-37.
2. Williams, Jhacova. "Historical lynchings and the contemporary voting behavior of Blacks." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 14, no. 3 (2022): 224-253.
3. Testa, Patrick A., and Jhacova Williams. "Political foundations of racial violence in the post-reconstruction south." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (2025): qjaf045

Week 4 (2/16, 2/18, NO CLASS on 2/16, I will be out but will record lecture ahead of time and post to Canvas): Age of Mass Migration

This week will focus on the political consequences of the Age of Mass Migration (1850-1914), where many European immigrants migrated to the United States. **Reading Quiz #3. Reading Response 1 DUE (2/18)**

1. Fouka, Vasiliki, Soumyajit Mazumder, and Marco Tabellini. "From immigrants to Americans: Race and assimilation during the Great Migration." *The Review of Economic Studies* 89, no. 2 (2022): 811-842.
2. Tabellini, Marco. "Gifts of the immigrants, woes of the natives: Lessons from the age of mass migration." *The Review of Economic Studies* 87, no. 1 (2020): 454-486.

Week 5: (2/23, 2/25): Great Migration

This week will focus on the political consequences of the Great Migration (1910-1970), where many Southern Black Americans migrated to Northern and Western U.S. cities. **Reading Quiz #4.**

1. Derenoncourt, Ellora. "Can you move to opportunity? Evidence from the Great Migration." *American Economic Review* 112, no. 2 (2022): 369-408
2. Sahn, Alexander. "Racial diversity and exclusionary zoning: Evidence from the great migration." *The Journal of Politics* 87, no. 4 (2025): 000-000.
3. Reny, Tyler T., and Benjamin J. Newman. "Protecting the right to discriminate: the second great migration and racial threat in the American West." *American Political Science Review* 112, no. 4 (2018): 1104-1110.

Week 6: (3/2, 3/4): The Black Rights Movement

This week will focus on the political consequences of the Black Rights Movement (1950s, 1960s). We should start to observe common trends in American politics historically, namely, resistance to change in the ethno-racial hierarchy after moments of transformation. **Reading Quiz #5. Reading Exam #1 Study Guide Distributed (3/4)**

1. Wasow, Omar. "Agenda seeding: How 1960s black protests moved elites, public opinion and voting." *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 3 (2020): 638-659.
2. Gillion, Daniel Q. "Protest and congressional behavior: Assessing racial and ethnic minority protests in the district." *The Journal of Politics* 74, no. 4 (2012): 950-962.
3. Bernini, Andrea, Giovanni Facchini, Marco Tabellini, and Cecilia Testa. "Black empowerment and white mobilization: the effects of the Voting Rights Act." *Journal of Political Economy* 133, no. 10 (2025): 3078-3131.

Week 7: (3/9, 3/11): The Racialized Partisan Realignment Historically and Today (among Anglo whites)

This week will focus on the political realignment after the Black Rights Movement, namely, how Southern whites became more Republican in response to the Civil Rights Act. We will also focus on contemporary realignment trends, namely, the increasingly pro-immigrant and racially liberal attitudes of white Democrats. **Reading Exam #1 (3/9). Reading Response 2 Prompt + Rubric Distributed (3/11) Final Paper Prompt + Rubric Distributed (3/11)**.

1. Kuziemko, Ilyana, and Ebonya Washington. "Why did the Democrats lose the South? Bringing new data to an old debate." *American Economic Review* 108, no. 10 (2018): 2830-2867
2. Jardina, Ashley, and Trent Ollerenshaw. "The polls—trends: The polarization of White racial attitudes and support for racial equality in the US." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 86, no. S1 (2022): 576-587.
3. Ollerenshaw, Trent, and Ashley Jardina. "The asymmetric polarization of immigration opinion in the United States." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (2023): 1038-1053.

Week 8 (3/16, 3/18) (NO CLASS, spring break)

Week 9 (3/23, 3/25): Contemporary Immigration Part 1 (the Anglo white response)

This week will focus on the political consequences of post-1965 immigration trends, particularly on how white people respond to an influx of immigrants from Latin America and Asia. **Reading Quiz #6. Reading Response 2 DUE (3/25)**

1. Craig, Maureen A., and Jennifer A. Richeson. "On the precipice of a "majority-minority" America: Perceived status threat from the racial demographic shift affects White Americans' political ideology." *Psychological science* 25, no. 6 (2014): 1189-1197.
2. Newman, Benjamin J. "Acculturating contexts and Anglo opposition to immigration in the United States." *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 2 (2013): 374-390.
3. Reny, Tyler, Marcel Roman, Benjamin Newman. "The Immigration-to-Reproduction Shift: Latino Population Growth and White Support for Legal Abortion" Working paper

Week 10 (3/30, 4/1): Contemporary Immigration Part 2 (how non-whites respond to immigration)

This week will focus on the political consequences of post-1965 immigration trends, particularly on how non-white people negotiate these trends politically. **Reading Quiz #7. Reading Response 3 Prompt + Rubric Distributed (4/1)**

1. Asante, Godfried, Sachi Sekimoto, and Christopher Brown. "Becoming "Black": Exploring the racialized experiences of African immigrants in the United States." *Howard Journal of Communications* 27, no. 4 (2016): 367-384
2. McClain, Paula D., Niambi M. Carter, Victoria M. DeFrancesco Soto, Monique L. Lyle, Jeffrey D. Grynaviski, Shayla C. Nunnally, Thomas J. Scotto, J. Alan Kendrick, Gerald F. Lackey, and Kendra Davenport Cotton. "Racial distancing in a southern city: Latino immigrants' views of Black Americans." *The Journal of Politics* 68, no. 3 (2006): 571-584.
3. Roman, Marcel F. "Living in the shadow of deportation: How immigration enforcement forestalls political assimilation." *Political Research Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (2023): 1460-1474

Week 11 (4/6, 4/8): Contemporary Racial Politics

This week will focus on various topics related to contemporary racial politics, including, the political effects of racialized violence, explaining why Black people are so strongly Democratic, explaining why non-whites decide to (or decide not to) support the Democratic party. **Reading Quiz #8.**

1. Enos, Ryan D., Aaron R. Kaufman, and Melissa L. Sands. "Can violent protest change local policy support? Evidence from the aftermath of the 1992 Los Angeles riot." *American Political Science Review* 113, no. 4 (2019): 1012-1028.
2. White, Ismail K., Chryl N. Laird, and Troy D. Allen. "Selling Out?: The politics of navigating conflicts between racial group interest and self-interest." *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 4 (2014): 783-800.
3. Chan, Nathan Kar Ming, Jae Yeon Kim, and Vivien Leung. "COVID-19 and Asian Americans: How elite messaging and social exclusion shape partisan attitudes." *Perspectives on Politics* 20, no. 2 (2022): 618-634.
4. Fraga, Bernard L., Yamil R. Velez, and Emily A. West. "Reversion to the mean, or their version of the dream? Latino voting in an age of populism." *American Political Science Review* 119, no. 1 (2025): 517-525.

Week 12 (4/13, 4/15): Obama and Trump

This week focuses on what the Obama and Trump eras mean for racial politics today. **Reading Quiz #9. Reading Response 3 DUE (4/15)**

1. Tesler, Michael. "The spillover of racialization into health care: How President Obama polarized public opinion by racial attitudes and race." *American Journal of Political Science* 56, no. 3 (2012): 690-704.

2. Hutchings, Vincent L. "Change or more of the same? Evaluating racial attitudes in the Obama era." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73, no. 5 (2009): 917-942.
3. Reny, Tyler T., Loren Collingwood, and Ali A. Valenzuela. "Vote switching in the 2016 election: How racial and immigration attitudes, not economics, explain shifts in white voting." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 83, no. 1 (2019): 91-113.
4. Hernandez, Kiara A., Taeku Lee, and Marcel F. Roman. "White Power! How White Status Threat Undercuts Backlash Against Anti-democratic Politicians." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* 10, no. 1 (2025): 86-110.

Week 13 (4/20, 4/22): Black Lives Matter

This week focuses on how the Black Lives Matter movement came into fruition, and it's concomitant political consequences. **Reading Quiz #10. Reading Exam #2 Study Guide Distributed (4/22)**

1. Williamson, Vanessa, Kris-Stella Trump, and Katherine Levine Einstien. "Black lives matter: Evidence that police-caused deaths predict protest activity." *Perspectives on Politics* 16, no. 2 (2018): 400-415.
2. Bonilla, Tabitha, and Alvin B. Tillery Jr. "Which identity frames boost support for and mobilization in the #BlackLivesMatter movement? An experimental test." *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 4 (2020): 947-962
3. Reny, Tyler T., and Benjamin J. Newman. "The opinion-mobilizing effect of social protest against police violence: Evidence from the 2020 George Floyd protests." *American political science review* 115, no. 4 (2021): 1499-1507.

Week 14 (4/27, 4/29): REVIEW WEEK

- Reading Exam #2 (4/27)
- Final Paper Review and Questions (4/29)
- **Final paper due May 12**