

**The Politics of Race at the University of Florida (IDS 2935)**

**Fall 2025**

**Dr. Sharon Austin**

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**University of Florida**

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**Dr. Austin's Office Hours:** You may participate in office hours with Dr. Austin *both in person and via zoom* at <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/5186400829> on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:40pm-1:40pm. I am available *only via zoom* at <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/5186400829> on Mondays from 2pm-4pm. I am also available on other days and at other times by appointment only.

**The Teaching Assistants:**

The teaching assistants for this class are **James Justus ([justusj@ufl.edu](mailto:justusj@ufl.edu))** and **Anna Verma ([annaverma@ufl.edu](mailto:annaverma@ufl.edu))**. They are doctoral students in the department of political science. Each student will be assigned to one of the teaching assistant's sections. They will write comments on the assignments and I will assign grades according to the rubrics on canvas. If you have any questions or concerns about assignments or grades, please contact me (and not them) via email or during office hours. Also, you can correct your errors after the TAs upload their comments as long as you make corrections before I assign grades.

**\*Very Important: You can only see my lectures if you are using Firefox. Also, refer to the information about the VPN network so that you can access the reserve articles from an off-campus location. The instructions are listed as VPN instructions in the files folder. If you have any trouble, please contact one of the Library West librarians.**

**Course Description:**

Welcome!! This asynchronous quest 1 course falls under the category of justice and power. We will examine essential questions such as "What makes society a fair one?" and "How do we manage conflict?" Concerning the first question, educational opportunities are one step toward a fairer society. Concerning the second, we will examine the manner in which colleges and universities manage conflicts among their student body on the basis of race and ethnicity with an emphasis on the University of Florida. The essential questions that we will discuss are listed for each module. We will have more fairness in society when people from all racial groups have opportunities to receive elite educations at distinguished schools like UF. How has UF addressed racial issues throughout its history? What actions need to be taken at UF to ensure that students receive equal educational opportunities and fair treatment regardless of their race? Although the course will address issues examining many students of color, the focus will largely be on Black students.

This multidisciplinary course fulfills requirements for Quest 1 and 4,000-word writing credits. Students will learn about race issues on campus, on college campuses generally, and will receive information about undergraduate research facilities that examine race and ethnicity. The format

for the class is as follows. There are seven modules that will include your assignments, readings, and videos. You must watch my lectures and the required videos that are listed in each. In addition, you must read the required readings and complete the assignments.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

- (Content) The class will examine the history of race on at the University of Florida and at other universities, but the primary emphasis will be on race relations at UF. Students will read interdisciplinary articles and book chapters that use qualitative methodologies. I also encourage you to continue to engage in undergraduate research after completing this course.
- (Critical Thinking) Each student will think critically about the essential questions raised in each module after reading the assigned materials, watching films, and participating in discussions.
- (Communication) You will complete papers, an experiential activity, and an analytical essay and also must participate on class discussion boards.
- (Connection) The main objective of the course is for students to connect the course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond. After completing this course, you will be more familiar with the historical and other events that have resulted in the current state of race relations on campus. You will also reflect on the ways in which these issues might impact your own intellectual, personal, and professional growth.

### **Quest Objectives:**

UF's website states that "Quest 1 courses address the history, key themes, principles, terminologies, theories, or methodologies of various arts and humanities disciplines that enable us to ask essential questions about the human condition. Students learn to identify and analyze the distinctive elements of different arts and humanities disciplines, along with their biases and influences on essential questions about the human condition. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and evaluation of essential questions about the human condition from multiple perspectives. Students reflect on the ways in which the arts and the humanities impact individuals, societies, and their own intellectual, personal, and professional development."

The Politics of Race at UF provides a history of race relations at the University of Florida. Before the admissions of the first Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, international, and other students of color, the university practiced an unyielding form of racism that excluded these students. After the university desegregated, these students often encountered a very hostile and unwelcoming environment. In today's society, students are encouraged to fight discrimination and become activists as a way to make the Gator nation a better place, but recent Florida laws, such as the Stop WOKE Act, have raised First Amendment concerns. This course will discuss race relations in both the past and present.

## Writing Requirement

This course also fulfills the 4,000-word writing requirement. The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures that students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory evaluation on the writing requirements of the course. The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback, on all written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.

## The Textbook:

Ross, Lawrence. *Blackballed: The Black and White Politics of Race on America's College Campuses*. (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2017).

## Recommended Books:

Lester, James D. 2014. *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. (New York: Pearson).

Colburn, David R. and Jane L. Landers, Eds. *The African American Heritage of Florida*. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995).

Gordon, Jacob and Paul Ortiz, eds. 2022. *African American Studies: 50 Years at the University of Florida*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Zimmerman, Johnathan. 2016. *Campus Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**The Reserve Articles** can be accessed by clicking on the link on the title of the article on the module pages. They can also be found on the course reserves page. Again, please review the VPN information on the course reserves page so that you can access the readings from off-campus locations. I have also included the articles that have a paywall. Click on files on the left side of the page, they are in the VPN **You will not be able to access the readings if you use Firefox. Please contact me or a librarian if you see a paywall. You don't have to pay for any of the articles.**

## Your Grade will be Based on:

In addition to the discussions, this course requires short papers, an experiential activity, and an analytical essay. All written assignments must have a 12-point font and use the Chicago Manual of Style citation format. The due dates for the assignments on the class schedule. **In order to make the highest grade possible, refer to all of the assigned materials.**

- 1) **Introduction Post (3%) and Course Orientation Quiz (2%).** You will not be able to access the course materials until you complete this information.

- 2) **Discussions (30%)** Refer to the assigned materials (readings and videos) when answering the discussion questions. Also, refer to two (or more) of your classmates' posts. Refer to the assigned materials when including your posts and responses.
- 3) **Short Reflection Papers (10% each for a total of 40% of the grade)** Each of these must be typed, double-spaced, and three complete pages (not including a reference page). It is also very important to include citations, but title pages aren't necessary. You can also include more than three pages. It is probably easier to include a citation after a sentence that includes the author's last name, year of publication, and page number like (Ross, 2015, page 1). On the reference page include the complete reference (Ross, Lawrence. 2015. *Blackballed: The Black and White Politics of Race on America's Campuses*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin Press).
- 4) **Experiential Learning Activity (10%)** This assignment must be typed, double-spaced, and three pages (not including a reference page). It is also very important to include citations, but title pages aren't necessary. Like with the reflection papers, you can include more than three pages, include a citation after a sentence that includes the author's last name, year of publication, and page number, and include the complete reference on the reference page.
- 5) **Analytical Essay (15%)** This essay must typed, double-spaced, and three pages. Like with the other papers, you can also include more than three pages, but citations and a reference page aren't necessary. This paper requires that each student reflect on the things they have learned and their impact on their development.

#### **Grading Scale:**

94-100 A	90-93 A-	87-89 B+	84-86 B	80-83 B-	77-79 C+
74-76 C	70-73 C-	67-69 D+	64-66 D	60-63 D-	Below 60 E

Information on current UF grading policies can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

**I do not authorize the usage of any artificial intelligence (AI) tools in the completion of any assignments. Work that has been completed with the usage of AI tools will receive the grade of zero.**

#### **Missed Work Policy:**

The policy for missed work in this class is consistent with the university's policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>). All required assignments must be uploaded on the correct date before 11:59pm. Students will not be allowed to make up any assignments unless proper documentation is submitted to the professor before the assignment. It is very important to upload your work on canvas on time. Please, don't wait until the last minute to submit your work.

**Disabilities Statement:**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor. **In addition, I do not allow students to utilize any artificial intelligence resources, including ChatGPT.**

**Course Evaluation:**

Students will have the opportunity to evaluate the class during the last two weeks of class and will be informed when they will be able to submit course evaluations. Summaries of the results can be found at [www.evaluations.ufl.edu/results](http://www.evaluations.ufl.edu/results). You will be given specific times when evaluations can be submitted.

**Campus Resources:**

Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 3921575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

**Academic Resources:**

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learningsupport@ufl.edu](mailto:Learningsupport@ufl.edu). <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

### **Class Schedule**

#### **Module 1: Introduction and The Latino/a and Undocumented Student Experiences at UF**

**Module Description:** In this module, we will examine the experiences of Latino/a students at UF and at other colleges. After completing this module, you will be able to reflect on the experiences of Latino/a students, and undocumented students, and question whether their experiences impact the lives of everyone in society. If you would like to learn more about resources and campus offices that pertain to Hispanic/Latino culture, see the links in the files folder on canvas.

#### **Turn it in:**

- 1) Complete the course overview information (syllabus quiz and introduction post can be found here [https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/540012/pages/course-orientation?module\\_item\\_id=12137629](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/540012/pages/course-orientation?module_item_id=12137629)) at or before 11:59pm on **Sunday August 24<sup>th</sup>**. You must complete these to access the modules and other information on Canvas.
- 2) Complete the module 1 discussion post and responses to two classmates on **Sunday, August 31<sup>st</sup> at or before 11:59pm**.

#### **Assignments:**

- 3) Discussion Post (Essential questions): What unique challenges do Latino and undocumented students encounter at UF and how should they cope with their status and the problems they face? Required Reading: Hay Que Tener Fe: The Challenge of Being a Latina DACA College Student. Required Videos: Dr. Austin's Latino/a student and La Casita lecture; What It's Like to be Latino at a White College; and Coming Out as an Undocumented Immigrant; University of Florida Student Reportedly Detained by ICE Back in Colombia Recommended Videos, but not required: Latino in UF; The Making of La Casita.

#### **Module 2: The African American and Asian American Student Experience at UF**

**Module Description:** In this module, we will read articles about the stereotypes, racial microaggressions, and/or mental health challenges experienced by African American and Asian American students. This topic is a relevant one because of the anti-black and anti-Asian environments on some college campuses, especially in recent years, that have affected their abilities to gain a fair and equitable educational experience.

#### **Turn it in:**

- 1) Upload discussion post and responses on **September 7<sup>th</sup> at or before 11:59pm**.

- 2) Upload first reflection paper on or before **September 14<sup>th</sup> at or before 11:59pm.**

#### **Assignments:**

- 1) Discussion Post (Essential questions): What racial micro-aggressions have Black male and female students encountered at UF and how should they have coped with them? Required readings: 'I Was One of the First to See Daylight': Black Women at Predominantly White Colleges and Universities in Florida since 1959 and Black Male Student Success in Higher Education. Required Video: Racial Microaggressions at UF lecture
- 2) First Reflection Paper (Essential Questions): Refer to the readings, lecture, and videos, when answering the following questions in your reflection paper. What types of racial micro-aggressions do Asian American students experience on college campuses in general and at the University of Florida? Required readings: Challenging the Model Minority Myth as a First-Generation College Student; A month later — has UF addressed its own Asian hate?; Looking Back at UF's Asian American Pacific Islander History. Required Videos: Dr. Austin's The Asian American Student Experience Lecture; Anti-Asian Hate Touches International Students; US to Cancel Visas of Chinese Students Tied to Communist Party, Says Rubio.

### **Module 3: Greek Life and The Integration of UF**

**Module Description:** The readings, videos, and lecture in this module will educate students about the racial climate on campus when the first black students were admitted and that today. Current students continue to encounter prejudices that resemble those experienced by the first black students, especially when it pertains to Greek life.

#### **Turn it in:**

- 1) Upload discussion post and responses by **September 21<sup>st</sup> at or before 11:59pm.**
- 2) Upload experiential learning activity to canvas on **September 28<sup>th</sup> at or before 11:59pm.**

#### **Assignments:**

- 1) Discussion Post (Essential Questions): Should fraternities and sororities be expelled if their members engage in bigoted or discriminatory actions? Required Readings: "Jim Crow Greek Row", "The Machine", "Not Bitter, No Apologies" in *Blackballed: The Black and White Politics of Race on America's Campuses*. Required Videos: Oklahoma SAE Frat: Two Students Expelled Over Racist Chants; Abolish Greek Life; Presumed Guilty.
- 2) Experiential Learning Activity: An analysis of the Gator Tales play (Essential Questions). Actors re-enact the oral histories of the first Black students at UF in the play that can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6BU6Vfxw1o> (1 hour and 58 minutes). Write a typed, double-spaced, three-page paper about the following. What did I learn

from the oral history experiences of the students in the play and from Dr. Austin's lecture about the experiences of the first Black students? How can their experiences contribute to my personal and intellectual growth as a student? Required readings: None. Required videos: Gator Tales play and Dr. Austin "The Integration of UF" lecture.

#### **Module 4: Free Speech and Political Correctness**

**Module Description:** In this module we will gain a greater understanding of controversies involving free speech. On one hand, universities, like UF, want to foster a climate of diversity and inclusion that is free from bigotry. On the other hand, members of the university community usually have a right to engage in verbal and symbolic speech that sometimes makes us uncomfortable.

##### **Turn it in:**

- 1) Upload discussion post and responses by **October 5<sup>th</sup> at or before 11:59pm.**
- 2) Upload second reflection paper to canvas by **October 12<sup>th</sup> at or before 11:59pm.**

##### **Assignments:**

- 1) Discussion Post (Essential Questions): Refer to the assigned materials when answering the following questions. "Is HB7 (the stop woke act) necessary to prevent the "indoctrination" of college students?" Required readings: HB 7— Individual Freedom; Florida Bill Impacts Classrooms Two Years Later. Required Videos: Dr. Austin's lecture on free speech; Floridians Protest Gov. DeSantis' 'Stop Woke Act'; The Fight for Free Speech and Racial Justice.
- 2) Second Reflection Paper (Essential Questions): Should Florida's state government fund diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public universities because of past and present campus racial climates (SB266/HB931 prohibits this funding)? Required readings: We're Mad as Hell. . . and We're taking Over the Building in *Blackballed*; Florida Rejected Santa Ono, But Will It Reject the Culture That Made Him?; SB 266 — Higher Education; Life After the Multicultural Center Closed; UF Cuts Thousands in Funding, Support for Identity-centered Student Welcome Assemblies. Required video: DeSantis Signs Bill to Defund Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs in Public Colleges.

#### **Module 5: One Florida and the Issue of Affirmative Action**

**Module Description:** For many years, colleges and universities have tried to ensure racial, ethnic, gender, religious, and other forms of diversity. In this module, students will discuss the issue of whether affirmative action is an appropriate way for them to do so. The class will read and analyze readings and videos about the origin, evolution, and controversies associated with affirmative action as well as the inception and impact of the One Florida Initiative.



**Turn it in:**

- 1) Upload discussion post and responses by **October 19<sup>th</sup> at or before 11:59pm.**
- 2) Upload third reflection paper on **October 26<sup>th</sup> at or before 11:59pm.**

**Assignments:**

- 1) Discussion Post (Essential Questions): Refer to the assigned materials and answer the following questions. Did affirmative action in general, and One Florida in particular, enhance or inhibit the educational experiences of UF students? Required readings: 10 years in, 'One Florida' Posts Mixed Results for Minorities at Universities; Where are all the Black Students at UF?. Required Videos: Dr. Austin's lecture on affirmative action
- 2) Third Reflection Paper: Should colleges still be allowed to consider race as one of many factors in deciding whom to admit to college? In other words, did the U.S. Supreme Court reach the correct decision in the *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* decision? Why or why not? Required readings: *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* (Justia Summary); The Great American Half-Baked Sale of *Blackballed*. Required videos: Affirmative Action for College?; Affirmative Action and the Diversity Dilemma; Breaking Down the Supreme Court's Ruling Ending Affirmative Action in College Admissions.

**Module 6: The Legacy of Slavery and Segregation, and Final Reflections**

**Module Description:** In this module, we will discuss UF's (and other elite colleges') ties to slavery and segregation. On many campuses, buildings that are named after supporters of segregation are being renamed and statues are being removed.

**Turn it in:**

1. Upload discussion post and responses by **November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:59pm.**
2. Hurricane Makeup Class **November 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm.**

**Assignments:**

- 1) Discussion Post (Essential Questions):  
What benefits would UF and its students receive from the renaming of the O'Connell Center, J. Wayne Reitz Union, and George P. Smathers Libraries? Required readings: Honoring the Dishonorable in *Blackballed*; UF Students Examine School Ties to Slavery; Rename UF buildings that Glorify Racists. Required videos: Black Thursday; UF's Ties to Slavery.
- 2) Hurricane Makeup Class Information:  
Usually, I have to cancel a class during the fall semester because of hurricanes. If I cancel an assignment because of a hurricane campus closure (and/or power outage), I'll

push the assignment due dates back for a week and an earlier assignment will be due on the 9<sup>th</sup>. If I don't have to cancel class, no assignment will be due.

### **Module 7: The Jewish Student Experience and Final Reflections**

**Module Description:** In this module, we will discuss UF's (and other elite colleges') ties to slavery and segregation. On many campuses, buildings that are named after supporters of segregation are being renamed and statues are being removed.

#### **Turn it in:**

1. Upload reflection paper by **November 16<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm.**
2. Enjoy your Thanksgiving Break during the **week of November 23<sup>rd</sup>.**
3. Upload analytical essay by **December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11:59pm.**

#### **Assignments:**

- 1) Fourth Reflection Paper: Should individuals be allowed to wear symbolic speech symbols, such as swastikas, on a public campus like ours? Required readings: As a New Generation Rises, Tension Between Free Speech and Inclusivity Simmers; Speech on Campus. Required videos: Hitler and the Story Behind the Swastika-Symbol of the Nazis, The Jewish Student Experience presentation; These Are the Stories of Holocaust Survivors.
- 2) Analytical Essay (Essential Questions): What actions need to be taken at UF to ensure that students receive equal educational opportunities and fair treatment regardless of their race? How has this learning experience impacted your understanding of the interaction between race, justice, and power in academia? How has the information you've learned in this class contributed to your intellectual, personal, and professional growth?