

Race and Ethnic Politics in the United States
PSCI 529
Spring 2026

I. Course Description

This research seminar surveys the literature on race and ethnic politics in the United States. We will focus on the causes and consequences of electoral rules, the political representation of minority groups, and the mechanisms through which government policy coordinates social inequities. This course will incorporate diverse analytical perspectives while highlighting recent theoretical and empirical innovations in political science.

II. Contact and Meeting Details

Classroom Location and Meeting Times

Mondays, 12:30 am – 3:30 pm

Instructor

Professor Sidak Yntiso

Email: syntiso@ur.rochester.edu

Office Hours: Mondays, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm (Harknes 320)

III. Student Responsibilities

Class participation: _____ 35 %

Active participation in classroom discussion is expected. Students should be prepared to demonstrate their understanding of the readings and engage with their peers' presentations.

Presentations: _____ 15%

In our first meeting, students will have the opportunity to choose four readings from the syllabus to present in class. While the format of the presentations may vary according to the content of the readings, each presentation should be approximately 25-30 minutes in length and must include at least two elements:

1. An opening slide that introduces the question (or set of questions) covered by the reading
2. A concluding slide that includes three questions for your classmates about the assigned reading. These questions may, for example, address a deficiency in one or more of the arguments presented in the readings. Alternatively, students may argue for the importance of a question related to the general topic of the week that is not addressed in the reading.

Conversation Starters: 15%

Each student will write a 1-2 page “conversation starter” in the weeks they are not presenting. These essays should reflect on all the readings in ways that open the door to class discussion, for example by outlining a specific set of questions the readings raise for the student, a research direction implied by the readings, or puzzles raised by the readings. Conversation starters should not summarize the readings. These assignments must be uploaded to course site by 5 PM on the Sunday before our course meeting. Shortly after 5 pm, the option to upload a new assignment will close and submitted assignments will be made available for viewing by the entire class.

Research proposal/paper: 35%

You will be asked to prepare a research design with a clear question and a plan for answering that question. We will discuss details in class.

III. Student Responsibilities

There are no books or materials to purchase for this course. All readings or links to readings will be made available by the instructor.

IV. Schedule

Week 1. January 26, 2026
No class meeting

Week 2. February 2, 2026
Introduction and Orientation

- Fearon, James D. "What is identity (as we now use the word)." *Unpublished manuscript*, Stanford University, Stanford, California (1999): 1-43.
- 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.
- Rose, Evan K. "A constructivist perspective on empirical discrimination research." *Journal of Economic Literature* 61, no. 3 (2023): 906-923.

Week 3. February 9, 2026
Historical Legacies

- McGee, Dan. "Exploitation through racialization." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 140, no. 2 (2025): 1581-1631.
- Acharya, Avidit, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics*. Princeton University Press, 2018.

- Suryanarayan, Pavithra, and Steven White. "Slavery, reconstruction, and bureaucratic capacity in the American south." *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 2 (2021): 568-584.

Week 4. February 16, 2026

Electoral Rules I: Suffrage

- Trebbi, Francesco, Philippe Aghion, and Alberto Alesina. "Electoral rules and minority representation in US cities." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123, no. 1 (2008): 325-357.
- Naidu, Suresh. Suffrage, Schooling, and Sorting in the Post-bellum US South. No. w18129. *National Bureau of Economic Research*, 2012.
- Schuit, Sophie, and Jon C. Rogowski. "Race, representation, and the voting rights act." *American Journal of Political Science* 61, no. 3 (2017): 513-526.
- Washington, Ebonya, and Elizabeth U. Cascio. 2014. "Valuing the Vote: The Redistribution of Voting Rights and State Funds Following the Voting Rights Act of 1965." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 129(1): 379-433.

Week 5. February 23, 2026

Electoral Rules II: Redistricting

- Shotts, Kenneth W. "Gerrymandering, legislative composition, and national policy outcomes." *American Journal of Political Science* (2002): 398-414.
- Ananat, Elizabeth Oltmans, and Ebonya Washington. "Segregation and black political efficacy." *Journal of Public Economics* 93, no. 5-6 (2009): 807-822.
- Washington, Ebonya. "Do majority-black districts limit blacks' representation? The case of the 1990 redistricting." *The Journal of Law and Economics* 55, no. 2 (2012): 251-274.
- [H.M.] Hajnal, Zoltan L. "Who loses in American democracy? A count of votes demonstrates the limited representation of African Americans." *American Political Science Review* 103, no. 1 (2009): 37-57.
- Atsusaka, Yuki. "A logical model for Predicting Minority representation: Application to redistricting and Voting Rights cases." *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 4 (2021): 1210-1225.

Week 6. March 2, 2026

Elections I: Representation and agency

- Griffin, John D., and Brian Newman. "The unequal representation of Latinos and whites." *The Journal of Politics* 69, no. 4 (2007): 1032-1046.
- [H.M.] Flavin, Patrick, and Michael T. Hartney. "Racial inequality in democratic accountability: Evidence from retrospective voting in local elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 61, no. 3 (2017): 684-697.
- [C.P.] Griffin, John D., and Patrick Flavin. "Racial differences in information, expectations, and accountability." *The Journal of Politics* 69, no. 1 (2007): 220-236.

Week 7. March 9, 2026
No class meeting (Spring Break)

Week 8. March 16, 2026
Elections II: Parties

- [D.S.] Kuziemko, Ilyana, and Ebonya Washington. 2018. "Why Did the Democrats Lose the South? Bringing New Data to an Old Debate." *American Economic Review*, 108 (10): 2830-67.
- [C.P.] Schickler E. 2016. *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932–1965*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press

Week 8. March 23, 2016
Elections III. Candidates

- [C.P.] Broockman, David E. "Black politicians are more intrinsically motivated to advance blacks' interests: A field experiment manipulating political incentives." *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 3 (2013): 521-536.
- Lowande, Kenneth, Melinda Ritchie, and Erinn Lauterbach. "Descriptive and substantive representation in congress: Evidence from 80,000 congressional inquiries." *American Journal of Political Science* 63, no. 3 (2019): 644-659.
- Beach, Brian, Daniel B. Jones, Tate Twinam, and Randall Walsh. 2026. "Racial and Ethnic Representation in Local Government." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 16 (2): 1–36.
- Henderson, John A., Jasjeet S. Sekhon, and Rocio Titunik. "Cause or effect? Turnout in Hispanic majority-minority districts." *Political Analysis* 24, no. 3 (2016): 404-412.

Week 9. March 30, 2016
Protest

- [H.M.] Gause, LaGina. "Revealing issue salience via costly protest: How legislative behavior following protest advantages low-resource groups." *British Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 1 (2022): 259-279.
- [D.S.] Wasow, Omar. "Agenda seeding: How 1960s black protests moved elites, public opinion and voting." *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 3 (2020): 638-659.
- Gillion, Daniel Q. "Protest and Congressional Behavior: Assessing Racial and Ethnic Minority Protests in the District." *The Journal of Politics*. 2012

Week 10. April 6, 2026
Bureaucracy

- [D.S.] McCall, Andrew. "Resident assistance, police chief learning, and the persistence of aggressive policing tactics in Black neighborhoods." *The Journal of Politics*. 81.3 (2019): 1133-1142.
- White, Ariel R., Noah L. Nathan, and Julie K. Faller. "What do I need to vote? Bureaucratic discretion and discrimination by local election officials." *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 1 (2015): 129-142.

- [C.P.] Fraga, Brendan and MG Miller. "Who do voter ID keep from voting?" *The Journal of Politics* 84, no. 2 (2022): 1091-1105.
- Cobb, Rachael V., D. James Greiner, and Kevin M. Quinn. "Can voter ID laws be administered in a race-neutral manner? Evidence from the city of Boston in 2008." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 7, no. 1 (2010): 1-33.

Week 11. April 13, 2026

The Judiciary

- Feigenberg, Benjamin, and Conrad Miller. "Racial divisions and criminal justice: Evidence from southern state courts." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 13.2 (2021): 207-40.
- [H.M.] Alesina, Alberto, and Eliana La Ferrara. "A test of racial bias in Capital Sentencing." *American Economic Review* 104.11 (2014): 3397-3433.
- Kastellec, Jonathan P. "Racial diversity and judicial influence on appellate courts." *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 1 (2013): 167-183.
- Park, Kyung H. "The impact of judicial elections in the sentencing of black crime." *Journal of Human Resources* 52, no. 4 (2017): 998-1031.

Week 12. April 20, 2026

State and local politics

- Trounstine, Jessica. "The geography of inequality: How land use regulation produces segregation." *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 2 (2020): 443-455.
- Hersh, Eitan, and Clayton Nall. "The Primacy of Race in the Geography of Income-Based Voting: New Evidence from Public Voting Records." *Journal of Politics* 60(2) (2016): 289-303.
- Komisarchik, Mayya, and Ariel White. "Throwing away the umbrella: Minority voting after the Supreme Court's Shelby decision." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 20.2 (2025): 269-305.

Week 13. April 27, 2026

Student Presentations