SPECIAL TOPICS IN AMERICAN POLITICS: RACIAL STEREOTYPES IN ELECTORAL POLITICS

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:30-2:30, and by appointment

Course Description: While there has been an increase in black elected officials in the United States, they are, for the most part, elected from areas that have high concentration of blacks. The reality is that when blacks seek political office outside of majority black and majority-minority (black plus Latino) districts, they persistently fail. For example, did you know there have only been 2 black governors, 3 black United States Senators, and one black president elected, since Reconstruction? Often, an explanation for this failure is due to racial stereotyping. Consequently, the purpose of this course is to examine closely the effect of racial stereotyping in electoral politics. Specifically, our discussions will focus on the following areas: the psychology of stereotypes, formation of black stereotypes, and the influence of black stereotypes on electoral politics.

Course Objectives: This major goal of this course is to facilitate students’ understanding of the effects of stereotypes in elections. By the end of the course you should be able to:

- comprehend the major themes, issues, and concepts regarding stereotypes;
- recognize the role of media in creating and disseminating black stereotypes;
- demonstrate knowledge on the effects of black stereotypes in electoral politics; and
- demonstrate analytical, verbal, and written skills.

Course Methods:

To reach these goals, you will:

- Read and discuss weekly assignments;
- Conduct observational research and present the findings; and
- Complete exams that gauge your competencies of course content.

Basic Expectations:

You can expect me (the professor) to:

- Arrive on time and be prepared for class;
- Follow the syllabus and alert you in advance of any changes;
- Respond as quickly and as thoroughly as possible to your work and concerns; and
- Evaluate your work fairly according to clearly communicated expectations.
I expect you (the student) to:

- Be both prompt and prepared for class;
- Place all cell-phones, CD players, and MP3 players in your book-bag;
- Read and follow the written syllabus and ask any clarifying questions in advance;
- Take the initiative in communicating with me before problems get out of control; and
- Evaluate your own work according to the expectations of the course.

I’m happy to meet, talk, or email with you about problems, questions, confusions or concerns about the class, and hope you will take advantage of my office hours which are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30-2:30 or by appointment.

Policies & Procedures:

- **Missing an Examination** - In the event of an in-class missed exam the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to find me; do not expect me to track you down. You must take exams when they are scheduled. If you miss an examination due to an emergency (car accident, emergency room visit, sick child, or death in the family) you must: (1) contact me within 24 hours of your absence, and (2) provide written documentation of your absence.

- **Attendance & Participation** - Class attendance is regarded as an obligation as well as a privilege, and all students are expected to attend regularly and punctually to all classes. Failure to do so may jeopardize your grade. Absences of military personnel are reported in accordance with university rules. These guidelines follow University policy as described in the general catalog. I encourage meaningful and positive class participation. Participation will heavily be considered at the end of the semester. Meaningful and positive class participation needs to be done in an organized matter. Please raise your hand to be acknowledged. Talking out of turn will not be tolerated. Please respect me and your colleagues when they are speaking.

- **Student Code of Conduct** - Chatting (side conversations), reading the paper, sleeping, wearing personal stereos, playing with cell-phone, and generally not paying attention during lecture can be distracting not only to me but to your fellow classmates. Students who must leave earlier than the end of the class period should inform me before lecture begins; otherwise they will be “absent.” Please do not pack-up before I indicate that class has been dismissed. Please turn off cell-phones before coming into class. I expect that you will maintain the highest standards of intellectual honesty in this class. Anyone involved in any act of academic dishonesty as outlined by the University’s Student Conduct Code will be referred to the Dean of Students.

- **Students with disabilities**: If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). The ODS is located in 112 Johnston Hall. Phone is 225/ 578-5919. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper ODS forms and meet with me at the beginning of the semester.

- **Copyright Statement** - Students shall adhere to the laws governing the use of copyrighted materials. They must ensure that their activities comply with fair use and in no way infringe on the copyright or other proprietary rights of others and that the materials used and developed at Louisiana State University contain nothing unlawful, unethical, or libelous, and do not constitute any violation of any right of privacy.
Required Texts:


Evaluation:

- **Participation** (140 Points): Your grade will be based on your attentiveness, involvement, and attitude. I expect everyone to attend all classes. There is no distinction between an “excused” or “unexcused” absence, and you don’t need to tell me when or why you’ll be absent. If you miss class for any reason, you are expected to obtain any missed material from other students in the class. I will not provide a summary of the class during my office hours. In order to obtain participation points, you obviously have to be present in class, and you must have read the material before class and add your voice to the classroom discussion. I will at random ask you to answer questions and share your input, and consistently not having a response will greatly affect your participation points. There will be 28 class sessions; for 14 of these class sessions you can earn 10 points for participation (totaling 140 points). I will at random select the class sessions in which participation will be given. In order to receive participation points, you are to sign the attendance sheet (if you were present) and place a check next to your name, if you participated in class discussion. If I find you have checked your name without having participated (or someone other than you has signed and checked your name), your name will be forwarded to the Dean’s Office for engaging in academic dishonesty. **In addition, if I see you on your phone (for whatever reason—i.e., to call, text, or play games), you will not be awarded participation points for that class period.**

- **Exam** (300 Points): There will be three exams worth 100 points each. This exam will include essay questions taken directly from discussions and readings. In order to do well on the exams, you must answer all parts of a question and give detailed responses. Often, students do not receive full credit, because they simply list their answers or they just write one sentence. In the directions, it will state clearly to please explain answers in detail. Simply writing one sentence or listing is not answering questions in detail. As a word of advice, when a question is worth 10, 15, and 20 points, it means more is required in terms of explanation. Please do not just write one or two sentence, because that is not enough to receive full credit! Based on student engagement in the course, the exams will either be in-class or take-home. If it is a take-home exam, you must attend class on this day to submit your exam. E-mail submissions or placing them in my mailbox will be not accepted. Furthermore, I will NOT accept any late exam.

- **Research Paper/Presentation** (100 Points): The research paper and the presentation will be worth 50 points each. This is a group project (no more than 3 to a group). Your group is to select 5 episodes of a recent television show and watch it throughout the semester. You are to keep a log of all the stereotypes you see on the television program you watch.

  In the **paper** (one paper per group), identify the television programs you watched; discuss what these stereotypes were in detail; and how frequently it occurred. Based on what you have read in this class, what are the potential implications of these
stereotypes for those in the in-group and those in the out-group (whether you define the in-group and out-group as: black or white; women or men; old or you; etc.). In what ways could these stereotypes affect the way we view others? What are the political implications of these stereotypes? You will be required to write an 8 to 10 page research paper. This paper must be type written in Times Roman, 12 point font, and double-spaced. Papers will be due on **Thursday, April 26**. You must attend class on this day to submit your paper. E-mail submissions or placing them in my mailbox will be not accepted.

For the *presentation* (which will be done as a group), you will basically share with the class the synopsis of your paper using *PowerPoint*. These presentations will begin on **Tuesday, April 17**. I will randomly call out names, and your group will be required to present on that day. If you are not prepared, you will receive a ‘0’ for a grade. You should make this presentation interactive. For example, during your presentation, you might want to show us some clips of the stereotypes your group observed, and ask thought-provoking questions to the class. The presentations should be about 12 minutes.

**Grading Scale:** In order to calculate your grade, you will divide your total points earned by the total points allowed--which is 540 points.

The following grading scale will be used to determine the letter grade for the course:

- A 90-100
- B 80-89
- C 70-79
- D 60-69
- F <60

**Course Schedule:**

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<tr>
<th>Class Meetings</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, January 17</td>
<td>- Introductions</td>
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<td>- Discuss Syllabus</td>
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<td><strong>Section 1: The Psychology of Stereotypes</strong></td>
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<td>Thursday, January 19</td>
<td><strong>BK:</strong> David J. Schneider, <em>The Psychology of Stereotypes</em></td>
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<td>- Chapter 1: Introduction</td>
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<td>Tuesday, January 24</td>
<td><strong>BK:</strong> David J. Schneider, <em>The Psychology of Stereotypes</em></td>
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<td>- Chapter 2: Methods</td>
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<td>Thursday, January 26</td>
<td><strong>BK:</strong> David J. Schneider, <em>The Psychology of Stereotypes</em></td>
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<td>- Chapter 3: Categories and Categorization</td>
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<td>Tuesday, January 31</td>
<td><strong>BK:</strong> David J. Schneider, <em>The Psychology of Stereotypes</em></td>
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<td>- Chapter 7: Ingroups and Outgroups</td>
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<td>Thursday, February 2</td>
<td><strong>BK:</strong> David J. Schneider, <em>The Psychology of Stereotypes</em></td>
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<td>- Chapter 8: Prejudice and Discrimination</td>
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<td>Tuesday, February 7</td>
<td><strong>BK:</strong> David J. Schneider, <em>The Psychology of Stereotypes</em></td>
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<td>- Chapter 9: The Development of Stereotypes</td>
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<td>Thursday, February 9</td>
<td><strong>BK:</strong> David J. Schneider, <em>The Psychology of Stereotypes</em></td>
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<td>- Chapter 10: Change of Stereotypes and Prejudice</td>
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<td>Tuesday, February 14</td>
<td>Film: A Class Divided</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday, February 16</strong></td>
<td>Exam 1 Due: David J. Schneider, <em>The Psychology of Stereotypes</em></td>
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<td>Film: A Class Divided</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, February 21</td>
<td>Mardi Gras: No Class</td>
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### Section 2: Black Stereotypes in the Media

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<th>Topic</th>
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| Thursday, February 23 | **BK:** Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*  
- Chapter 1: The Racial Chameleon, pg. 1-15  
- Chapter 2: White Racial Attitudes in the Heartland, pg. 16-45 |
| Tuesday, February 28  | **BK:** Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*  
- Chapter 3: Culture, Media, and the White Mind, pg. 46-59 |
| Thursday, March 1     | **BK:** Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*  
- Chapter 4: The Meaning of Blackness in Network News, pg. 60-77 |
| Tuesday, March 6      | **BK:** Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*  
- Chapter 5: Violence, Stereotypes, and African Americans in the News, pg. 78-93 |
| Thursday, March 8     | **BK:** Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*  
- Chapter 10: Advertising Whiteness, pg. 162-181 |
| Tuesday, March 13     | **BK:** Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*  
- Chapter 9: Prime-Time Television: White and Whiter, pg. 144-161 |
| Thursday, March 15    | Film: Crash |
| Tuesday, March 20     | Film: Crash  
**Exam 2:** Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America* Section 3: Stereotyping in Elections |

### Section 3: Stereotyping in Elections

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| Thursday, March 22    | **BK:** Keith Reeves, *Voting Hopes or Fears?: White Voters, Black Candidates, and Racial Politics in America*  
- Introduction: pg. 3-10  
- Chapter 1: Race—A Political Lightening Rod, pg. 13-24 |
| Tuesday, March 27     | **BK:** Keith Reeves, *Voting Hopes or Fears?: White Voters, Black Candidates, and Racial Politics in America*  
- Chapter 2: Voting Discrimination against Black Candidates, pg. 25-42 |
| Thursday, March 29    | **BK:** Keith Reeves, *Voting Hopes or Fears?: White Voters, Black Candidates, and Racial Politics in America*  
- Chapter 3: The Print Press—Making an Issue of Race, pg. 45-60 |
| Tuesday, April 3      | **BK:** Keith Reeves, *Voting Hopes or Fears?: White Voters, Black Candidates, and Racial Politics in America*  
- Chapter 4: The Persistence of Racial Prejudice in the Electorate, pg. 61-75 |
| Thursday, April 5     | **BK:** Keith Reeves, *Voting Hopes or Fears?: White Voters, Black Candidates, and Racial Politics in America*  
- Chapter 5: The Consequences of Cueing Subtle Appeals to Race, pg. 76-90 |
| Tuesday, April 10     | Spring Break: No Class |
| Thursday, April 12    | Spring Break: No Class |
| Tuesday, April 17     | Research Presentations |
| Thursday, April 19    | Research Presentations |
| Tuesday, April 24     | Research Presentations |
| **Thursday, April 26**| Research Papers Due  
Research Presentations |
| Tuesday, May 1        | Research Presentations |
| **Thursday, May 3**   | Research Presentations  
**Exam 3:** Voting Hopes or Fears? |