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PSC 383.01: Multicultural Politics in the United States

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PSC 383, Sec. 1 – MULTICULTURAL POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES

Spring 2008

Monday & Wednesday 2:10 – 3:30, 337 Liberal Arts

Professor Christopher Muste

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Many of the most controversial political issues during the past two decades in the United States have raised fundamental questions about how the U.S. deals with its diverse population. These issues have often been described as “multicultural” in nature because they involve differences among the many and diverse social groups in the U.S. They include a wide range of basic questions about what the U.S. is and what it should be, such as what it means to be American, who should be included in the American “community,” what the relationship between the nation and its citizens should be, and the role of social groups in American political, economic, and social life. Each of these conflicts raises key questions about the nature of American society, what direction American society should take in the 21st century, and how government policy should be shaped to achieve the ideal society. In this course we will explore some of the main controversies over multicultural politics, some of the ideas that have been used to try to understand what the U.S. is and to think about what it should be, and the tradeoffs (costs and benefits) associated with the various policies and points of view.

Multicultural politics is a broad topic with far reaching implications, but because this course is limited in scope by the constraints of time, we will focus on the topics of national community, identity, immigration and assimilation, and race and ethnicity, in the U.S. While other aspects of multicultural politics, such as gender politics, the politics of sexual preference, the politics of disability, the politics of religion, and multicultural politics in other countries are important, we will examine those topics only as they provide us with a better understanding of the main issues covered in this course. However, these issues can be explored more intensively in your research paper in this course.

The course is divided into two main sections. The first section deals with some basic ideas about what multiculturalism is and how the term has been used, and issues relating to how America is defined – such as what it means to be a nation, how citizenship is defined, and the politics of immigration and assimilation. The second section focuses on the politics of race and ethnicity, examining voting rights, affirmative action, segregation and property, and educational issues.

READINGS:

The main textbook planned for this course is out of print. As a result, some additional readings will be added to this draft syllabus and others removed. We will use a variety of articles and book chapters to explore the course topics. All readings will be on Reserve, in both electronic (ERES) and paper versions, through the Mansfield Library. To get a paper copy of the readings, you can either print out the electronic versions from the Mansfield Library’s electronic reserve page, or you can get the paper versions from the Mansfield Library Reserve Desk and copy it at the Copy Center in the Library. The ERES password for this course is

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://ordway.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/name/StudentConductCode>

The University of Montana Student Conduct Code prohibits plagiarism, which is “representing another person’s words, ideas, data, or materials as one’s own.” This is a serious academic violation that can result in penalties up to suspension or expulsion from the University. **I take academic honesty very seriously, and will do my utmost to prevent, uncover, and penalize any form of cheating in this course.** See the “Plagiarism Warning” on pp. 23-24 in the *University of Montana 2007-2008 Catalog*, and the Student Conduct Code on the UM website listed above. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

GRADUATE STUDENTS:

Graduate students must complete additional graduate-level readings and short papers for each course topic as specified by the instructor, and must complete a 20-25 page research paper consisting of a research design and hypothesis, extensive literature review, data collection, and an analysis that synthesizes these three components.

CLASS COURTESY:

In order to have a pleasant and effective learning environment in a class this size, we need to observe a few basic courtesies. This is a small campus, so it is possible to get to the classroom on time from all other campus buildings; arriving late or leaving early disrupts the class and disturbs other students and the instructor. Please turn off all cell phones before class begins. Please don’t read a newspaper or other non-course material, eat during class, or use text messaging, web browsers, or similar communications. If you have a question or comment about the material, please raise your hand instead of discussing it with your neighbor. We’ll all benefit if we just keep in mind the reason we’re in the room together.

DROP POLICY AND INCOMPLETES:

You can drop on Cyberbear until February 11, and from then until March 4 using a drop slip signed by me. After March 4, you must go through the more formal and difficult “late drop” petition process. I will sign late drop petitions for only one week after the midterm exam grades are posted, and after that only under extraordinary circumstances, as outlined on p. 21 of the *UM 2007-2008 Catalog*.

Incompletes will only be permitted when all the conditions set forth in the official University policy are met – the policy is on p. 23 of the *University of Montana 2007-2008 Catalog*.

DSS STUDENTS:

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodation in this course. Students with disabilities requesting accommodation on exams, papers, or other course requirements should contact me as soon as possible, and must contact DSS in order to arrange for and provide me with a letter of approval for accommodations. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154.

E-MAIL AND BLACKBOARD:

In order to do some of the assignments for the course, for communication and course resources, and to access your grades and other course information, you will need to sign into the Blackboard website that has been created for this course. Information on how to access your account is at:

<http://umonline.umt.edu/StudentInfo/welcome.htm>

Blackboard and Cyberbear both send my e-mails to your official UM e-mail account, so you should check it frequently. If you use another e-mail account, go into CyberBear to have your official UM e-mail forwarded to your preferred e-mail account, and check that account frequently.

March 31 - April 7 Racial and Ethnic Politics: Policy Formation and Policy Change

Boger, John Charles. "The Kerner Commission Report in Retrospect."

Steinberg, Stephen. "The Liberal Retreat from Race."

McClain, Paula D., and Joseph Stewart Jr., "Resources and Status of America's Racial Minorities" in *Can We All Get Along?*, 3rd edition, pp. 25-56.

Wilkins, David E. "A History of Federal Indian Policy." In *American Indian Politics*, pp. 109-124.

Thornton, Russell. "Trends Among American Indians in the United States" in *Race, Ethnicity, and Gender*, pp. 195-210.

April 9 & 14 Representation and Redistricting Policy

Guinier, Lani. "Groups, Representation, and Race Conscious Redistricting."

Swain, Carol M. "The Future of Black Representation."

Hewes, Brooke. "A Place at the Table," *Missoulian* Special Section, May 2005, pp. 32-35.

April 16 & 21 Affirmative Action Policy

Skrentny, John David. "Conclusion: Culture, Politics, and Affirmative Action" in *The Ironies of Affirmative Action*, pp. 222-242.

Steinberg, Stephen. "Occupational Apartheid and the Origins of Affirmative Action."

Collins, Sharon M. "Bursting the Bubble: The Failure of Black Progress."

Kahlenberg, Richard D. "The Case for Class-Based Affirmative Action."

Gutmann, Amy. "Should Public Policy Be Class Conscious Rather than Color Conscious?"

April 23 & 28 School and Residential Desegregation

Orfield, Gary. "Turning Back to Segregation."

Wilkinson, Doris Y. "Integration Dilemmas in a Racist Culture."

Massey Douglas S., and Nancy A. Denton. "Should the Ghetto Be 'Dismantled'?"

Smith, Burton M. "The Politics of Allotment on the Flathead Indian Reservation."

April 30 & May 5 Multiculturalism in Education Policy

Schlesinger. *The Disuniting of America*, Chapter 2, pp. 51-77.

Levine. *The Opening of the American Mind*, Chapter 3, pp. 54-74.

Ravitch, Diane. "Multiculturalism: E Pluribus Plures."

Nash, Gary B. "The Great Multicultural Debate."

McLandress, Kelley. "Making the Grade," *Missoulian* Special Section, May 2005, pp. 18-23.

May 7 E Pluribus Unum? Unity, Diversity, and Multiculturalism

Schlesinger. *The Disuniting of America*, Epilogue, pp. 147-165.

Levine. *The Opening of the American Mind*, Chapter 10, pp 158-169; Epilogue, pp. 170-174.

Glazer, Nathan. "We Are All Multiculturalists Now," pp. 147-162.

FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, MAY 8TH, 3:20-5:20