

**BLACK POLITICS  
GVPT479B  
FALL 202**

Instructor: Dr. Chryl Laird  
Office Location: 1140 Tydings  
Email: [cnlaird@umd.edu](mailto:cnlaird@umd.edu)

Classroom: 0111 Tydings  
Class Meetings: TuTh 12:30PM-1:45PM  
Office Hours: TuTh 10am-11am or by appt.  
Signup for office hours here: [claird.youcanbook.me](http://claird.youcanbook.me)

**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to assist students in gaining an understanding of the relationship of people of African descent in the United States to the political system and other structures of power. We critically engage several themes/topics including Black political philosophies and ideologies, electoral politics, Black and mainstream political institutions, political behavior and psychology, gender politics, and public policy. We will also analyze and discuss the informal political spaces that serve as sites for Black politics including social media, entertainment, and pop culture.

**Required Text:**

The required books are available at the online bookstore: <https://umcp.bncollege.com/> and UMD Libraries (ebook)

- The Racial Contract by Charles W. Mills (25th-anniversary edition)

**Assignments:**

Assignments	Percentage
8 Discussion Boards	20%
6 Recorded Reactions	15%
In-Class Participation	20%
Current Events	5%
Final Paper and Presentation	40%
TOTAL	100%

*8 Discussion Boards (20%)*

- Original Post: Your posts in the discussion area should exhibit careful thought and logical reasoning and provide evidence for your position (external sources). Each post should be at least one well-developed paragraph (approximately 4-5 sentences or more, unless otherwise indicated). Use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. **Original Post needs to be posted by 10 PM the day before class in which the content will be discussed.**
- Reply Post: You are also required to read and reply to other students, as indicated in each discussion assignment. Your replies should offer new substantiated ideas or thoughtful questions. I encourage friendly debate and disagreement but ask that it be courteous and respectful. Do not be afraid to speak your mind but remember that yours is only one opinion. **Reply Post needs to be posted by 9 AM the day the content will be discussed**

*6 Recorded Reactions (15%)*

Recorded reactions are audio file reactions to the course readings/content. You are to complete these before the week in which we will be discussing the readings. **You should upload your audio**

**file by 10 AM on the day** that we will discuss the material. You are to complete **6 recorded reactions** over the course of the semester. **Once the material has been discussed in class, a late submission for that content will not be accepted. You cannot do a record reaction on material after it has been discussed in class.**

#### *In-Class Participation (20%)*

I will also be grading you on in-class participation. During class discussions, I will be taking note of students that participate. The assessment will be based on your participation throughout the entire semester. Your attendance record will also be to assess your participation. You are expected to attend every class. If you are absent, a lot then you can also anticipate that this will reflect in your participation grade. **Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact me about long-term absences. If you are exhibiting COVID symptoms, please do not attend class to reduce the spread of infection and get tested. UMD guidelines for testing can be found here:**

<https://umd.edu/4Maryland/covid-testing#testing-what>

#### *Current Events (5%)*

In addition to participation in class discussion, each student will be required to present a current events article/news story/podcast episode related to women of color in politics. **The current event piece needs to be posted to the Discussion Board by 10AM the day of the presentation.** We will discuss these articles during the first 5-10 minutes of class. I will be grading you on the presentation of the article based on the criteria that will be distributed. **A PowerPoint presentation is not required; however, students MUST upload the article to the Discussion Board for current events by 11:59 PM the day before the class session.**

#### *Final Project and Presentation (40%)*

- Proposal (5%): A one-page proposal including abstract, research question, thesis, and scholarly sources
- Presentation (10%): 5-7 minute in-class presentation
- Final Project (25%): The final project can be one of these two options:
  1. An argumentative paper/research design (7-10 pages)
  2. Teaching the Public (project + 4-5 pages)

#### *Pop Quizzes*

Pop Quizzes will be administered if it becomes apparent that students are not doing course readings. These pop quizzes will count towards your participation grade. There are no make-ups for pop quizzes.

#### *Extra Credit*

Extra credit opportunities will be at the discretion of the instructor. You will be notified of these opportunities if they become available.

#### *Late Assignment Policy*

Assignments submitted late will lose 1/3 letter grade for any late submission within the first 24 hours. Each additional 24 hours results in another 1/3 letter grade reduction. Due to the nature of the pandemic, exceptions to this policy will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## *Final Grade Scale*

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	≥ 92.5	B-	≥ 79.5	D+	≥ 66.5
A-	≥ 89.5	C+	≥ 76.5	D	≥ 62.5
B+	≥ 86.5	C	≥ 72.5	D-	≥ 59.5
B	≥ 82.5	C-	≥ 69.5	F	< 59.5

### **Student Assistance:**

I want my students to do well in this course. I am open to answering questions, clarifying materials, offering suggestions for studying, assisting with paper writing, and addressing any concerns you may have about the course. I have assigned office hours listed in the syllabus, but if my schedule allows, I can also meet at alternate times if you are unable to attend office hours. Questions and concerns can also be raised in class, and I encourage you to do so.

### **Classroom Behavior:**

In class, discussions will be a central part of this course. These discussions will be based on the assigned readings and content in the lecture. I believe that these discussions can benefit students in a variety of different ways. Students will not only enhance their critical thinking skills but will also be exposed to alternative opinions related to a particular issue. Students will have to learn how to defend their views rationally when presented with an opposing view. *Trigger Warning:* Many of these issues could be considered controversial and/or sensitive. Many of the topics will include sexual assault, domestic abuse, police brutality, white identity politics, and racial/gender hierarchies. Students should feel free to express their opinions. At the same time, we must remember to respect one another and maintain a constructive and civil dialogue. If you are unable to engage in conversation in this manner you will be dismissed from the discussion. If you are uncomfortable with discussing these topics throughout the semester it will be up to you to determine if you want to stay in this course.

### **Academic Integrity and Honor Code:**

All written work must be your own and must be in line with the University of Maryland regulations on academic honesty. You are expected to be aware of these guidelines; ignorance does not excuse a violation of these guidelines. The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity in Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student, you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. You need to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <https://studentconduct.umd.edu/you/students>

### **Disability Services:**

I will make every effort to accommodate students with disabilities. If you need accommodation, please let me know as early as possible, and please provide written

documentation from the Accessibility and Disability Service office:

<https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/>

**Writing Services:**

I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Center at UMD. Getting feedback benefits all writers! Trained writing consultants can help with writing, multimedia projects, or oral presentations. During one-on-one consultations, you can work on everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. Bring your assignment description, and a few goals, to the consultation! For more information, or to make an appointment please visit:

<https://english.umd.edu/writing-programs/writing-center>

**Tentative Class Schedule:**

The schedule is subject to change based on the needs of the class.

Weeks	Dates	Readings/Content
Week1	8/30	Introduction to Course
	9/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Racial Contract Introduction &amp; Part 1</li> </ul>
Week 2	9/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Racial Contract Part 2</li> </ul>
	9/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Racial Contract Part 3</li> </ul>
Week 3	9/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linda Williams, <i>The Constraint of Race: Slavery, The Legacy of the “White Citizen,” and American Social Policy</i></li> </ul>
	9/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WATCH: 13<sup>th</sup> by Ava Duvernay (No Class)</li> </ul>
Week 4	9/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WATCH: <i>Little White Lies</i> by Lacy Schwartz</li> <li>Lauren Davenport, “Beyond Black and White: Biracial Attitudes in Contemporary U.S. Politics”</li> </ul>
	9/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claudine Gay, <i>Putting Race in Context: Identifying the Environmental Determinants of Black Racial Attitudes</i></li> <li>Claudine Gay, Jennifer Hochschild and Ariel White-Americans’ Belief in Linked Fate: Does the Measure Capture the Concept?</li> </ul>
Week 5	9/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Melissa Harris-Perry, <i>Barbershops, Bibles and BET</i>, Chapters 1 &amp; 3</li> <li>LISTEN: <a href="#">Vox Conversations: What Clarence Thomas Really Thinks</a></li> </ul>
	9/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LISTEN: <a href="#">NPR CodeSwitch-The Black Table in the Big Tent</a></li> <li>Ismail White, Chryl Laird, and Troy Allen, “Selling Out?: The Politics of Navigating Conflicts Between Racial Group Interest and Self-Interest”</li> </ul>
Week 6	10/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LISTEN: <a href="#">Black America-“Race, Immigration and Politics with Christina Greer”</a></li> <li>LISTEN: <a href="#">Niambi Carter, “American While Black: African American Immigration and the Limits of Citizenship”</a></li> </ul>
	10/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cathy Cohen, <i>Boundaries of Blackness</i>, Chapter 2</li> <li>WATCH: <a href="#">FRONTLINE Endgame: Aids in Black America</a></li> </ul>
Week 7	10/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cathy Cohen, <i>Punk, Bulldaggers and Welfare Queens</i></li> <li>WATCH: Check It (Pluto TV/Tubi)</li> </ul>
	10/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shaw and McDaniel, “Whosoever Will”: Black Theology, Homosexuality and the Black Church</li> <li>WATCH: <i>The New Black: LGBT Rights and African American Communities</i></li> </ul>

Week 8	10/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patricia Hill Collins-Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy</li> </ul>
	10/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claudine Gay and Katherine Tate, Doubly Bound: The Impact of Gender and Race on the Politics of Black Women</li> <li>Melissa Harris-Perry <i>Sister Citizen</i>, Chapter 4-Disaster</li> </ul>
Week 9	10/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Camile Burge, Julian Wamble and Cuomo, “A Certain Type of Representation”</li> <li>Lemi and Brown, “Melanin and Curls: Evaluation of Black Women Candidates”</li> </ul>
	10/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taneisha Means, “Her Honor: Black Women Judges’ Experiences with Disrespect and Recusal Requests in the American Judiciary”</li> <li>LISTEN: <a href="#">1A Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson Makes History</a></li> </ul>
Week 10	11/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WATCH: I Am Not Your Negro by Raoul Peck (No Class)</li> </ul>
	11/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Davin Phoenix, “Black Hope Floats: Racial Emotion Regulation and the Uniquely Motivating Effects of Hope on Black Political Participation”</li> <li>Antoine Banks, Ismail White and Brian McKenzie, “Black Politics: How Anger Influences the Political Actions Black Pursue to Reduce Racial Inequality</li> </ul>
Week 11	11/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WATCH: Let the Fire Burn</li> <li><b>SUBMIT FINAL PROJECT/PAPER PROPOSAL</b></li> </ul>
	11/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Megan Ming Francis, “The Price of Civil Rights: Black Lives, White Funding, and Movement Capture”</li> <li>Christian Davenport-“Protesting While Black”</li> </ul>
Week 12	11/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alvin Tillery-“What Kind of Movement is Black Lives Matter? The View from Twitter”</li> <li>Tehema Lopez and Candis Watts-Smith-“Do All Black Lives Matter Equally to Black People?”</li> </ul>
	11/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imani Perry, <i>The Cut</i>, Stop Hustling Black Death: Samaria Rice is the Mother of Tamir, Not A “Mother of the Movement”</li> <li>Sean Campbell, <i>New York Intelligencer</i>, Black Lives Matter Secretly Bought a \$6 Million House: Allies and Critics Alike Have Questioned Where the Organizations Money Has Gone</li> </ul>
Week 13	11/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fred Harris, <i>The Price of the Ticket</i>, “Wink, Nod, Vote”</li> <li>Niambi Carter and Pearl Ford Dowe, “The Racial Exceptionalism of Barack Obama”</li> </ul>
	11/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>THANKSGIVING BREAK</li> </ul>
Week 14	11/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Ta-Nehisi Coates on The Case for Reparations</a>, UChicago Institute of Politics</li> <li><a href="#">Harvard &amp; the Legacy of Slavery</a>, Harvard Radcliffe Institute</li> </ul>
	12/1	<p>Final Presentations</p> <p><b>SUBMIT ALL FINALL PRESENTATIONS BY 8AM</b></p>
Week 15	12/6	Final Presentations
	12/8	Final Presentations

FINAL PAPER/PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE THE DAY OF FINAL EXAM