Black Women’s Politics (POS 6933)  
Spring 2021  
Dr. Sharon D. Austin  
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The University of Florida

**Contact Information: Office Hours:**

Office: 203 Anderson Hall Wednesdays 11am-2pm online or by appointment

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\*I can also remain online after our class ends if you have questions. Please email me on Wednesdays if you’re planning to meet with me during office hours so that I can turn on my zoom account. I am also available for zoom meeting every day this semester (by request only).

**Course Description:**  
  
This synchronous course will examine several political and public policy issues relating to black American women. We will discuss a comprehensive history of black female political participation from the era of slavery and Reconstruction to the present. We will also examine various theoretical frameworks such as black feminism, womanism, and intersectionality that scholars have used to examine the black female political experience as both voters and candidates. Included in this analysis, we will examine black women who have either become (or attempted to become) congressional members, governors, mayors, legislators, and president/vice-president of the United States.  
  
**Course Objectives:**

1. Examine the political behavior of black female voters and their impact in determining election outcomes.
2. Detail the history of black women’s involvement in civil rights, political, and social movements while examining their successes and challenges.
3. Analyze the manner in which black women have run for office and have governed the districts, cities, etc. they represented.
4. Examine political science research on black women’s politics and the challenges scholars have confronted when attempting to study black women.

**How Do I Find the Class?**

1. Log into elearning.ufl.edu
2. Find the class POS6933.
3. On the left side on canvas, you will see Zoom Sessions. Click on that and you should be able to see the class. I will also post the passcode and other information you’ll need in the announcements section. When I post announcements, you can see them on canvas and will receive an email.
4. On the left side, you will also see the word “Chat”. There, you can type questions that I’ll answer at the end of class.

**The Format:**

On Thursdays, our zoom session will begin promptly at 3pm and will end at 6pm. During the first part of class, I will give a power point presentation. We will have a 10 minute break during the halfway point of class. During the second part, we will discuss your “discussion points” for each reading.

**Don’t forget during class sessions to:**

* Place your computers on mute while class is in session (unless you are participating in a discussion).
* Remain in class during the entire class session.
* Type your questions into the chat room and I will answer them at the end of class.

**The Required Textbooks:**

* Baker-Motley, Constance. 2017. *Equal Justice Under the Law* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
* Harris, Duchess. 2018. *Black Feminist Politics from Kennedy to Trump* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
* Harris, Kamala. 2019. *The Truths We Hold* New York: Penguin.
* Jones, Martha S. 2020. *Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All* New York: Basic Books.
* Winslow, Barbara. 2014. *Shirley Chisholm* New York: Westview.

**The Reserve Articles** can be found on the Course Reserves link on canvas.

**Your Grade will be Based on:**  
  
**1) Attendance (5%), Participation and Weekly Discussion Points (25%)**

Class participation and attendance are extremely important in this seminar.  Each week (before noon on the day of class), please upload “discussion points” from each reading (one page per reading) to canvas so that we can discuss them in class.   Each discussion point should identify a specific concept/theme/question that you find interesting in the reading.  In order to perform this assignment well, you must indicate your knowledge of the readings.  Each week, I will grade the information and your participation. The rubric for this assignment (and all of the others) can be found on canvas.

**2) NCOBPS Paper Analysis (30%): Due March 26th**

I will post the preliminary program for the National Conference of Black Political Scientists virtual meeting. It will take place from March 11th-14th. View one of the panels that examines black women’s politics. I will provide a list of these panels. In a 5-8 page, typed, double-spaced paper, answer the following questions: What research questions are the authors addressing in their papers? What theories and methodologies are they using the examine these questions? What contribution does this research make to the study of black women’s politics? Finally, what suggestions would you give the authors for improving their research?

**3) Research paper (30%): Due April 21st**

This assignment requires an analysis of a topic/issue concerning African American/Black women. You may choose to write a paper about an individual, a group of women, an issue of concern to black women, their status of voters, their status as candidates/activists. etc. Include a theoretical framework for your study. It can be either qualitative or quantitative.

The paper should range from 20-25 pages, be typed and double-spaced (exclusive of tables, photos, lists, and references).  A well-developed paper may include scholarly sources (books and articles), reports from agencies and organizations, and credible websites.

Use parenthetical citations in the paper that include the person’s last name, year of publication, and page number-i.e., (Wright, 2020, 20).  Include a Bibliography page at the end of the paper that lists your sources.  The sources can be formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, M.L.A., or the American Psychological Association (A.P.A.) format.  See the sources in the textbooks for examples.  Also, submit your papers through turnitin.com.

**5) Paper Presentation (10%) (To be given on April 15th)**

Summarize the main points of your paper in your PowerPoint presentation that is no more than 20 minutes in length (approximately 15 slides). A brief discussion of the papers will take place at the end of that class.

**Feedback**

I will grade each assignment and record your grade on canvas within a week after it is completed. I will also provide information each week about your class participation.

**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

A C- will not be a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule or College Basic Distribution credit.

**Disabilities Statement:**

Students requiring accommodations must first register with the Dean of Student’s office, Disability Resource Center. The Dean of Student’s office will provide documentation, which the student will then give to the instructor. For more information, see [HTTP://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc](https://mail.ufl.edu/OWA/redir.aspx?C=2cb007bd128b47548756116534ed7741&URL=HTTP%3a%2f%2fwww.dso.ufl.edu%2fdrc)  

**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 can be accessed at the link below and 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. [<https://archive.catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>]

**Privacy Issues:**

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded.  If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded.  If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

**Counseling Services:**

For help from the university counseling services and mental health services, call (352) 392-1575, see <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, or call the University Police Department [(35) 392-1111] or 9-1-1 for emergencies. You can also find help at the U Matter We Care site [<https://umatter.ufl.edu/>].

**Course Evaluation:**

At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. We will evaluate the class on the last day.

**Class Schedule:**

Why Study Black Women? The Mother of Black Political Science

1-14 Introduction to the class

Reserve readings:

Jewel Prestage, “In Quest of the African American Political Woman”

Jewel Prestage, “The Case of African American Women and Politics”

Sheila Harmon-Martin, “Jewel Limar Prestage: Political Science Trailblazer and Mother of Black Political Science”

Jenn Jackson, “Breaking Out of the Ivory Tower: (Re)Thinking Inclusion of Women and Scholars of Color in the Academy”

Mae King, “Oppression and Power: The Unique Status of the Black Woman in the American Political System”

Nikol Alexander-Floyd, “Why Political Scientists Don’t Study Black Women, But Historians and Sociologists Do: On Intersectionality and the Remapping of the Study of Black Political Women” (pages 3-19 of the Black Women in Politics Special Issues of the National Political Science Review journal that is on reserve)

Slavery, Reconstruction, and the Turn of the Century

1-21 **Our Guest: Dr. Nikol Alexander-Floyd**

Textbook readings:

*Vanguard* chapters 1, 2, and 9

Black Feminist Politics, chapter 2

*Equal Justice Under the* Law, “Equal Justice Under the Law” chapter

Reserve readings:

Jane Crow: Pauli Murray’s Intersections and Antidiscrimination Law

Women’s Suffrage, Black Civil Rights, and Black Power

1-28 Textbook readings:

*Vanguard* chapters 6, 7, and 8

*Shirley Chisholm*, chapter 4

Reserve readings:

Tracye Matthews, No One Ever Asks What a Man’s Role in the Revolution Is: Gender Politics and Leadership in the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971

Black Female Voters

2-4 **Our Guest: Dr. Sheila Harmon-Martin**

Reserve readings:

Chatman and Jackson Sow, The Disregarded Canary: On the Plight of Black Women Voters

Mirya Holman, “Social Capital and Solving the Puzzle of Black Women’s Political Participation”

Junn and Masouka, “The Gender Gap is a Race Gap”

Claudine Gay and Katherine Tate, “Doubly Bound: The Impact of Gender and Race on the Politics of Black Women”

Wendy Smooth, “African American Women and Electoral Politics”

Intersectionality Research and Black Female Mayors

2-11 Reserve readings:

Evelyn Simien, et al. “A Portrait of Marginality in Sport and Education: Toward a Theory of Intersectionality and raced-Gendered Experiences for Black Female College Athletes”

Julia Jordan-Zachery, ““I Ain’t Your Darn Help”: Black Women as the Help in Intersectionality Research in Political Science” (pages 19-30 of the Black Women in Politics Special Issues of the National Political Science Review journal that is on reserve)

Sharon Austin, “Black Female Mayors on the West Coast”

Sharon Austin, “Introduction”

Sharon Austin, “Keisha Lance Bottoms Governs a City of Haves and Have-Nots”

Statewide Campaigns and Republican Women

2-18 **Our Guest: Dr.** **Miriam Harris**

Textbook reading:

*Black Feminist Politics*, chapter 4

*The Truths We Hold*, chapter 5

Reserve Readings:

Sharon Austin, “Contemporary Black Populism and the Development of Multiracial Electoral Coalitions: The 2018 Stacey Abrams and Andrew Gillum Gubernatorial Campaigns”

Catherine Wineinger, “How Can a Black Woman Be a Republican? An Intersectional Analysis of Identity Claims in the 2014 Mia Love Campaign”

2-25 NO CLASS: Recharge Day

Public Policy and Social Issues

3-4 Textbook reading:

*Equal Justice Under* Law, pages 102-161 and “The Supreme Court and Affirmative Action “Chapter

Reserve readings:

Melanie Njeri Jackson, “Fathering injustice: Racial Partriarchy and the Dismantling of Affirmative Action”

Dorothy Roberts, “Prison, Foster Care, and the Systemic Punishment of Black Mothers”

3-11 NO CLASS: NCOBPS Meeting

3-19 **Our Guest: Dr.** **Martha S. Jones**

Textbook reading:

Black Feminist Politics, chapter 3

Reserve readings:

Nadia Brown, “Mentoring, Sexual Harassment, and Black Women Academics”

Tarana Burke,” #MeToo was started for black and brown women and girls but they’re still being ignored”

Congressional Campaigns and Service

3-25 **Our Guest: Dr.** **Nadia Brown**

Textbook reading:

*Black Feminist Politics*, chapter 5

Reserve readings:

Sharon Austin, “A Record Number of Women Will Serve in the 117th Congress”

CAWP Report, “Black Women in Congress”

Michael Minta and Nadia Brown, “Intersecting Interests: Gender, Race, and Congressional Attention to Women’s Issues”

Orlanda Ward, “Seeing Double: Race, Gender, and Coverage of Minority Women’s Campaigns for the U.S. House of Representatives”

Black Women and the Presidency

4-1 **Our Guest: Dr. Angela Lewis-Maddox**

Textbook reading:

*Shirley Chisholm*, chapter 5-10

Reserve reading:

Paula McClain, et al., “Gender and Black Presidential Politics”

4-8 Textbook reading:

*The Truths We Hold*, chapters 1, 6, 7

Reserve reading:

Sharon Austin, “Before Kamala Harris, Many Women Aimed for the White House”

4-15 Presentations

Evaluate Class