

**School of Public Policy
Georgia Institute of Technology**

**PUBP 3214 African American Politics
Summer 2026**

**Dr. G. A. Persons
Dm-Smith 224 - by Appt.**

Diversity and Inclusion

The Ivan Allen College and the School of Public Policy support the commitment of the Georgia Institute of Technology to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender and identity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community. We also affirm the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society. Welcome Everyone!

SYLLABUS

Course Overview

African American Politics has historically been concerned about such things as freedom, civil rights, protest politics, liberation, effective representation, and fulsome representation in American society. These concerns have spawned competing and diverse ideologies; diverse social and political movements; diverse strategies; and a strong focus on electoral politics. Always, race has been at the focus of these concerns and related political aspirations. And, always, race has been a powerful delimiter and constraint on African American political aspirations. The present era, and ongoing political discourse follow these patterns.

Required Text-Book

The course utilizes a main textbook as the primary resource: **American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom**, Hanes Walton, Jr., Robert Smith, and Sherri Wallace. 10th Edition. Routledge. 2026.

The textbook for this course is organized as a kind of reflective overlay of the organization, structure, and functioning of the U.S. national government. Hence, the outline of chapter headings closely resembles what one would find in a standard textbook on American Government. **The substantive content of the textbook constitutes a kind of Black perspective on, and grounded critique of, the major institutions and political dynamics of American national government.**

Additional materials for the course may be drawn from sources that capture the unfolding of current events in African American politics—as pertinent to the foci of this class.

Requirements for the course include the following:

Students are expected to keep abreast of current events relevant to the course coverage and are expected to be able to participate in class discussions in a civil and respectful manner.

3 Exams, inclusive of the Final Exam - There will be a **REVIEW** preceding each Exam.

A Research Paper/Report that focuses on some aspect of “African-American Life and Politics.”

Research Topics must be approved by the Professor! Written Guidelines will be provided for the Research Paper.

Grading Policy:

The value of specific Exams may vary, and exam values will be indicated at the time of the Exam.

The value of the Research Paper/Report will be 100 obtainable points.

Individual Grades for the course will be calculated as your percentage of the total obtainable points for all requirements/assignments.

Disability Accommodations –

Students needing Disability Accommodations for Exams should inform the Professor and we will make necessary and appropriate arrangements!

COURSE OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW – OPEN DISCUSSIONS

The Black Lives Matter Movement: What’s It all About?
The Dismantling of Affirmative Action: What’s It all About?
Why Can’t America elect a woman as President?

Part I – Foundations

Chapter 1. Universal Freedom Declared, Universal Freedom Denied: Racism, Slavery, and the Ideology of White Supremacy in the Founding of the Republic.

Chapter 2. Federalism and the Limits of Universal Freedom

Part II – Political Behaviorism

Chapter 3. Political Culture and Socialization

Chapter 4. Public Opinion

Chapter 5. African Americans and the Media

EXAM I**Part III - Coalitions, Movements, Interest Groups, Parties, and Elections**

Chapter 6. Social Movements and a Theory of African American Coalition Politics

Chapter 7. Interest Groups

Chapter 8. Political Parties

Chapter 9. Voting Behavior and Elections

EXAM II**Part IV – Institutions**

Chapter 10. The Congress and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom

Chapter 11. The Presidency, Bureaucracy, and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom

Chapter 12. The Supreme Court and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom

Chapter 13. State and Local Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom

EXAM III**Part V – Public Policy**

Chapter 14. Domestic Policy and the African American Quest for Social and Economic Justice

Chapter 15. The African American Quest for Universal Freedom and U. S. Foreign Policy

Epilogue: African American Politics in the Post-Obama Era...

Final Exam as Scheduled