

Course Syllabus

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POLS 4365 – 001

RACE & ETHNICITY

Fall 2026

August 24 – December 12

Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

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CAS 125

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM

This syllabus provides the general plan for the course. Adjustments may be made as the semester develops. Changes will be announced in class and through Canvas.

INTRODUCTION

Race and ethnicity are often discussed as characteristics of individuals or groups. We will study race and ethnicity as parts of **political systems**. Throughout American history, racial and ethnic categories have shaped citizenship, political participation, representation, immigration, education, housing, employment, criminal justice, and access to public resources. But identifying inequality is only the beginning of political analysis. We want to understand **how it happens**.

Throughout the semester, we will use a common systems framework, asking us to move beyond explanations that begin and end with individual attitudes:

PEOPLE → RULES → RESOURCES → INCENTIVES → POWER → OUTCOME → FEEDBACK → CHANGE

- **Who are the people involved, and how are they positioned differently within the system?**
- **What formal and informal rules govern their choices?**

- **Who has access to money, information, networks, institutions, opportunities, and other resources?**
- **What behaviors do those arrangements reward, discourage, or make possible?**
- **Who gains the power to make decisions, shape agendas, define categories, or resist others?**
- **What outcomes result?**
- **How do those outcomes reshape resources and power for the next round?**

The course examines racial and ethnic identity, classification, ideology, political behavior, immigration, political parties, social movements, coalition building, education, housing, criminal justice, representation, and public policy.

HOW WE WILL LEARN: SSS Approach

This course uses three recurring approaches to move beyond simply reading or hearing about race and ethnicity:

SCREENINGS

Film Labs use documentaries and other media to connect political concepts to lived experiences, historical events, institutions, and conflicts. You will be asked to identify moments that reveal something about **how power works**, connect those moments to concepts from the course, and consider how different institutional arrangements might produce different outcomes.

SIMULATIONS

Simulations, games, negotiations, and decision-making exercises put you inside political institutions. Rather than simply being told that institutions create incentives and constraints, you will experience what happens when you must make decisions while operating under them. The questions become: **what would you do? What does the system make easier, harder, rewarding, or costly to do?**

STORYTELLING

Understanding something and explaining it are different skills. Throughout the course, you will practice communicating political ideas through discussion, reflection, written analysis,

video and voice memos, and other public-facing work. The goal is to explain complicated political processes clearly and responsibly to people beyond the classroom.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. **Explain the historical development of racial and ethnic categories in the United States** and identify their political consequences.
2. **Analyze race and ethnicity by** tracing relationships among people, rules, resources, incentives, power, outcomes, feedback, and change.
3. **Distinguish** how individual behavior and larger political structures can interact.
4. **Analyze how formal and informal rules shape racial and ethnic political outcomes.**
5. **Evaluate how unequal access to political, economic, social, and institutional resources affects political power.**
6. **Identify the incentives created by political arrangements** and explain how those incentives influence individual and collective behavior.
7. **Analyze how power is created, distributed, exercised, challenged, and reproduced.**
8. **Examine racial and ethnic political behavior**, including voting, public opinion, partisan identification, representation, organization, and coalition building.
9. **Analyze social movements and other efforts to change racial and ethnic political systems**, including the obstacles movements encounter and the strategies they use.
10. **Identify feedback mechanisms** through which previous political outcomes affect future resources, incentives, participation, and power.
11. **Communicate through evidence-based** written work, discussion, advocacy, voice/video assignments, and public-facing storytelling.

COURSE GRADES

Assignment	Percentage
Interactive Portfolio	25%
Film Labs	15%
Simulations, Assignments & Discussions	15%
Midterm Advocacy Video	20%

Final Portfolio & Storytelling Project	25%
TOTAL	100%

INTERACTIVE PORTFOLIO

Across the semester, you will complete **six Portfolio Entries**. Each entry asks you to use a different part of the course to develop your ability to explain course concepts. This portfolio provides a record of **what you learned** and **how your ability to analyze changed**.

FILM LABS

There will be **three Film Labs** distributed across the semester. Each asks you to do something increasingly difficult with the course framework.

ASSIGNMENTS & DISCUSSIONS

Additional assignments and discussions will examine specific questions involving race, ethnicity, identity, political behavior, inequality, institutions, and public policy. Many will take the form of **voice or video defenses** rather than traditional discussion-board posts.

You may be asked to:

- **MAKE A CLAIM.**
- **DEFEND IT WITH EVIDENCE.**
- **COMPARE EXPLANATIONS.**
- **RESPOND TO A COUNTERARGUMENT.**
- **IDENTIFY A RULE.**
- **FOLLOW THE RESOURCES.**
- **LOCATE THE POWER.**
- **RECONSIDER AN ASSUMPTION.**

MIDTERM ADVOCACY VIDEO

At the midpoint of the semester, you will complete an individual public-facing Advocacy Video. You will identify a course-related political problem and advocate for a specific intervention. This is not graded on whether I agree with your proposed solution. You should be focused on the quality of your **diagnosis, evidence, causal reasoning, advocacy, and understanding of political feasibility**.

FINAL PORTFOLIO

Your Final Portfolio brings together evidence of your work across the semester. It will draw from:

- **Six Portfolio Entries**
- **Three Film Labs**
- **Three to Four Simulations**
- **Midterm Advocacy Video**

FINAL STORYTELLING PROJECT

An individual **"How Did We Get Here?" project that** may produce a course-related:

- **6–10 minute video essay**
- **documentary short**
- **audio story**
- **narrated digital story**
- **multimedia presentation**

REQUIRED BOOKS

Eberhardt, Jennifer L.

Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do.

ISBN: 9780735224957

Oluo, Ijeoma.

So You Want to Talk About Race.

ISBN: 9781580056779

Additional readings, data, videos, primary sources, and other materials will be provided through Canvas.

GRADING SCALE

Below 60 = F

60 and less than 70 = D

70 and less than 80 = C

80 and less than 90 = B

90 and less than 100 = A

POLITICAL VIEWPOINTS & DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

This course examines subjects on which people often hold strong political, moral, and personal beliefs. You are not required to adopt a particular position about race, ethnicity, immigration, affirmative action, policing, inequality, political parties, social movements, or any other subject we study. But you are required to engage seriously with **evidence, course concepts, and competing explanations**. Your grade reflects your ability to analyze evidence, apply concepts, identify causal relationships, and communicate your reasoning, not whether your conclusions agree with mine.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Race and ethnicity can produce difficult conversations precisely because they intersect with politics, history, identity, inequality, and competing understandings of American society. Disagreement is permitted, but intellectual disengagement is not. I expect everyone to:

- Critique arguments.
- Question evidence.
- Challenge assumptions.
- Interrogate rules.
- Follow resources.
- Analyze power.

I am not aiming to eliminate disagreement or discomfort, I'm trying to create an environment in which we can investigate difficult questions seriously.

ACCOMODATIONS

Students who require academic accommodations should work with UT Tyler's **Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR)** office. Approved accommodations will be implemented consistent with university policy and the essential requirements of the course.

Students are encouraged to communicate with me early in the semester so that we can ensure approved accommodations work effectively with exams, screenings, simulations,

classroom activities, and other course requirements.

TECH & ATTENTION

Technology may be used for **course-related purposes** during class. Texting, social media, unrelated browsing, watching videos, or other sustained off-task activity interferes not only with your learning but potentially with students around you. I will generally treat occasional distraction as exactly that. Repeated behavior that disrupts the learning environment, however, may require correction or ejection.

There will also be times when I ask everyone to put devices away so that we can concentrate on a discussion, screening, simulation, or other activity.

FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICY

Students sometimes balance college with responsibilities as parents and caregivers. Those responsibilities do not always conform neatly to a class schedule.

Babies who need to accompany a parent are welcome. Older children may also occasionally accompany a student when **unexpected gaps in childcare** occur. This policy is intended to help students manage occasional conflicts; it is not intended as a substitute for regular childcare.

When possible, students bringing children should choose a location that allows them to step outside temporarily if their child needs attention in a way that significantly disrupts class.

Most importantly, **communicate with me.**

Parenting, caregiving, employment, and education can create competing demands. I maintain the same academic standards for students while recognizing that there may be more than one reasonable way to help a student meet those standards.

Our classroom should respect the different responsibilities students carry with them when they enter it.

Adapted from Cheyney (2019).

ATTENDANCE

This course meets twice each week and relies heavily on activities that cannot always be recreated outside the classroom. Attendance matters. Your incentive is **the full learning**

experience. But I'm not going to police that. Y'all are grown.

If you're going to miss class, you are responsible for checking Canvas, obtaining relevant notes or materials, and **completing work** that can reasonably be completed outside class.

If circumstances begin interfering substantially with your ability to attend or complete the course, **communicate with me early rather than waiting until the end of the semester.** There are often more options available when problems are addressed while they are happening.

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do. Students Rights and Responsibilities To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php> 

[\(http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php\)](http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php)

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at

<http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php> 

[\(http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php\)](http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php)

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products. There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free

 [\(http://www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free\)](http://www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free)

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. (For Fall, the Census Date is Sept. 12.) Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>  (<http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>). Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date (Sept. 12th) is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid State-Mandated Course

Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career.

This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date). Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the

Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit

<https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> ➞

(<https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler>) and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at

<http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices> ➞ (<http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>),

the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester. (Revised 05/17)

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via

e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

“Cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student's test paper;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed “crib notes”. The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;

- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

“Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.

“Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
(<mailto:writingcenter@uttyler.edu>)
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
(<mailto:tutoring@uttyler.edu>)
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Thu Aug 27, 2026	 Your Agreement (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144113)	due by 11:59pm
Mon Aug 31, 2026	 Portfolio 1 (What I Notice) (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144104)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 6, 2026	 Implicit Bias in Children (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144096)	due by 11:59pm
	 Microaggressions in the Classroom (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144095)	due by 11:59pm
	 The Racial Wealth Gap (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144097)	due by 11:59pm
	 Blind People Describe Racism (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144093)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 13, 2026	 Portfolio 2 (Implicit Association Tests (IAT) and Reflection) (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144102)	due by 11:59pm
	 Racial "Color Blindness" (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144094)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 20, 2026	 Is "White" A Racial Identity? (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144091)	due by 11:59pm
	 Racial Classification in America (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144092)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 27, 2026	 Difference Between Latino and Hispanic (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144090)	due by 11:59pm
	 How Latinos Voted In The 2024 Election (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144089)	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
	 Model Minority Myth (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144084)	due by 11:59pm
	 Film Lab #1 - A Class Divided (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144098)	due by 11:59pm
	 Portfolio 3 (Who Named the Category?) (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144106)	due by 11:59pm
Mon Sep 28, 2026	 Final Project Group Sign-Up Sheet	to do: 11:59pm
	 Group Podcast Sign-Up Sheet	to do: 11:59pm
Sun Oct 4, 2026	 "White Flight" & Suburbanization (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144087)	due by 11:59pm
	 Immigrant Workers (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144086)	due by 11:59pm
	 Portfolio 4 (Follow the Rule) (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144107)	due by 11:59pm
	 The Great Migration, Explained (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144088)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 11, 2026	 We Need to Get Back to 1980 on Immigration (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144078)	due by 11:59pm
	 Booker T. Washington v. W.E.B. DuBois (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144085)	due by 11:59pm
	 Latino Intracultural Competition (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144082)	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
	 Midterm Advocacy Video (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144103)	due by 11:59pm
	 Portfolio 5 (Find the Lever) (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144108)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 18, 2026	 The Black Church (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144081)	due by 11:59pm
	 The Chicano Movement in Texas (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144080)	due by 11:59pm
	 Gen Z: What Changed, What Stayed the Same? (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144079)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 25, 2026	 Film Lab #2 - Street Fight (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144099)	due by 11:59pm
	 Portfolio 6 (Follow the Feedback) (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144109)	due by 11:59pm
	 Portfolio 7 (Where Does Change Come From?) (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144110)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 1, 2026	 The End of Affirmative Action (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144077)	due by 11:59pm
	 The Disturbing New Face of Mass Incarceration (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144076)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 8, 2026	 The School-To-Prison Pipeline (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144083)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 29, 2026	 Film Lab #3 - Salt of the Earth (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144100)	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Sun Dec 6, 2026	 Final Portfolio (https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/54666/assignments/1144101)	due by 11:59pm