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PSC 395.01: Politics of Civil Rights

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Summer 2004, Session 1
PS 395: Politics of Civil Rights
Dr. Gregory Koger

LA 337 M-F 7:30-9 a.m.
Office Hours: M-Th 9-10 a.m.
Office: LA 354

Syllabus: The Politics of Civil Rights, 1945-1965

The central purpose of this class is to trace the transformation of civil rights in America from 1945 to 1965 from a political perspective. This period is *historically* interesting because several key events in America's racial development occurred during this era: Brown v. Board of Education, the rise of the civil rights movement, and landmark legislation to protect civil and voting rights. This is an often-discussed period, but this class takes the path less traveled: our focus is on the role of elections, party strategy, and Congress during this era.

From a *political* perspective, the civil rights era is interesting as a case study in a larger question—how well does our governing structure represent political minorities? While we will focus on the plight and progress of African Americans during this era, we are also interested in gauging how well our political system represents discrete political groups.

This is primarily a reading class. Your primary responsibility is to be prepared for every class and to participate actively. To that end, this class features rules and rituals designed to promote active participation. First, attendance and participation are both key parts of your grade. Second, you will be responsible for a short class presentation on an election or bill. Finally, each class will begin with students being chosen at random to summarize the readings for the day.

Additionally, you are responsible for a short paper describing and evaluating a key election or bill during this period. Here is the breakdown of grades:

Attendance	30%
• 1 excused absence; -2% for every subsequent missed class.	
Participation	20 %
Presentation	10%
Paper	40%

Late papers are docked a **full grade** for each day late. There are no excuses for late papers; start papers early and protect yourself against computer failures.

READINGS

There is one required text, *Walls of Jericho* by Robert Mann, and a small packet of readings.

Class	Topics	Readings
WEEK 1		
May 24	Introduction. Representing minorities.	
May 25	Reconstruction to World War II	Riches, <i>Civil Rights Movement</i> , introduction.
May 26	Parties and Civil Rights	<i>Hope and Independence</i> , ch. 1
May 27	New Deal Politics	Reichley, <i>Life of the Parties</i> , ch. 12, 227-234
May 28	Democrats, Republicans, and the South	Reichley, ch. 14
WEEK 2		
May 31	Memorial Day. Don't come to class.	
June 1	1945-1948	Riches, ch. 1
June 2	Truman	Billington, "Civil Rights, President Truman, and the South"
June 3	The 1948 election	Walls of Jericho 1
June 4	1949	Walls of Jericho 4
WEEK 3		
June 7	The Brown decision and protests	Walls of Jericho 8, 9
June 8	1956 election and 1957 cloture reform	Walls of Jericho 10
June 9	1957 civil rights bill	Walls of Jericho 11
June 10	1960 civil rights bill	Walls of Jericho 12, 13
June 11	1960 election	Walls of Jericho 14
WEEK 4		
June 14	1961	Walls of Jericho 15
June 15	1962	Walls of Jericho 16
June 16	1963	Walls of Jericho 17
June 17	Civil Rights bill pt. 1	Walls of Jericho 18
June 18	Civil Rights bill pt. 2	Walls of Jericho 19
WEEK 5		
June 21	PAPERS DUE. Civil Rights bill 3	Walls of Jericho 20
June 22	Voting rights bill 1	Walls of Jericho 22
June 23	Voting Rights Bill 2	Walls of Jericho 23
June 24	After 1965?	Frymer, ch. 4
June 25	Summary: representing minorities	

WJ 5: Humphrey and Senate society

WJ 6: Humphrey moves into senate society; LBJ and Dick; LBJ elected maj whip.

WJ 7: civil rights legislation 1950-. Dick's failed campaign. LBJ for maj leader. 1953 cloture reform effort.

WJ 8: review of civil rights. Brown vs. board. Civil rights movement.

Wj 15: LBJ as VP. HH becomes whip.

WJ 21: HH as VP. 64 election