

POLS 148-01: District of Columbia Government and Politics

Fall 2022

Tuesday and Thursday 3:40-5:00PM, Douglass 104

Instructor: Robinson Woodward-Burns, robinson.woodward@howard.edu

Instructor Office Hours: Thursday 2:00-3:40PM Douglass 306

Course Overview

This course addresses the government and politics of the District of Columbia. The course is ordered chronologically, with each class meeting describing a different era and issue in the history and politics of the District. Classes describe the District's indigenous people and settlers, the District's planning and construction, the lives of free and enslaved residents, congressional debates over abolition in the District, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the role of Jim Crow in residents' and workers' lives, the civil rights and Black power movements, white flight and the "chocolate city" era, and contemporary gentrification, focusing on policing, LGBTQ identity, food politics, and poverty. Across these eras, the course emphasizes the District's relationship with Congress, recounting Washingtonians' long fight against congressional oversight and for home rule, representation, voting rights, and statehood.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your course grade has five parts:

Attendance 20%

One absence is automatically excused. Subsequent absences are excused given documentation. Please read and bring the assigned material for each class. The participation grade for a given day may be based on a pop quiz on that day's readings.

Presentation 10%

The presentation should summarize one and only one of the readings for a single class meeting. For example, a student presenting on Sept. 2 can present on Bordewich or on Asch and Musgrove, but not both readings. The presentation should 1) summarize the reading, 2) prompt discussion with at least one question (either during or after the presentation), and 3) last roughly 10 minutes. Students may use aids like a handout or PowerPoint presentation but are not required to do so. If a student misses his or her assigned presentation date, he or she can reschedule, but will lose a third of a letter grade for each time rescheduled. If a student fails to sign up for a presentation before slots are filled, he or she can submit a written presentation, but will lose a full letter grade. The instructor will email students comments and a grade. Students should sign up for presentation slots at signup.com/go/LsoDBMC

Paper 1 20%

Topics will be posted to the Blackboard Content tab by Sept. 17. Due by 11:59PM EST **Oct. 1**.

Paper 2 25%

Topics will be posted to the Blackboard Content tab by Oct. 22. Due by 11:59PM EST **Nov. 5**.

Paper 3 25%

Topics will be posted to the Blackboard Content tab by Nov. 30. Due by 11:59PM EST **Dec. 14**.

Paper instructions will be posted with paper topics to Blackboard. Each paper should be 5-6 pages, double spaced, due as a Word or PDF file by email. Papers should include in-text citations and/or a bibliography.

Students may choose the citation style. Please use 10 to 12 pt. font and one-inch margins. The teaching assistant will email students comments and a grade.

All grades are assigned as letter grades, i.e. A+, A, A-, B+, B, etc.

Students are expected to read and follow Howard University's [Academic Code of Student Conduct](#), including rules on cheating, plagiarism, etc. Please note plagiarism includes copying and rewording material from another source, even with citation. Plagiarized assignments will receive a zero. Late assignments decrease a third of a letter grade per day for up to five days. Students missing a paper or meeting for an emergency or for health or family issues can retake the assignment given documentation. All assignments, including make ups, must be completed before the last day of class.

If you do not have regular access to a computer, need accommodation because of a disability, or if you other have questions, please email me. If you have issues with Blackboard, please see the university's [Blackboard orientation site](#) or contact ETS at helpdesk@howard.edu or 202-806-2020. Students should also note College and University deadlines on the university's [academic calendar](#).

This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Course Schedule and Readings

Readings are available as PDFs on the Blackboard Content tab.

Date	Topic	Readings
Aug. 23	Introduction	
Aug. 25	Settlers and Indigenous People: 1600s-1790s	Asch and Musgrove, Ch. 1, pp.5-15; Bowling, Ch.1, 3, pp. 30-35, 74-106
Aug. 30	Planning the District: 1790s	Abbott, Ch. 2 pp.26-52; Bordewich, Prologue, Ch. 1-2, pp.1-52
Sept. 1	Slavery and Building the District: 1790s-1800s	Bordewich, Ch. 3, 5 pp.53-81, 118-124, 219-31; Asch and Musgrove, Ch.2, pp.16-46
Sept. 6	Enslaved and Free Black Women: 1810s-1840s	Nunley, Introduction, Ch. 1, 3, pp. 1-40, 70-95
Sept. 8	Congress and Abolition I: 1830s-1840s	Gilhooley, Ch. 6-7, pp. 125-186
Sept. 13	No class – prof. at conference	
Sept. 15	No class – prof. at conference	
Sept. 20	Congress and Abolition II: 1840s-1850s	Shelden, Introduction, Prologue, pp.1-13; Asch and Musgrove, Ch.4, pp. 84-118
Sept. 22	Civil War and Early Reconstruction: 1860s-70s	Masur, Introduction, Ch. 1, pp. 1-50; Asch and Musgrove, Ch. 5, pp. 119-151
Sept. 27	Late Reconstruction: 1870s-1890s	Masur, Ch. 6, pp. 214-256; Asch and Musgrove, Ch. 6, pp. 152-184
Sept. 29	Jim Crow and Black Civil Servants: 1900s-1910s	Yellin, Introduction, Ch.5-6, pp.1-8, 113-72
Oct. 4	Jim Crow and Black Womanhood I: 1910s-1920s	Lindsey, Introduction, Ch.1, pp.1-51
Oct. 6	Jim Crow and Black Womanhood II: 1930s-1940s	Murphy, Introduction, Ch. 5, pp. 1-14, 140-170

Date	Topic	Readings
Oct. 11	Jim Crow and Congressional Rule: 1940s-1970s	Asch and Musgrove, Ch.10, pp. 285-319
Oct. 13	Black Power Uprisings: 1960s	Walker, Introduction, Ch. 3-4, pp.1-5, 49-97; <i>Washington Post</i> . “ The Four Days in 1968 That Reshaped D.C. ”
Oct. 18	Chocolate City Machine Politics: 1970s-1990s	Asch and Musgrove, Ch.13, pp.390-424; Jaffe and Sherwood, Ch.7-8, pp.135-170
Oct. 20	Chocolate City Drugs and Crime: 1970s-90s	Jaffe and Sherwood, Ch. 11-14, pp.227-313
Oct. 25	Chocolate City Policing: 1970s-90s	Forman, Introduction, Ch. 1, 5, pp.3-46, 151-184
Oct. 27	Chocolate City Black Power Politics: 1970s-1990s	Musgrove, “ Black Power in Washington D.C. ”; Pearlman, Introduction, Ch. 4, pp.1-18, 139-178
Nov. 1	Chocolate City Music: 1970s-1990s	Hopkinson, Ch. 1-2, pp.1-29
Nov. 3	Chocolate City Statehood and Home Rule: 1970s-1990s	Fauntroy, Ch. 2, pp. 23-64; Musgrove, “Statehood Is Far More Difficult”; Randolph, “What DC Statehood Would Mean to Black America”
Nov. 8	Gentrification, Logan Circle, and U Street: 2000s-2020s	Easter, “Black D.C. Is Gone?;” Hyra, Ch.1, 5, pp. 3-22, 105-126
Nov. 10	Gentrification, Commoditization, and H Street: 2000s-2020s	Summers, Introduction, Ch. 4, pp.1-27, 111-142; Baca and Finio, “Gentrification in DC”
Nov. 15	Gentrification, Food, and Developers: 2000s-2020s	Reese, Introduction, Ch. 2, pp.1-19, 44-68; Overly et al. “Washington Was an Icon of Black Political Power.”
Nov. 17	Statehood and the Future I	Woodward-Burns, “Statehood Is Back on the House’s Agenda”; Asch and Musgrove, Democracy Deferred
Nov. 22	Statehood and the Future II	Woodward-Burns, “The Best Way to Secure the Capitol”; Summers, “The Chocolate State.”; Hatcher-Mays and Levin, “The Senate is Broken” Meeting via Zoom: link passcode POLSPOLS
Nov. 24	No class - Thanksgiving	
Nov. 29	No class – prof. at conference	
Dec. 1	Conclusion	Meeting via Zoom: link passcode POLSPOLS

Bibliography

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