

To: POSC 108: Race and Ethnic Politics

From: Loren Collingwood

Subject: Possible Exam Questions

Date: January 27, 2016

Three of the questions will be on the exam. Best of luck!

1. Recently, in *Shelby County v. Holder* the U.S. Supreme Court struck down section 5 of the Voting Rights Act (1965). This section required states and localities with histories of racial discrimination to pass any changes to their voting laws by the federal government. Based on the readings and your knowledge of race and ethnic politics in the U.S., what is your take on what is likely to happen as a result of this SCOTUS decision?
2. In the latter years of his tenure as president, George W. Bush pushed for comprehensive immigration reform, which included a pathway to citizenship for those living in the country illegally. In response, most of the GOP base in Congress revolted pushing for a tightening/hardening of immigration legislation. In response to this, huge pro-immigrant protests erupted around the country in 2006. What does the text tell us about minority political participation beyond the voting booth? Is it effective? What role does group-threat play in activating the Latino vote?
3. Some people argue that while the U.S. may have been founded on racist principles (what with the enslavement of Blacks and the near genocide of the native population), as a society we have moved beyond race. These people point to the election of Barack Obama as an example that America is post-racial. As a result, we should do away with policies like affirmative action and aide to specific minority populations that are under-represented. Instead, any aide should be entirely class-based. What do you think? Does America still have a race problem or is it now just a class problem? In your answer, consider the arguments presented in class and the two texts discussed thus far.
4. Sidanuis & Prato argue that prejudice and racism are best understood by examining racial attitudes through a group-based paradigm. First, explain how Blumer's group-based positioning and threat works theoretically. Second, summarize and explain social-dominance theory and the nature of hierarchical group-based thinking (their observations about societies, role of aggregate individual and institutional discrimination, behavioral asymmetry, and legitimizing myths). Do these theories help explain the white push for colorblindness and white antipathy towards affirmative action? If so, how so? If not, why not?
5. The Democratic Party greatly relies upon the minority vote in order to win elections, and many analysts say that minority growth will doom the Republican Party. Still, the GOP remains strong, as their presidential candidates are basically even with Democratic candidates in early polling, Democrats have lost both houses of Congress and also lost spots in state legislatures around the country. If minorities tend towards Democrats and are continuing to grow in size, why do Republicans continue to be so dominant in many areas of politics?