PS 399: BARACK OBAMA AND THE 2008 ELECTION  
SUMMER 2009 SYLLABUS  
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Political Science Weekend Session: Saturday July 11, 9 AM-3:50 PM; Sunday July 12, 9-11:50 AM  
2 Credits (including mandatory registration for 1 credit PS 405). CRN: 42593. RM: 221 Allen

Professor Daniel Martinez HoSang  
Office: PLC 923  Email: dhosang@uoregon.edu  Phone: 346-4861  
Office Hours: Friday July 10, 12-3 PM, Monday July 13, 12-3 PM or by appointment.

NOTE: You must register for PS 399 (CRN 42593) AND PS 405(CRN 42594). PS 399 provides 1 credit for attending the weekend class and the PS 405 provides 1 credit for completing the final paper (it is NOT a separate class), but you must register for both together—you cannot register for PS 399 alone.

Attendance is MANDATORY for class on both 7/11 and 7/12 in order to receive a passing grade.

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores Barack Obama’s historic 2008 presidential campaign. It focuses on Obama’s early life, his entry into politics, the Democratic primary, and the campaign for the presidency. What role did Obama’s early life—growing up in Hawaii and Indonesia and spending time in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago—play in shaping his political values and ambitions? What led Obama to run? How did conflicts over race and racism shape the political environment he encountered? What role did popular cultural forms (think Saturday Night Live skits) play in the election? How do we explain Obama’s success, and what precedents might this set for the future of US politics? We will consider these questions through various readings (including Obama’s memoir, Dreams from My Father), documentaries about the campaign, lectures, discussions, and small group activities.
B. Reading Requirements and Texts

(Except for Dreams from My Father, all of the assigned readings below are available on the Blackboard (Bb) website for our course, which can be accessed at https://blackboard.uoregon.edu/. Please email the instructor (dhosang@uoregon.edu) if you have never used Blackboard before).

**MANDATORY TO READ BEFORE CLASS**

Before class meets on July 11-12, please complete the following readings, as they will be covered during the in-class quizzes. The discussion and our quizzes will emphasize broad themes rather than specific details, so don’t worry about retaining or memorizing minor points. Instead, familiarize yourself with the basic narrative and key events.


**TO READ BEFORE OR AFTER CLASS**

These readings must be completed in order to write the final paper, but they do not have to be done before class meets on July 11-12. That having been said, you will be able to absorb much more from the lectures and discussions if you read these in advance of the class. Most are quite short.

*On political critiques of Obama and his campaign:*


*On Obama and race:*

C. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

• **IN CLASS QUIZZES:** At the end of the day on Saturday and Sunday, there will be brief in class quizzes based on the lectures and discussions for that day and the required reading. (30% of final grade)

• **ATTENDANCE/SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION EXERCISES:** Students will do two small group discussion exercises on Saturday. Note, you must attend class on both days to receive a passing grade. (20% of final grade)

• **FINAL PAPER.** All students will write an 8-13 page essay due no later than **Friday August 7.** A list of potential topics will be passed out in class. The essay will require students to draw from the readings and class lectures, films and discussions. The essay can be submitted via hard copy (either in person or through the mail) to Professor HoSang’s mailbox in PLC or submitted electronically by email. The essay must also be submitted through the Safe Assign plagiarism detection program on Blackboard (50% of final grade).

D. COURSE SCHEDULE

**SATURDAY**

Part I: Course Introduction/Obama’s early life, 9-10:30 AM
• Film clip: “The Path to the Corridors of Power” from *The Choice, 2008*

Part II: The Political Landscape, 10:45 AM-12:15 PM
• Film clip: “John McCain, Center State at the 2004 GOP Convention” from *The Choice, 2008*

Part III: The Primary Campaign, 1-2:30 PM
• Film clip: *The Candidates: Barack Obama* (2008)

Part IV: The General Election I, 2:45-3:50PM
• Film clip: *By the People: The Election of Barack Obama* (2009)

**SUNDAY**

Part V: The General Election II, 9-10:30 AM
• Film clip: “Two Very Different Men” from *The Choice, 2008*

Part VI: The Impact and Legacy of the 2008 Election? 10:45 AM-11:50 AM
• Film clip: *By the People: The Election of Barack Obama* (2009)