

Political Science 71H
The Politics of Identity
Professor Andrea Benjamin

This paper is Due in Class December 5, 2017.

This paper should be 5 pages, double spaced (1 inch margins, Times New Roman font). Failure to meet these requirements will result in a deduction in 3 points on this assignment.

Each day the paper is late will result in 3 points/day deduction.

Paper #2 Prompt

This semester we have read various social science research that presents Identity Politics in a positive light. That is, we have seen the benefits that come with racial and ethnic groups using politics as a means to meet political goals. On the other hand, we have read various narratives that suggest that Identity and Identity Politics can create a political context where violence and out-group discrimination is the tool used to meet political goals. Although most of the scholarship we have used in this class focuses on the US, there are a few readings that address negative aspects of Identity Politics in the US. Similarly, there are a few examples of positive Identity Politics in the narratives as well.

In this paper I want you to address this paradox. How and when do Identity Politics benefit groups? How and when do Identity Politics hurt groups? Are there institutional factors (government type, electoral rules, access to voting, the right to protest) that help explain one outcome over another? What are those rules? What about context? What makes Identity Politics a positive experience in some cases and a negative experience in other cases? Please use at least two (2) scholarly articles to support your claims and at least one (1) piece of fiction. When addressing the institutional factors of a given location, you may need to rely on outside sources. Please do not use Wikipedia. You may want to search for an article or book that addresses electoral rules in a specific locale that you use an example.

There is no right or wrong answer here, but I want you to work hard to convince me of the reason we observe different outcomes with respect to Identity Politics.

Please cite your work properly and consistently so that if I need to I can look up your references.