FINAL PAPER

The paper is due the last day of class. It should be 12-15 pages in length, double-spaced, stapled, with numbered pages, and with footnotes or endnotes. Proofread your essay carefully.

Please, choose ONE of the following topics and make sure you incorporate into the theoretical analysis some examples or experiences you have had in your group project.

1. An intersectional approach to analyzing the disempowerment of marginalized women attempts to capture the consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of subordination. It addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other discriminatory systems create inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes and the like. Moreover, intersectionality addresses the way that specific acts and policies operate together to create further disempowerment.
   Discuss with references to the pertinent readings we have done in the course of the semester, and particularly during the second half of the term. Address the framework of intersectionality and how certain policies and strategies can have a disempowering or empowering effect.

2. The crucial fact of minority politics—whether that of African Americans, Latinos, or other groups—is their exclusion from the mainstream of American political affairs in spite of their desire to be full participants in it. Examine the factors that prevent the integration of minorities (housing segregation, employment discrimination, school segregation, voting rules, redistricting, etc.).

3. Despite gains made by racial and ethnic minorities in the areas of civil and voting rights, race remains a major source of cleavage in American politics. Examine the intersection of racial politics and political representation in the American political context. Analyze the Voting Rights Act, public opinion and electoral behavior, elected officials and public policies, and the effect of electoral rules and districting decisions on minority representation in Congress.

4. Americans have always been ambivalent about immigration, with realistic concerns bumping into altruistic, even romantic notions. Immigration policy has historically swung between moral links to the American creed and a struggle over whom and how many the economy could afford and society could effectively absorb.

   “U. S. immigration policy must reflect our ideals, our humanitarian concern and our commitment to the plight of refugees worldwide. Besides, the United States benefits from immigration. Hard-working immigrants start businesses, create jobs, and help the economy grow. Culturally, immigrants enrich America with their arts, traditions, and languages.”
“The first concern should be the economic cost imposed by the huge influx of immigrants and their effects on wages and jobs. The fact is that we need to educate and employ the people already here before we can worry about paying for the education, welfare, and health care of hundreds of thousands of newcomers each year. The immigrants we do accept should either have jobs waiting here or have the skills to support themselves. The nation’s first obligation is to protect the welfare and well-being of those who are already American citizens.”

“We need to control immigration to secure our borders and protect our unity. Sept. 11 showed how our immigration policies have failed to keep criminals and terrorists out of the country. Millions of people have evaded our immigration laws and the government has no idea whether any of them pose a threat to us. In addition, the recent wave of immigration has brought increasing pressure to accommodate immigrants by accepting bilingualism. We should honor diversity, but not at the cost of breaking the bonds of cohesion — common ideals, a common language, and common political institutions — that hold the nation together.”

Discuss with references to the history and policies of immigration in the United States and the past and present debates.