Course Description
This course will examine the African American and Latino experience in the American politico-legal system, with special attention to the civil rights movement and the history of affirmative action.

Learning Objectives
The basic goal of the course is to enable students to understand the concept of “minority” and how minorities in the United States have fared politically over time. The course also seeks to test and evaluate the ability of students to write clearly, analytically, and thoughtfully and to provide an opportunity for students to exercise the research skills acquired in either a lower-level writing intensive course or in other courses with writing requirements. Generally, the course seeks to enable students in the acquisition of knowledge about constituent population groups in American society and how public policy and the law interact to produce social, political, and economic outcomes.

Required Texts
Edna Acosta-Belén and Carlos E. Santiago, Puerto Ricans in the United States
David Gutierrez, Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity
Ira Katznelson, When Affirmative Action Was White
Donald G. Nieman, Promises to Keep
Selected Readings available on Blackboard

Course requirements
- Class participation - (30% of course grade). Class participation will be structured so that each student, with notice, is able to formally comment on class readings. Students who are absent on the day they are given notice of participation will lose five points on this requirement for every occurrence. Students who are absent on the day when they are supposed to comment will fail the requirement for that given day and will not be allowed to make up the assignment unless their absence is justified and documented according to university policy. Participation is also expected from everyone independently of assigned presentations.

Presentations should be no longer than 10 minutes. Presenters will answer the following questions: 1. What is the main point of the chapter/reading? 2. What did you learn? 3. What did you find particularly interesting or provocative? 4. Is (are) there any value judgment(s) that you disagree with and/or assumption(s) that is (are) unfounded? 5. Is there anything in the chapter/reading that was not entirely clear?
These questions must be addressed. Each student will address the class as if he/she was giving a lecture. Within that basic framework, there is room for creativity but whatever students choose to do differently should be done in consultation with the instructor.

Presenters should speak loudly, projecting their voice so it can reach the far end of the room. They should avoid excessive reliance on reading their presentation, make sure their diction is clear and their voice attuned to the environment (e.g. if someone coughs at the same time you say something, repeat what you said). They should make good eye contact with the audience and speak at a pace that allows the audience to process the information.

Individual oral presentations will be peer evaluated. Presentation assignments will be made so that everyone has an opportunity to consult with the instructor about anything extra or different from the guidelines provided here that they might want to do to make their presentation the best it can be. Advice should not be misconstrued, however, as a surefire formula for success. The proof of your success will be in your actual performance, and ultimately, my judgment.

Some of the material will be discussed in small groups. Each group will select a recorder who will write down and present the analysis and conclusion of the small group discussion to the whole class. Small groups will address only questions 3-5 above.

Group discussions and presentations will be scored on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest). Peer evaluators of individual presentations will be chosen randomly by the instructor. Each student will complete a group discussion peer evaluation form of the student seated to his/her left.

The participation grade will result from a combination of these scores and my evaluation of overall participation throughout the semester.

Statements or questions that reveal that a reading or readings have not been done or that do not measure up to standards of reason and civility are not only discouraged but will not be considered meaningful contributions.

• Attendance - (10% of course grade). Students who are absent are responsible for the material missed.
• Two ten-page papers - (25% of course grade each). Each paper will be a critical review of one book of your choosing on minority politics. In your review you must incorporate at least three related sources other than book reviews. In other words, you must reference articles or essays that offer a complementary and/or critical perspective on the topic of the book you choose. The books you choose must be other than the required readings and must be approved by the instructor.

Feedback for improvement of the papers will be provided. You must submit your revised papers along with their corresponding drafts so that I can assess improvement.

Failure to submit papers on time will result in a half grade penalty per late submission.

In evaluating these papers I will be looking for quality of presentation (e.g. no typos, no run-on sentences, proper vocabulary), clarity, coherence, thoughtfulness, and originality. Any standard academic format is acceptable.

To receive a grade of “A” your paper must be excellent in every way. For example, a brilliant paper that is not well-written or riddled with typos will not receive a grade of “A”; similarly, a mediocre paper, no matter how beautifully presented will not receive a grade of “A”. You must write well, your presentation must be neat, and your ideas must be interesting, logical, and well-argued. A good argument is one in which a thesis is supported by objective evidence and/or by a logical and coherent set of theoretical statements.

You can retrieve your final paper from the political science office after May 16.

• Proper demeanor and engagement. (10% of course grade). I notice everything and take everything into account, e.g. if you are routinely absent, absent-minded, late, disruptive, disrespectful, texting, browsing the internet, etc. Texting and browsing the internet will be flagrant violations of the terms set here. I assume that everyone knows how to behave appropriately during class and unless a student’s disregard for the basic norms of classroom behavior is flagrant, I will try not to put anyone on the spot. I may call your attention privately but I will do so only on a discretionary basis.

Grading
The course is graded A-E. The course grade will be tabulated according to the weights indicated above for each requirement. Letter grades will be converted into scores between 0-100 according to the scale noted below. As a matter of policy, letter grades will be converted to the top score in the range for each
grade. For example, if you receive a grade of B+ on a given requirement, your score will be 89.

There will be no opportunities for extra credit in this class.

**Grading Scale**

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<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-95</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>94-90</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>89-85</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>84-80</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>79-75</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>74-71</td>
<td>C+</td>
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**Policies**

Please note that, as indicated in the University’s Undergraduate Bulletin: “Each instructor retains the right to modify the syllabus and give notice in class of any modifications in a timely fashion. Students are responsible to apprise themselves of such notices.”

Concerning standards of academic integrity, freedom of expression, and attendance and timely completion of course requirements please refer to: [http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html)

Concerning medical excuses please refer to: [http://www.albany.edu/health_center/medicalexcuse.shtml](http://www.albany.edu/health_center/medicalexcuse.shtml)

Use of laptop computers, tablets or any other hand held devices in the classroom will be limited to taking notes or to reference class readings. Unless authorized, Googling, facebooking, twittering, instagramming, etc. is prohibited. Cellphones must be silent and stowed away during class.

**If you must eat, be discreet.**

If you are late, sit in the back of the room close to the door to avoid disruption. Also, if you must leave class early, let me know in advance, preferably in person rather than by e-mail, and sit in the back close to the door.
Office Hours
M-W-F 9:30-10:30 am HU-B16. If you are unable to meet during scheduled office hours, we can meet at a mutually convenient day and time by appointment. Contact information: jcruz@albany.edu E-mails sent after business hours will be answered the following day if possible. E-mails sent after 5pm on Fridays will be answered the following week during business hours. Business hours are 9am-5pm.

Course Outline and Readings
1/20 Introduction; Review of Syllabus
1/22 Study Abroad Presentation; "What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Minorities?"
1/25 Background on Slavery
1/27 Racial Orders and Political Development
1/29 Background on Affirmative Action
2/1 Nieman Chs. 1-2
2/3 Nieman Chs. 3-4
2/5 NO CLASS, CRUZ AWAY.
2/8 Gutierrez, Ch. 1
2/10 Gutierrez, Ch. 2
2/12 Gutierrez, Ch. 3
2/15 Gutierrez, Ch. 4
2/17 Gutierrez, Ch. 5
2/19 Gutierrez, Ch. 6
2/22 Coalition Politics: Cruz on interminority relations in urban and legislative settings. Readings on Blackboard.
2/24 Acosta-Belén & Santiago, Ch. 1
2/26 Acosta-Belén & Santiago, Ch. 2
2/29 Acosta-Belén & Santiago, 3
3/2 Acosta-Belén & Santiago, Ch. 4
3/4 Acosta-Belén & Santiago, Ch. 5
3/7 Acosta-Belén & Santiago, Ch. 6
3/9 Acosta-Belén & Santiago, Ch. 7
3/11 Acosta-Belén & Santiago, Ch. 8 Mid-Term Paper Draft Due in class. Returned for revisions 3/25.
3/14 Easter Break
3/16 Easter Break
3/18 Easter Break
3/21 Katznelson, Appendix
3/23 Katznelson, Ch. 1
3/25 Katznelson, Ch. 2
3/28 Katznelson, Ch. 3
4/1 Katznelson, Ch. 4
4/4 Katznelson, Ch. 5
4/6 Katznelson, Ch. 6 Revised Mid-Term Paper Due, including draft.
4/8 Nieman, Ch. 5
4/11 Nieman, Ch. 6
4/13 Nieman Ch. 7; The Affirmative Action Debate, reading on Blackboard.
4/15 Regents of the University of California v. Bakke (1978) All the cases available on Blackboard
4/20 Johnson v. University of Georgia (2001)
4/29
5/2
5/4 Class evaluation. (Last day of classes).
5/9 Due date for final paper including revised draft. Due between 10:00 am - 2:45 pm, HU B16.