Latino Politics in The United States
MWF 11:30-12:25 pm HU 20

Description and Objectives
This course will review Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, and Dominican participation, perspectives, and issues in American politics. We will analyze and assess Latino politics in the United States through lectures, class discussion, class debates, and videos.

This course satisfies the diversity and pluralism requirement of the university’s general education program. This means that our study of Latino politics will have the following objectives:

To understand difference as an analytical category, as a source of conflict, as well as one possible basis for democratic participation, negotiation, and understanding;

To review and understand the historical forces that have contributed to the emergence of Latino politics;

To review and understand how Latinos participate politically and how they relate to other minority groups.

Required Readings (available at University bookstore)
José E. Cruz, ed., Latino immigration Policy
Michael Kenny, The Politics of Identity
Lisa García Bedolla, Latino Politics

Selected Readings available on Blackboard

Class Requirements
Participation in class debates – 20% Each student will participate in one debate. The individual grade for each student will be based on the quality of participation. The debates will be structured in the fashion of presidential debates. In each debate session, two groups of students (number per group TBD) will consider one question formulated by the instructor. Each group will answer a different question and each student will have two minutes to respond, up to a total of 12 minutes per debate question. Special care will be taken to make all questions similar in their degree of difficulty but some questions will appear more difficult than others depending on the material. For the sake of fairness, this concern will be of some weight in my evaluation of individual performance.

Students in the audience will take notes of the responses provided by each team of debaters and in each debate segment at least two students will rejoin any of the debaters.
Each student will have one minute to rejoin any debater and the debater rejoined will have one minute to respond, for a minimum of 4 minutes and a maximum of 10 minutes per Q&A segment.

The questions will not be provided in advance much in the same way that presidential candidates do not know ahead of time what questions they will be asked. This means you have to do the readings and come to class. The instructor will moderate the process to promote maximum feasible participation. However, this is a collective process and whether it works or not is a shared responsibility. My expectation is maximum feasible participation.

The debate process will unfold according to the script below:

Assembly of teams – 2 minutes  
Formulation of 1st question and answer by debaters – 12 minutes  
Formulation of 2nd question and answer by debaters – 12 minutes  
Q & A for 1st debate team – 10 minutes  
Q & A for 2nd debate team – 10 minutes

Debate Papers – 50% (4 papers, 4 pages, double-space each) – Debate papers will consist of two parts. Part one will be a summary of the key points made during the debate. The second part will be a commentary on any of the key points of the debate. The second part will provide students with an opportunity to reiterate in a slightly more elaborate way whatever substantive points they may have made in class or to articulate and refine their thinking in writing if unable to participate in class. The papers will be evaluated individually and assigned a grade according to the criteria specified below. There are no points attached to any criterion. I will use the criteria to determine, overall, whether a paper is excellent, good, fair, poor, or a failure. Within these broad categories there will be room for grading according to + or -. The overall grade will be an average of the individual paper grades.

Criteria for Evaluation of Papers

Clarity (word use is appropriate and conveys ideas without confusing the reader); grammar (every sentence has a subject and a predicate, there are no run-on sentences); presentation (the essay is spelled-checked and has few or no typographical errors); organization (the presentation flows logically and there is a beginning, middle, and end); substantiation (opinions and interpretations are backed up through logic or research). As a rule of thumb, the more notes on the margins on my part, the more problematic the essay. In extreme cases, the paper may have so many problems that it is exhausting to point everything out in which case the rule of thumb does not apply.

Midterm Exam – 15%

Final Exam – 15% Exams will test your ability to recall information. Both will be objective and based on the material covered up to the exam date. There will be no study
guide separate from the guidance provided by the instructor through emphasis and repetition.

**Grading**
The course is graded A-E. The course grade will be tabulated according to the weights indicated above for each requirement. Letter grades for debate participation and debate papers 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 assignment, your score will be 89. You will receive a letter grade for your participation in class debates and for the debate papers.

Individual participation in class through statements and questions will be taken into account in determining the **course** grade in borderline cases. An example of a borderline case is someone scoring 94 in the final course tabulation. If that student meets every other requirement but makes no **additional**, distinctive and significant contribution to class participation during the course of the semester, he/she will receive a grade of A- in the course. This is not the same as extra credit and should not be understood as such. There will be no opportunities for extra credit in this class but there will be ample opportunities for spirited and substantive class participation beyond the class debates.

In making borderline determinations, I reserve the right to judge whether contributions are worthy or not. 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.

*Grading Scale*

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<th>Score Range</th>
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<td>94-90</td>
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<td>79-75</td>
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**Policies**
This course is guided by the following general principle: the powers and stipulations not included in the syllabus are reserved to the instructor, who shall use reasonable discretion in the event of contingencies.

I reserve the right to modify the terms of this syllabus and to make changes requiring
additional readings as needed within reason. To the extent that it is possible, any changes made during the course of the semester will be cost-neutral. Students will be given reasonable notice of any changes and every effort will be made to accommodate special needs and circumstances so that there is no negative impact on the ability of students to meet all their academic obligations.

Students are encouraged to provide feedback on the proceedings of the course at any point in time, including suggestions for additional readings and/or activities that enhance the pedagogical process.

Other than to store and make available class readings, I will use Blackboard sparingly. There will be no posting of lecture notes on Blackboard. Students must come to class, be attentive, take notes, and raise questions if in need of clarification or to present a differing interpretation.

I will alert students to specially significant facts and statements through emphasis and repetition but the burden of proof is on the student to understand the main points, facts, arguments, issues, debates, and interpretations.

If you miss a class, do not ask me to tell you whether “you missed anything important.” Come see me during office hours and we can have a conversation about the material that was covered in the class you missed but make sure you have read the material before coming to see me.

Regarding academic integrity, the undergraduate bulletin states: “It is every student’s responsibility to become familiar with the standards of academic integrity at the University. Claims of ignorance, of unintentional error, or of academic or personal pressures are not sufficient reasons for violations of academic integrity.” If you have any questions regarding standards of academic integrity and the consequences following violation of those standards please seek clarification by meeting with me during office hours or by special appointment.

As the undergraduate bulletin indicates: “students will not be excused from a class or an examination or completion of an assignment by the stated deadline except for emergencies, required appointments or other comparable situations. Students who miss a class period, a final or other examination, or other obligations for a course (fieldwork, required attendance at a concert, etc.) must notify the instructor or the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education of the reason for their absence and must do so in a timely fashion.” In this class, you cannot make-up a missed debate and extra credit will not be considered.

Undergraduate academic regulations are fully disclosed and available at http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html

I follow the University's Medical Excuse Policy, which is available at http://www.albany.edu/health_center/medicalexcuse.shtml
Office Hours
MW 10:00 am – 11:00 pm HU B16; W 4:00-5:00 pm Milne 219. If this schedule does not work for you, please make an appointment with me for a mutually convenient time and day. Contact information: jcruz@albany.edu I will check e-mail only during business hours M-F.

Course Schedule
January
18 – Introduction

Background and Context
20 – Lecture: Demographics of Latino Population and Politics
23 – Lecture: What’s in a name: Latinos or Hispanics?; Bedolla, Ch. 1, Introduction: Latinos and U.S. Politics
25 – Lecture: The Historical Context of Latino Politics; Bedolla, Ch. 2, Latina/o Participation: Individual Activity and Institutional Context
27 – “Latino Participation in Elections,” PDF in Blackboard
30 – Class Debate #1

Theoretical Framework: Identity Politics
February
1 - Kenny, Ch. 1, Character and Origins of Politics of Identity; “Identity and Power,” PDF in Blackboard
3 – Kenney, Ch. 2, Politics of Identity in Liberal Political Theory
6 – Kenney, Ch. 3, Citizenship, Public Reason and Collective Identity Debate paper 1 due
8 – Kenney, Ch. 4, Civil Society and the Morality of Association
10 – Kenney, Ch. 5, The Public Faces of Identity Politics
13 – Kenney, Ch. 6, The Political Ethics of Social Movements
15 – Kenney, Ch. 7, Liberalism and the Politics of Difference
17 – Kenney, Ch. 8, Liberalism and the Politics of Recognition
20 – Class Debate # 2

Latino Sub-Groups
22 – Bedolla, Ch. 3, Mexican Americans: Conquest, Migration, Adaptation
24 – Mexicans in Local Politics: “Mexicans in New England,” PDF on Blackboard
27 – Bedolla, Ch. 5, Cuban Americans: Occupation, Revolution, and Exile Politics Debate paper 2 due
29 – Bedolla, Ch. 6, Central Americans: Inequality, War, Solidarity
March
2 – Lecture: Dominicans in New York City and New York State Politics
5 - Bedolla, Ch. 4, Puerto Ricans: From Colonized People to Political Activists
7 – “Puerto Rican Politics in NYC 1960s” PDF on Blackboard
9 – Class debate #3
12-18 Classes suspended
19 – Documentary: Politics con Sabor **Debate paper 3 due**
21 – Documentary: Politics con Sabor – Class Discussion
23 – Mid-term exam

**Immigration**

26 - *Latino Immigration Policy*, Ch. 1, 2
28 - *Latino Immigration Policy*, Ch. 3
30 - *Latino Immigration Policy*, Ch. 6

April
2 - *Latino Immigration Policy*, Ch. 4, 5
4 – **Class Debate #4**
6 Classes suspended
9 No Class

**Representation, Gender, Public Opinion, Local Political Incorporation, Interminority Relations**

11 – “Latino Representation in Congress,” PDF in Blackboard **Debate paper #4 due**
13 – “Homestyles of Latino Political Representative,” PDF in Blackboard
16 – “Role of Latino Candidates,” PDF in Blackboard
18 – “Gender and Citizenship in Latino Political Participation,” PDF in Blackboard
20 – “Latinas in Latino Politics,” PDF in Blackboard
23 - “Latino Public Opinion,” PDF in Blackboard

25 – “Latinization of Lawrence,” PDF in Blackboard
27 – “Interminority Relations in Urban Settings,” PDF in Blackboard
30 – Interminority Relations in Legislative Settings,” PDF in Blackboard

May
2 – “A Place at the Lunch Counter,” PDF in Blackboard
4 –
7 -
14 – **Final exam**, 3:30 pm, HU 20