Course Description
This course will examine the African American and Latino experience in the American politico-legal system, with special attention to the relationship between these groups, the dynamics of minority politics, and the affirmative action debate.

Learning Objectives
1. Through lectures, readings, and class discussion students will understand the concept of “minority” and how minorities in the United States have fared politically over time.

2. Students will also acquire historical and contemporary knowledge about specific population groups in American society and they will learn how public policy and the law interact to produce social, political, and economic outcomes.

3. Students will write two five-page papers, each based on a case-study of a minority group in the United States, and one five-page reflective journal to exercise and hone their ability to think critically, write clearly, analytically, and thoughtfully. Students will also apply and refine research skills acquired in either a lower-level writing intensive course or in other courses with writing requirements.

Required Texts
Elijah Anderson, The Cosmopolitan Canopy
Arlene Davila, Barrio Dreams
David Gutierrez, Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity
Jane Junn and Kerry L. Haynie, New Race Politics in America
Ira Katznelson, When Affirmative Action Was White
Selected Readings available on Blackboard

Course requirements

Class participation - 30% of course grade.

- Class participation will be structured to include one presentation on a class reading (10%) and a presentation of the first of the two five-page papers (15%).
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.

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.

Participation is also expected from everyone independently of assigned presentations. (5%) 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%): Three unjustified absences or four absences justified or not equal failure of this requirement. Additional absences, justified or not, will have a negative impact on the class participation grade. A disproportionate number of absences will result in a grade of E for the course. Lateness will also have a negative impact on your grade.

Students who are absent are responsible for the material missed. I will not recount missed proceedings with anyone who is absent on a given day. Absences due to work, job interviews, weddings, birth of nieces, nephews, cousins, etc. are not justified. If you have decided to be a student you have to be a student. You cannot expect to be enrolled in this class and be excused
from its requirements because the class conflicts with other choices you make.

Two five-page papers - 20% of course grade each. Each paper will be a critical review of one book of your choosing on minority politics. The books you choose must be other than the required readings and must be approved by the instructor. Students will present the first one of these papers in class as part of the participation requirement. A model paper is available on Blackboard for citation and formatting guidelines.

You will submit your papers typed double space, 12 pt font, electronically as word files. I will return your first paper with a preliminary grade and suggestions for improvement, unless you receive a grade of A or A-. You will then re-submit the revised draft. I will return the final papers with the final grades by email. See deadlines below.

One five-page minimum reflective journal - 20% of the course grade. This journal will be due on May 15 typed, single space, as a word file by 12:30 pm.

You will structure your reflections around the question: what does being a minority mean to me and others? Anderson's book provides a model for this requirement.

Reflective journaling is based on observation, participation, and then writing. For this journal, your participation and observation will be in class, in your residential hall or neighborhood, and in any other public or private spaces that you frequent. You should avoid *ad hominen* criticism as well as direct references to individuals but if these are necessary they should be disguised to protect their privacy. As time goes by, make sure you review past entries as this will help you keep a coherent flow and help you save time when putting the complete journal in shape for submission. The final journal can be in the form of a diary or it can be organized topographically, e.g. observations carried out over the course of the semester at a frequent location or locations, or by issue.

You should jot down your reflections while they are fresh. It is important to write regularly so that you can keep your journal organized and also to make sure you have enough material at the end of the course to meet the minimum page requirement. You can write as many entries as you like but I suggest a minimum of two entries per week.

Remember these steps: 1. keep your journal at close range, whether you use a paper notebook, your smart phone, tablet or laptop computer; 2. make
regular entries; 3. participate, observe, and summarize; 4. review regularly.¹

Late submissions will incur a penalty, typically a half grade down but varying according to circumstances.

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<tr>
<th>Timeline for 5-page Papers &amp; Journal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of two books due</td>
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<td>Submission of draft of first paper</td>
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<td>First draft paper returned for revisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revised first paper due</td>
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<td>Second paper due</td>
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<td>Reflective Journal due</td>
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**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 according to the grade scale below.

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<th>Grade Scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>A 4.00</td>
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<td>A- 3.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>B- 2.70</td>
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**Policies**
There will be no opportunities for extra credit in this class. You either meet the requirements specified in the syllabus or you don't.

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)

¹ Adapted from How to Write a Reflective Journal with Tips and Examples https://penzu.com/how-to-write-a-reflective-journal <Accessed August 8, 2017>
There will be no posting of lecture or discussion 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 especially 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 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. This is not an online course. Therefore, I will not discuss class material by e-mail.

I notice everything and take everything into account, e.g. if you are routinely absent-minded, disruptive, disrespectful, texting, browsing the internet, etc. Texting and browsing the internet will be flagrant violations of proper demeanor and engagement. 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 on a discretionary basis.

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. Cellphones must be silent and stowed away during class.

If you must eat, be discreet.

If you are late, sit 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 close to the door.

Office Hours
MW, 1:30-3:00 pm, 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 or Monday, if possible. Business hours are 9am-5pm.

Course Schedule

January
24 - Review of Syllabus
26 - Lecture and discussion: "What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Minorities?"
29 - Discussion: KKK Threatens to Burn Latina- Reading on Blackboard
31 - Background lecture on Slavery; Reading on Blackboard: "Battle Scars"

February
2 - Background on Affirmative Action

5 - Discussion of The Originalist Perspective and The Incoherence of Antonin Scalia. Readings available on Blackboard
7 - Review
9 - June and Haynie, Chs. 1-2

12 - June and Haynie, Chs. 3-4. **Book choices due, 11:59 pm.**
14 - June and Haynie, Chs. 5-6
16 - June and Haynie, Chs. 7-8

19 - June and Haynie, Ch. 9; Coalition Politics: Discussion of Cruz on interminority relations in urban and legislative settings. Readings available on Blackboard.
21 - Review
23 - Gutierrez, Ch. 1-2

March
2 - Review

5 - Puerto Ricans and liberal democracy: Discussion of Cruz, chapters 1,2 of *Puerto Rican Identity, Political Development, and Democracy in New York, 1960-1990.* Chapters available on Blackboard; Book available on reserve
7 - Puerto Ricans and liberal democracy: Discussion of Cruz, chapter 9 of *Puerto Rican Identity, Political Development, and Democracy in New York, 1960-1990.* Chapter available on Blackboard; Book available on reserve
9 - Cruz, "Pluralism and Ethnicity" and Cruz, "Barriers to Political Participation." Readings available on Blackboard.

12-18 - Spring Break

19 - Review. **Draft of first paper due, 11:59 pm.**
21 - Dávila, Chs. 1-2
23 - Dávila, Chs. 3-4

26 - Dávila, Chs. 5-6
28 - Anderson, Chs. 1-2
30 - Anderson, Chs. 3-4. **First paper draft returned to students for revisions.**
April
2 - Anderson, Chs. 5-6
4 - Anderson, Chs. 7-8
6 - Anderson, Ch. 9. **Revised first paper due, 11:59 pm.**

9 - Review
11 - Book Review Presentations
13 - Book Review Presentations

Reading on Blackboard: "You Will Not Replace Us."
18 - Discussion of NYT OpDoc on Race and "You Will Not Replace Us."
20 - Katzenelson, Chs. 1,2

23 - Katzenelson, Chs. 3,4
25 - Katzenelson, Chs. 5,6
27 - Review

30 - *The Affirmative Action Debate*, reading on Blackboard

May
2 - Review of Affirmative Action Cases.

9 - Review. Last day of classes. **Second paper due by 11:59 pm.**

15 - **Reflective journal due, 12:30 pm.**