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Seminar on Latino Politics in the United States

ETHN 1890A • Spring 2009, Tuesdays 4:00-6:20 p.m. • J. Walter Wilson 502

In this *Seminar on Latino Politics* we study the history of Latino politics and the scope of Latino political participation in the United States. To understand such a complex subject, we look at immigration and citizenship policy, Latino social movements, and public opinion. We ask questions about gender and patriarchy in Latino families, and about the ethnic diversity of Latino communities. Finally, we analyze the complex relations between Latinos and African Americans in U.S. politics.

Course Format and Your Responsibilities

This seminar is discussion- and research-centered. Please note that weekly attendance is required for all students. During class meetings students debate implications of the assigned readings, and from time to time make short oral presentations. Conventional written assignments during the semester include **four review essays** (5 to 10 pages), based on course readings and seminar discussions. If you prefer, you may substitute in place of two of the essays, one of these options: 1) a **research project** based on the Latino National Survey; 2) a **bibliographic essay**, for some aspect of Puerto Rican or Mexican American political history; or 3) an **in-class presentation**, based on your analytical review of a supplemental text (from the list below).

Research Option: Latino National Survey (LNS)

Students selecting this option will conduct original analyses of data from the Latino National Survey (LNS), and write a conference-quality paper based on the analysis.

Bibliographic Option: Puerto Rican or Mexican American History

You may choose instead to write a literature review on some aspect of Puerto Rican or Mexican American political history. This bibliographic essay will identify a key theme, and survey the literature on that theme.

Presentation Option: Review of Supplemental Text

A final option you may substitute for two of the essays is an in-class, oral presentation, summarizing and critically evaluating one of the "Supplemental Texts" listed below, available in the Brown Bookstore.

Grading and Assessment

Final grades will be based primarily on the quality of your four essays (20% each). Your seminar participation (which includes contributions to discussions, mastery of assigned readings, attendance, and effort) will contribute the remaining 20% of your grade. PLEASE NOTE: There is no final exam, and we will meet during Reading Period. Our final class meeting will be Tuesday, May 5.

Assigned Readings

There are six required books for this class, but not everyone will be reading the same six. Everyone will read the four titles on the first list (All Students). Each student will also read two from the second list.

Required Texts (All Students)

Latino Politics: Identity, Mobilization, and Representation, Rodolfo Espino, David Leal, and Kenneth Meier (Virginia 2008).

Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles, Lisa García Bedolla (California 2005).

Democracy's Promise: Immigrants and American Civic Institutions, Janelle Wong (Michigan 2006).

Políticas: Latina Public Officials in Texas, Sonia R. Garcia, Valerie Martinez-Ebers, Irasema Coronado, Sharon A. Navarro, Patricia A. Jaramillo (Texas 2008).

Required Texts (Select Two)

Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos, Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanne Oboler, Eds. (Palgrave MacMillan 2005).

Latinos in New England, Andrés Torres, Ed. (Temple 2006).

Latino Spin: Public Image and the Whitewashing of Race, Arlene Davila (NYU Press 2008).

Puerto Ricans in the United States: A Contemporary Portrait, Edna Acosta-Belen and Carlos E. Santiago (Lynne Rienner 2006).

Supplemental Texts (Literature Review)

* *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*, Juan Gonzalez (Viking 2000).

* *Race and Nation in Modern Latino America*, Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Roseblatt, Eds. (North Carolina 2003).

* *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos, 4th Ed.*, Rodolfo Acuña (Longman 2000).

* *The Puerto Rican Diaspora*, Carmen Teresa Whalen and Victor Vazquez-Hernandez Temple 2005).

* *Latino Political Power*, Kim Geron (Lynne Rienner 2005).

* *Black and Latino/a Politics: Issues in Political Development in the United States*, William E. Nelson, Jr. and Jessica Lavariega Monforti, Eds. (Barnhardt & Ashe 2005).

COURSE SCHEDULE WITH READING ASSIGNMENTS

INTRODUCTION: OVERVIEW OF LATINO POLITICS AND CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS

Who exactly do we mean when we say, "Latinos"? Historically, Latinos in the U.S. are both first-generation immigrants and the descendants of immigrants, from former Spanish colonies of the

American Hemisphere. Thus Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans on the island and the mainland, Cuban Americans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Colombians, Nicaraguans, and many others, comprise the Latino population.

January 27

Introduction, and organization of the course; Discussion of goals and expectations

UNIT 1 • POLITICAL EMERGENCE

Collectively, Latinos constitute a rapidly growing population which will soon number 50 million persons and which is already, by most measures, the largest of the nation's "minority" groups. With these rising numbers has come new Latino influence across the U.S. political landscape, in local, state, and national governments, and in the popular political culture.

February 3

Overview: Latino Politics in the United States

Reading assignments:

❖ **Affigne**, "Latino Politics in the United States: An Introduction," and **Martinez-Ebers et al.**, "Latino Interests in Education, Health, and Criminal Justice Policy" in *PS: Political Science and Politics* (2000), Please download articles from http://www.apsanet.org/section_650.cfm

February 10

Elements of the Latino Political System

Reading assignments: **Espino, Leal, and Meier**, selected chapters.

February 17 Long Weekend : NO CLASS

February 24

Latino Political Participation

Reading assignments: **Espino, Leal, and Meier**, selected chapters.

FIRST ESSAY DUE

UNIT 2 • RACE, PLACE, AND IMMIGRATION

The Latino political emergence has been swift, has affected most regions of the country, and has varied a great deal in its details, from place to place. These characteristics pose new analytical puzzles for students of politics. Can social theories about "minorities," evolved primarily to explicate Black-White relations, also explain what Latino individuals will believe, how they will behave politically, or how their leaders will perform? In particular, is it reasonable to expect the conceptual frame of *racial dualism* — rooted in a distinct African American experience of *de jure* and *de facto* segregation — will help us understand Latino politics, in a very different context? Large pluralities or outright majorities in many Latino communities are *mestizas/os* or *mulatos/as*, people of *la raza* which embodies, to varying degrees, European, African, Asian, and Indigenous lineage.

March 3

"Negrura en política" — Black-Latino politics

Reading assignment: **Dzidzienyo and Oboler**, selected chapters.

March 10

Latinos in State and Local Governments and Political Cultures

Reading assignment: **Torres**, selected chapters.

March 17

Latino immigration and “Americanization”

Reading assignments: Wong, selected chapters., and Sierra et al., “Latino Immigration and Citizenship,” in *PS: Political Science and Politics* http://www.apsanet.org/section_650.cfm
SECOND ESSAY DUE

March 24 Spring Break : NO CLASS

UNIT 3 • THE POLITICS OF ETHNICITY AND CULTURE

Many Latinos are recent immigrants, both documented and undocumented. Others have been here for a very long time, yet have chosen to remain permanent legal residents, but not to become U.S. citizens. Ethnically, Latino communities comprise many national-origin cultures, religions, and immigration experiences.

March 31

Puerto Rican Political History

Reading assignment: Acosta-Belen and Santiago, selected chapters.

April 7

Women and Mexican American Politics in Texas

Reading assignment: Garcia, Martinez-Ebers, Coronado, Navarro, and Jaramillo, selected chapters.

April 14

Latino Identity, Race, and Popular Culture

Reading assignment: Davila, selected chapters.
THIRD ESSAY DUE

UNIT 4 • POWER AND IDENTITY

How can one possibly model and understand such a complex ethno-racial community as “Latinos,” using the conventional tools of social science?

April 21

Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles

Reading assignment: García-Bedolla, selected chapters.

April 28

Independent Reading Presentations

Reading assignment: None.

FOURTH ESSAY DUE (OPTIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT IS DUE ON MAY 15)

May 5

Final Discussion,

Reading assignment: None.

May 13 LNS Paper or Bibliographic Essay Due