

The Politics of Latino Identity

Angela Gutierrez

MAS 374/ GOV angela.gutierrez@austin.utexas.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Latinos come from many countries spanning North, South, and Central America. In this class, we will focus on understanding who counts as Latino, and what a U.S. Latino identity means. We will explore the creation of a pan-ethnic group identity, differences between national origin groups, and how Latino group and national origin identities influence political participation. This course will also touch on assimilation theory in an effort to understand what it means to be Latino.

By the end of this course, you should be able to understand the differences and similarities between national origin groups, and explain how these differences impact political participation. You will better understand what it means to belong to a pan-ethnic group and be able to discuss the benefits and costs of pan-ethnicity. In addition to knowing current trends in political participation, we will learn about the history behind these trends in order to c

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are 3 books that are required for this course. If you are a MALS major, please see Luis Guevara to receive a copy of your books. Otherwise, you can pick up a copy at the bookstore or online. Feel free to purchase e-books or audiobooks if that is your preference. Additional readings will be uploaded to the course web page.

Books

Bedolla, L. G. (2005). *Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles*. University of California Press.

Mora, G. C. (2014). *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American*. University of Chicago Press.

Ramos, P. (2025). *Defectors: The Rise of the Latino Far Right and What It Means for America*. Random House.

GRADING

Attendance.....	10%
Participation.....	15%
Literature/ reflection papers.....	30%
Discussion Leading.....	10%
Paper Outline/draft.....	15%
Final paper/ project	20%

DUE DATES

- Friday, Feb 13th: Have your paper topic approved
- Friday, February 6th: First reflection paper in class
- Monday, March 9th: Second reflection paper in class
- Wednesday, April 22: Third reflection paper in class
- Wednesday, March 11th: Paper outline/ draft
- Friday May 1st: Final paper due

DISCUSSION LEADER

Everyone will be required to sign up to co-lead a discussion twice during the semester, providing a brief overview of the reading, highlighting its key concepts or themes, connecting it to the course's larger theme, and posing discussion questions to the class. While not required, some students may want to create handouts for the class. If you have a handout that you would like to distribute, please email me the night before, and I will make copies for the class. Below are some questions that you can use as a guideline to get you started. The signup link will be available on Canvas.

- What is the reading about? What does the author intend to convey?
- Give a short summary of the reading (about 1/2 a page)
- What is the author's main point?
- How does this connect to other themes we have discussed or how does this connect to current political events?
- Is there anything in this reading that was unclear to you?

- Pose two questions that this reading made you think about. Try your best not to repeat the same questions as previous presenters.

REFLECTION PAPERS

Students are expected to finish all assigned readings and be prepared to participate in class discussions. To help motivate participation, students will be required to write in-class reflection papers throughout the term. There are three reflection papers planned for the semester. These reflection papers will be written by hand in class. The topic of each reflection paper will be provided beforehand. Students may bring in one page of handwritten notes or quotes from the text.

FINAL PAPER

This course has no midterm or final. In seminar form, the course will include a final research paper, which will be the largest component of your grade. This paper should be a minimum of ten but no more than twelve pages in length. Topics must be approved by me by the end of week 5. You are required to do outside research using the library resources to inform your argument. A **3-6 page outline of your paper** will be due week 9 in class. We will have a writing workshop in class week 9. The final paper will be due on **date**. A more detailed description of the requirements for the writing assignments will be provided at a later date.

ATTENDANCE& PARTICIPATION POLICY

Seminar attendance is required to receive participation credit. Excused absences will be granted for medically documented emergencies or illnesses (this requires a doctor's note) or a note from an administrator explaining your extenuating circumstances. Absences are unexcused for all other reasons. Everyone gets **three free unexcused absences**. After your third unexcused absence, each unexcused absence will lower your attendance and participation grades by a letter grade. In addition to being present, it is also important that you are **on time**. Anyone who is more than 10 minutes late will be marked as absent.

While being present in class is important, this course emphasizes in-class discussion. Even if you are present in every class, you will not receive participation points unless you are **ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN DISCUSSION**. I keep track of how frequently everyone speaks up in class. This tally sheet is used to calculate participation scores at the end of the semester. If you come to every class but only speak up twice, you should not expect to earn more than 50% for your participation grade.

RULES AND GUIDELINES

- **Late policy-** If you fail to turn an assignment in on time, you are welcome to submit it after the deadline. The assignment in question will be marked down 5 % for each day it is late.
- **Office Hours-** Office hours will be held in my office. If my office hours do not work for you, please email me and schedule an appointment.
- **Emails-** When emailing me, please include your name and reason for emailing in the subject line of your email. Emails should start with a greeting and my name, have at least one body paragraph, a closing, and your signature. Below is an example of a proper email format.

subject line: “Julian Castro set up an appointment”

Hi Dr. Gutierrez,

I was wondering if it would be possible to schedule an appointment to discuss the course material. Are you available anytime Monday afternoon between 2:00 pm and 3:30 pm?

Thanks,
Julian Castro

I will do my best to respond within 48 hours; however, it may take longer on the weekend. Please note that emails should not ask for a summary of the concepts covered in class or whether I will read your paper before you turn it in. I will happily discuss material and ideas with you during office hours.

- **Electronics-** You are welcome to use your laptops in class so long as they do not serve as a distraction. This means textbf no Facebook, iChat, Gchat, Twitter, ESPN, etc.. Allowing the use of computers is meant for note-taking and to reference previous notes. If it becomes a problem, I will ask you to put your computers away. I also ask that you **place your phones out of sight and on silent** during class time to minimize disruptions.

EXTRA CREDIT/ ABSENCE MAKE-UP

Students can receive extra credit or make up an unexcused absence in the course, which will count towards their final grade. To receive extra credit, attend a MALS or another campus event related to the course material. After attending the event, write up a 1-page summary of the event. The summary write-up **MUST** provide details of the event (i.e.,

title, location, date, who was present, who led the event, what type of event, etc.), and it must also address how the event related to a concept, theory, or idea discussed during class. If you are unsure whether an event qualifies, please get it approved by me in advance. Students may complete a maximum of 2 extra credit assignments. Each extra credit event is worth one absence or 1% added to your overall grade.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Your work should consist of your own ideas and your own words. Quotations and ideas used from authors and texts must be properly cited. Plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean. You should not use ChatGPT or other AI devices to write your papers. If I find that you did not write your assignments, you will receive a 0 on the assignment in question, which will also be reported to the Dean.

WRITING CENTER

The University Writing Center is a great resource for improving writing skills. They will look at drafts and preliminary outlines or even discuss how to get started. You can contact them online at <https://uwc.utexas.edu/>

FINAL REMARKS

I cannot stress the importance of communicating with me should problems arise during the semester. It is better to be proactive about situations than to wait until it is too late to find a solution.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

- **Monday, January 12:** No reading
- **Wednesday, January 14:** Mize, R. L. (2018). *Latina/o studies*. John Wiley & Sons.
- **Friday, January 16:** *Making Hispanics* ch 1

Week 2

- **Monday, January 19:** MLK Day NO CLASS

- **Wednesday, January 21:** Making Hispanics ch 2
- **Friday, January 23:** Making Hispanics ch 3

Week 3

- **Monday, January 26:** Making Hispanics ch 4
- **Wednesday, January 28:** Making Hispanics Conclusion
- **Friday, January 30:** The Trouble With Unity (Selected Chapters Online)

Week 4

- **Monday, February 2:** The Trouble With Unity (Selected Chapters Online)
- **Wednesday, February 4:** The Trouble With Unity (Selected Chapters Online)
- **Friday, February 6: First Reflection Paper**

Week 5

- **Monday, February 9:** Barreto, M., & Segura, G. (2014). Unity and Diversity (chapter 2) Latino America: How America's Most Dynamic Population is Poised to Transform the Politics of the Nation. Public Affairs.

Fraga, B. L., Velez, Y. R., & West, E. A. (2025). Reversion to the mean, or their version of the dream? Latino voting in an age of populism. *American Political Science Review*, 119(1), 517-525.

- **Wednesday February 11:** Wakefield D, Fraga BL, Fisk CA. Partisan Change with Generational Turnover: Latino Party Identification from 1989 to 2023. *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*. 2025;10(3):766-790. doi:10.1017/rep.2025.31
- **Friday, February 13:** Eckstein, S. (2022). Cuban Privilege. Cambridge University Press. (Selected Chapters)

Hernandez-Reguant, A. (2021). Making the Cuban American dream great again: Race and immigrant citizenship in Miami. In *The Anthropology of Donald Trump* (pp. 59-74). Routledge

Week 6

- **Monday, February 16:** Abrego, L. J., & Menjivar, C. (2022). Central American migration to the United States: historical roots and current conditions. In *The Routledge History of Modern Latin American Migration* (pp. 232-245). Routledge
- **Wednesday, February 18:** Valle, A. J. (2019). Race and the Empire-state: Puerto Ricans' Unequal US Citizenship. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 5(1), 26-40.
- **Friday, February 20:** Ocampo, A. N., & Ocampo, A. X. (2020). Disaggregating the Latina/o/x “umbrella”: The political attitudes of US Colombians. *Latino Studies*, 18(3), 390-419.

Schut, R. A. (2021). “New White Ethnics” or “New Latinos”? Hispanic/Latino Pan-ethnicity and Ancestry Reporting among South American Immigrants to the United States. *International Migration Review*, 55(4), 1061-1088.

Week 7

- **Monday, February 23:** Fluid Borders Ch 1
- **Wednesday, February 25:** Fluid Borders Ch 2
- **Friday, February 27:** Fluid Borders Ch 3

Week 8

- **Monday, March 2:** Fluid Borders Ch 4
- **Wednesday, March 4:** Fluid Borders Ch 5
- **Friday, March 6:** Garcia-Rios, S., Pedraza, F., & Wilcox-Archuleta, B. (2019). Direct and indirect xenophobic attacks: Unpacking portfolios of identity. *Political Behavior*, 41(3), 633-656.

Week 9

- **Monday, March 9:** Second Reflection paper
- **Wednesday, March 11:** Draft Workshop
- **Friday, March 13: BONUS NO CLASS**

Week 10

- **Monday, March 16: SPRING BREAK NO CLASS**

- **Wednesday, March 18: SPRING BREAK NO CLASS**
- **Friday, March 20: SPRING BREAK NO CLASS**

Week 11

- **Monday, March 23:** Schildkraut, D. J., Jiménez, T. R., Dovidio, J. F., & Huo, Y. J. (2019). A tale of two states: How state immigration climate affects belonging to state and country among Latinos. *selected chapters*
- **Wednesday, March 25:** Ocampo, A. X. (2024). Truly at home? Perceived belonging and immigrant incorporation. *Social Forces*, 103(2), 633-654.
- **Friday, March 27:** Clealand, D., & Gutierrez, A. (2025). More than brown: how race and skin tone matter for Latino group identity. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 1-21.

Week 12

- **Monday, March 30:** The Defectors Part 1 Tribalism
- **Wednesday, April 1:** Huckle, K., & Silva, A. (2020). People of color, people of faith: The effect of social capital and religion on the political participation of marginalized communities. *Religions*, 11(5), 249.
- **Friday, April 3: EASTER BONUS NO CLASS**

Week 13

- **Monday, April 6:** The Defectors Part 2 Tribalism
- **Friday, April 10:** Kehrberg, J. E., Bennett, S. L., & Pray, S. A. (2025). Acculturation, Identity, and the Authoritarian Worldview: Explaining Hispanic Attitudes Toward Police. *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*, 1-23.

Week 14

- **Monday, April 13:** The Defectors Part 3 Trauma
- **Wednesday, April 15:** The Defectors Part 4 The Way Forward & Afterword
- **Friday, April 17:** Gutierrez, A. (2025). Latino Tu Latino Yo: Group threat and group consciousness in California. *Political Research Quarterly*, 78(1), 264-276.

Week 15

- **Monday, April 20:** Zepeda-Millán, C. (2014). Perceptions of Threat, Demographic Diversity, and the Framing of Illegality: Explaining (Non)Participation in New York's 2006 Immigrant Protests. *Political Research Quarterly*, 67(4), 880-888.

- **Wednesday, April 22: Third Reflection Paper**
- **Friday, April 14:** Gutierrez, A., Ocampo, A. X., Barreto, M. A., & Segura, G. (2019). Somos mas: How racial threat and anger mobilized Latino voters in the Trump era. *Political Research Quarterly*, 72(4), 960-97

Week 16

- **Monday, April 27:** TBD