UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
POLS 4315: U.S. Latinx Politics (Online)
Summer 2025

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Course Registration Number: 31983
Class Website: Blackboard through the MyUTEP portal

Course Overview

POLS 4315 provides an in-depth examination of the state of U.S. Latinx politics, including an exploration of the historical, demographic-socioeconomic, and cultural settings that help illustrate the Latinx experience in the United States, including by subgroup, gender identity, and in coalition-building with other racial/ethnic groups. In doing so, we will examine the role that Latinos play in national politics through various means of political participation. We will likewise consider how Latinos are represented by government officials, institutions, structures, as well as how policymaking processes of the federal government are affecting members of the Latinx population. In addition, the course will also deal with community engagement issues and the prospects for key policy reforms in the current political environment. I look forward to working with you during the course of the semester and encourage you to be active in our online activities and discussions.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes relevant to Social and Behavior Sciences (SBS) and in line with UTEP's CEL and Edge Missions - Students can expect to learn the following by the end of this course:

(1) to explore, discuss, and understand the U.S. Latinx experience as a cultural and political phenomenon within the U.S. political system (Targeted Edge Advantages: Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Communication, Global Awareness)
(2) to define, understand, and use concepts and terms relevant to the study of Latinx politics (Targeted Edge Advantages: Communication, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving)
(3) to identify, formulate, and answer complex questions related to the institutions, structures, and processes that impact the lives and social status of Latinos (Targeted Edge Advantages: Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Global Awareness)
(4) to develop ideas about the role that Latinos play in national politics through various means of skill-building in political participation, including social media communication and change-making skills, which lend themselves broadly to leadership in community engagement (Targeted Edge Advantages: Communication, Leadership, Global awareness, Social Responsibility, Change-Making Skills, Initiative and Responsibility)

(5) to apply knowledge and general theories from the literature to evaluate and/or test real-world conditions related to public policy and the Latinx population, including through community engagement opportunities (Targeted Edge Advantages: Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Leadership, Change-Making Skills, Initiative and Responsibility)

Objectives for Good Citizenship

As a member of this classroom it is vital that you to adhere to the following principles of professionalism:

- interpret the consequences of one's own actions (unprofessional conduct will be dealt with swiftly through the university),
- have responsible civic engagement—that is,
    - respect different points of view and different cultures
    - work effectively as a leader and/or member of the class
    - articulate the value to society and the workplace of a diverse and global perspective
- Read carefully and understand you must follow the "Online Etiquette and Effective Communication" section of this syllabus before proceeding with the course to help ensure a productive and fruitful learning environment for yourself and others (see further below).

Grades

Grades will be based on five quizzes, five critical thinking assignments, a midterm major essay, and a final exam. Online class participation is critical for passing the course. Accordingly, you must actively participate in all online class activities and I expect everyone to keep up with our course schedule dates and times for readings and assignments that are due.

Grading/Exams	
Short Quizzes (5 Total, 6% each)	30%
Critical-Thinking Response Assignments (5 Total, 6% each)	30%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Total	*100%*

Final grades are based on accumulated weighted points, rounded to the 2nd decimal:

Final Grade Scale
≥ 89.50% = A
89.49 – 79.50% = B
79.49 – 69.50% = C
69.49 – 59.50% = D
≤ 59.50% = F

I will not change grades. You have the opportunity to credit in this online class with full access to all materials at all times so there is no reason to consider grade changes. If you are concerned

about your grade, please contact me via email and/or make an appointment to see me. This is particularly important if your grade on the first exam is not what you expected. I will not change the grade, but I can give you feedback and suggestions on how to improve your performance in the class.

Required Texts

The course includes one main **zero-cost (free)*** textbook that students can access via the Blackboard course page:

Affigne, Tony, Evelyn Hu-DeHart, and Marion Orr. *Latino Politics en Ciencia Política: The Search for Latino Identity and Racial Consciousness*. New York: New York University Press.

- **ISBN-13: 978-0814768983**

*This required textbook is zero cost thanks to UTEP's institutional subscription to Project Muse.

General Classroom Policies

Online class participation is critical for passing the course. Accordingly, you must actively participate in all online class activities and I expect everyone to keep up with our course schedule dates and times for readings and assignments that are due. This includes logging into the online class regularly, being alert, willing to ask and answer questions, and being prepared to contribute intellectually to the online class discussions/submissions. If I consistently detect a pattern of only a few students participating or completing the assignments, there may be additional "pop-quizzes" assigned at random, which will become part of the overall final grade. Note that the class participation portion of each student's grade is non-negotiable and left solely to the discretion of the instructor.

Make-up work for time missed from the online course activities will only be allowed if you have a university excused absence and follow university guidelines. If you miss a deadline due to an emergency or illness, or if you have a university-approved excuse ahead of time, you must notify me *as soon as possible* to make any necessary arrangements. Note that if you will miss the final exam deadline, I expect you to contact me *immediately* of your emergency situation in order to make arrangement, which may include an incomplete "I" for the course. If you miss a test and do not have a university acceptable excuse, you will receive a "0" on the test. Keep in mind that a make-up exam or assignment may be of a different format than the original exam or assignment.

Online etiquette is particularly important for this course, please note the detailed section below:

Online Etiquette and Effective Communication

It is essential that the utmost respect and professionalism be adhered in all exchanges between class members. This is a political science course and we will be discussing at times sensitive and controversial topics. Avoid any unnecessary arguments with other class members, such as political polemical arguments (e.g., negative partisan talking points targeting those of opposing ideological perspectives or particular political figures) or, even worse, personal attacks on others for having different views. <u>No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated.</u> Unprofessional conduct

will be dealt with swiftly through the university and it is at the professor's full discretion to have a student dropped from the course for any inappropriate behavior.

Please carefully read the following rules for online etiquette and effective communication:

Language: Given the absence of face-to-face clues, written text can easily be misinterpreted. Avoid the use of strong or offensive language, all capital letters, and the excessive use of exclamation points. If you feel particularly strongly about a point, it may be best to write it first as a draft and then to review it, before posting it, in order to remove any strong language.

Respect: A Web-based classroom is still a classroom, and comments that would be inappropriate in a regular classroom are likely to be inappropriate in a Web-based course as well. Treat your professor and your fellow students with respect. Remember that members of the class and I will be reading any postings.

Be Forgiving: If someone states something that you find offensive, mention this directly to the professor. Remember that the person contributing to the discussion is also new to this form of communication. What you find offensive may quite possibly have been unintended and can best be cleared up by the professor.

This is Permanent: Think carefully about the content of your message before contributing it. Once sent to the group, there is no taking it back. When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.

Edit Your Work: The grammar, spelling, and punctuation of a message are part of the grading criteria – you should not expect your professor and peers to decode misspelled words or poorly constructed sentences. It is a good practice to compose and check your comments in a word-processor before posting them.

Test for Clarity: Messages may often appear perfectly clear to you as you compose them, but turn out to be perfectly obtuse to your reader. One way to test for clarity is to read your message aloud to see if it flows smoothly. If you can read it to another person before posting it, even better.

Follow the Parameters/Stick to the Point: Follow the posting requirements and parameters set up by your professor. Contributions to a discussion should have a clear subject header, and you need to stick to the subject. Do not waste others' time by going off on irrelevant tangents. Also keep in mind that no credit will be received for yes/no answers. Posts should justify positions and provide specific examples. Students must demonstrate that they have read the assignment and their classmates' comments carefully and thoughtfully.

Read First, Write Later: Do not add your comments to a discussion before reading the comments of other students unless the assignment specifically asks you to. Doing so is tantamount to ignoring your fellow students and is rude. Comments related to the content of

previous messages should be posted under them to keep related topics organized, and you should specify the person and the particular point you are following up on.

E-mail Protocol

When e-mailing me, please put the course and section number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name and UIN (University Identification Number). Please do not e-mail me about information you can obtain from the syllabus. I do not answer substantive material from lectures or readings via e-mail as it is not an effective means of communicating. If there is class material you are confused about, please contact me during my office hours.

Short Quiz and Critical-Thinking Response Assignments

For every week of the course (except for the midterm point and final week), there will be key readings assigned to the class and you will have two weeks to do those readings and complete two main activities. First, there will be a short quiz (each worth 6% of the total grade) that will help test how well you are able to recall and identify correctly some of the key concepts, terms, findings, and other information from the readings. Second, I will assign critical-thinking response assignments (each also worth 6% of the total grade) that will test your ability to apply key concepts, develop original ideas and opinions, at times think outside the box, and thereby answer complex questions in a meaningful and insightful manner. I will provide the full details and instructions for these tasks via email on the day they are assigned.

As you may know, UTEP has recently begun an initiative called Edge, which recognizes that "Students enter UTEP with many talents, great strengths, and big dreams. The UTEP Edge – the cross-campus culture of student success and empowerment – develops these assets through high-impact experiences made possible by the expertise and dedication of faculty, staff, alumni and community partners." Accordingly, the course short quizzes and critical-thinking response assignments are developed with a mindset to allow each student to apply their learning exercises and skills in a way that aligns with what UTEP refers to as "Edge Advantages" goals as listed under our learning outcomes for the course. To see more information about UTEP's Edge Experiences and Edge Advantages assets, visit: https://www.utep.edu/edge/about/about.html

[Targeted Edge Advantages: Communication, Leadership, Global awareness, Social Responsibility, Change-Making Skills, Initiative and Responsibility]

Midterm and Final Exams

There are two exams for the course. Each exam constitutes 20% of your final grade point average, and the final exam will be cumulative. Questions are based on our course readings, discussions, and other exercises such as a gamification component for the midterm essay exam. The exams will be "open book" so that you will be able to have all support materials you think are necessary to answer the exam questions. The exams will be administered via Blackboard and a deadline for final submission will be provided with plenty of time to complete the exam upon activation (please contact the instructor immediately if any major technical issues arise with the exam or its submission). The exams are to be taken individually—one is not allowed to discuss the exam questions with classmates or anyone else. Please refer to the section on "Academic

Integrity" below to review the university and instructor policies on cheating, collusion, and plagiarism.

Among other Edge Advantages mentioned above, the exams in this course are primarily designed to trigger the Edge Advantage "Problem Solving" where students find solutions to difficult or complex issues as well as "Critical Thinking" in which students become adept at analyzing and evaluating issues in order to solve problems and develop informed opinions.

Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct

Academic integrity and standing require a respect and adherence to the grading policies and rules against cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student and possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. *One example of collusion is signing in for another person (or having someone sign for you) on the class attendance sheet.* As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated.

I encourage students to study together and work collectively; however, working together to write any part of a written assignment, research paper, and/or exam is plagiarism. If you are unsure whether a citation is required, err on the side of caution and provide one. A document detailing different forms of plagiarism is provided on Blackboard. Here is an informative webcast on plagiarism: http://www.plagiarism.org/resources/webcasts

Be aware, just as the internet has made it easier to find material, it has also made it easier to trace the source of any written work. All written work submitted for this course will be checked by the instructor for originality via ***Turnitin***—an online originality checking service made available by UTEP (http://www.turnitin.com/en_us/features/originalitycheck).

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be subject to disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. For further information, please refer to http://studentaffairs.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=4386.

Plagiarism Detecting Software

Some of your course work and assessments may submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

Accommodations Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable

accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you require specific accommodations and support services, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Please keep in mind that accommodations need to be requested at least two weeks (or a month if advance planning, such as the acquisition of books-on-tape, is required) prior to the beginning of the semester. Here is the contact information for CASS: web: http://sa.utep.edu/cass/; phone: (915) 747-5148; fax: (915) 747-8712; e-mail: cass@utep.edu; location: UTEP Union Building East Room 106.

Student Pregnancy and Parenting Nondiscrimination Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

Student Resources

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support. Please refer to the QR code below for a listing of campus resources or visit https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-resource-hub.html.

COVID-19 Precautions and Accommodations

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org.

Further COVID-19 Precautions

You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at screening.utep.edu. If you know of anyone who should report any of these three criteria, you should encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to COVIDaction@utep.edu.

Under no circumstances should anyone go to campus when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let the University know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

Students who refuse to follow UTEP's preventive COVID-19 guidelines will be dismissed from the class and will be subject to disciplinary action according to Section 1.2.3 *Health and Safety* and Section 1.2.2.5 *Disruptions* in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures.

Please note that if COVID-19 conditions deteriorate in the City of El Paso, all course and lab activities may be transitioned to remote delivery.

COVID-19 Accommodations
Students are not permitted on campus when they have a positive COVID-19 test, exposure, or symptoms. If you are not permitted on campus but have face-to-face classes, you should contact your professors as soon as possible so necessary and appropriate accommodations can be arranged.

Students who are considered high risk according to CDC guidelines and/or those who live with individuals who are considered high risk may contact Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) to discuss temporary accommodations for on-campus courses and activities.

Copyright Statement for Course Materials

The course materials used in this course are copyrighted. By course materials, I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, lecture notes and PowerPoint slides, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. This also includes any information posted on the course webpage. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to distribute the course materials, unless I expressly grant permission.

Software Requirements

You will need the following software on your computer to efficiently work in this course (your computer may already have some of these programs installed):

- Adobe Acrobat Reader. To get this program, go to https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/products/pdf-reader.html and follow the instructions.
- Adobe Flash Player. To get this program, go to https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/ and follow the instructions.
- QuickTime Player. To get this program, go to http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/ and follow the instructions.

Microsoft Office. If you do not have a word-processing software, go to https://my.apps.utep.edu. Using My.Apps interface, UTEP students can access most software offered in student computer labs (including Microsoft Office) from their personal computing devices. Students can use any laptop, tablet, or smartphone with an Internet connection and use the software from anywhere at any time. For more information, go to http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=73740 and follow the instructions.

UTEP Technical Support

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:

Technology Resources

- Help Desk: Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.

Academic Resources

- UTEP Library: Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- University Writing Center (UWC): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- Math Tutoring Center (MaRCS): Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
- History Tutoring Center (HTC): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
- RefWorks: A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

Individual Resources

- Military Student Success Center: Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
- Center for Accommodations and Support Services: Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.

Counseling and Psychological Services: Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.

Course Schedule

Note: This is a provisional schedule of our course. With advanced notice, I may introduce specific changes based on progress in class.

Part I: Latinx Politics and Identity		
Week 1	5/19	**Latinx Politics and the U.S. Political System** *Getting started:* Review syllabus, access the main zero-cost* textbook via the Blackboard course page (authored by Affigne, Hu-Dehart, and Orr 2014, and hereafter referred to as the "Affigne et al." book) *This main textbook is zero cost thanks to UTEP's institutional subscription to Project Muse. *Readings:* • "The People, Politics, Power, and the U.S. Political System" (Garcia and Sanchez 2008, Ch. 1; posted in PDF on Blackboard) • *see also "Identity Revisited: Latinos(as) and Panethnicity" (Affigne et al., Ch. 2; supplemental reading) *Assignments:* Short quiz and critical-thinking response assignment **due by 5/24**
Week 2	5/26	**From Exclusion to Empowerment: The Latinx Voice in Political Analysis, 1970-2014 (and up to 2025!)** *Readings:* • "The Latino Voice in Political Analysis, 1970-2014: From Exclusion to Empowerment" (Affigne et al., Ch. 1) • *see also "Attitudinal, Constitutional-Legal, and Historical Settings" (Garcia and Sanchez, Ch. 2; supplemental reading posted in PDF on Blackboard) *Assignments:* Short quiz and critical-thinking response assignment **due by 5/31**
Week 3	6/2	**Transnational Ties, Social Networks, Identity, and Linked Fate** *Readings:* • "Latino Immigrant Transnational Ties: Who Has Them, and Why Do They Matter?" (Affigne et al., Ch. 3) • "Multiple Paths to Cynicism: Social Networks, Identity, and Linked Fate" (Affigne et al., Ch. 4) *Assignments:* Short quiz and critical-thinking response assignment **due by 6/7**
Week 4	6/9	**Latinx Civic Engagement, Motivation, and Key Drivers Leading to Political Participation; MIDTERM EXAM** *Reading:*

		• "The Politics of Latino Publics: Immigration Reform, Political Participation and Intention to Vote" (Len-Ríos 2017; posted in PDF on Blackboard) *Assignment:* Midterm Exam **due by 6/14**
Part II: Identity, Interminority Relations, and Community		
Week 5	6/16	**Building an American Identity (Beyond the Latinx Bubble) and Finding Acceptance** *Readings:* • "¿Quién Apoya Qué? The Influence of Acculturation and Political Knowledge on Latino Policy Attitudes" (Affigne et al., Ch. 5) • "The Boundaries of Americanness: Perceived Barriers among Latino Subgroups" (Affigne et al., Ch. 6) *Assignments:* Short quiz and critical-thinking response assignment **due by 6/21**
Week 6	6/23	**Latinx Interminority Connections, Relations, and Linked Fate** *Readings:* • "Black and Latino Coalition Formation in New England: Perceptions of Cross-Racial Commonality" (Affigne et al., Ch. 7) • "Racial Identities and Latino Public Opinion: Racial Self-Image and Policy Preferences among Latinos" (Affigne et al., Ch. 8) *Assignments:* Short quiz and critical-thinking response assignment **due by 6/28**
Week 7	6/30	**Latinx Interminority Connections, Relations, and Linked Fate (Continued); FINAL CUMULATIVE ESSAY EXAM** *Reading:* • "A "Southern Exception" in Black-Latino Attitudes? Perceptions of Competition with African Americans and Other Latinos" (Affigne et al., Ch. 9) *Assignments:* *No assignment but reading will be covered on the final exam. Final cumulative essay exam **final due by 7/5**