The Role of Latinas in American Politics  
Class 400 Level/Semester  
Time  
Location  

Instructor: Linda K. Mancillas (lmancill@ggc.edu)  
Course taught at American University, Washington DC  
Office Hours:  

Purpose: This class will examine the cross-cutting cleavages of race, class, ethnicity and gender in the political struggles of the U.S. Latina population. We will investigate the role of the Latina public officials, activists and the electorate in shaping state and national politics. This will entail a review of American political history, exploring social movements, and introducing Latina feminist thought. We will discuss public policy issues that concern Latinas and explore the successes and failures of Latina empowerment strategies and their electoral impact. In addition to examining these areas, we will study Latina/o political participation, voting behavior, the role of political parties, interest groups and the media.  

A major goal of this seminar will be to encourage each of you to think critically, to speak articulately, and to develop writing skills that will help you clearly express problems and solutions for policy dilemmas facing the Latina/o community.  

Course Objectives and Goals:  
(1) To introduce the complexity of the Latina/o population and divergent political agendas.  
(2) To develop an understanding of the historical and cultural origins of how Latina/o social and political movements have emerged and changed.  
(3) To evaluate the role of movements and activists in policy reform and social change and to examine the agency and contributions of Latinas to the process of these changes.  
(4) To examine the impact of the Latina/o vote on contemporary politics.  
(5) To explore contemporary policy issues affecting the Latina/o population.
Required Texts:


Articles and other readings are posted on Blackboard under Course Documents. 

*Note*: It is essential to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Class will be much more fun and make more sense if you are prepared.

Blackboard: Check Blackboard for this class on a daily basis. All important notices will be posted there--this is a must. Going Green.

Course Requirements:

**Readings:** You should be able to give quality answers to questions asked in class. Additional readings may be posted on Blackboard. You are expected to read those articles and do online assignments before you come to class.

**Assignments:** All assignments must be handed in as indicated on the syllabus. No late submissions will be accepted. If you are planning on missing a class session when an assignment is due, please make other arrangements to get your work in before class. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments must be handed in by 5 p.m. on the due date. Most of the time, I will ask you to email your assignments. However, you may be instructed to leave your assignment at the front desk of Department of Government, Ward 230/233. Your assignment will be logged in and time stamped.

**Laptops:** We will be using laptops for research in class, please bring your laptop to each class. If you do not have access to a laptop, you can borrow one from the Center for Teaching Excellence (202-885-3904). Please do this before class and remember class time is not for IMing, emailing, solitaire or surfing the web. If you are observed doing any of the above in class, you will be asked to leave and will not receive credit for that class.
**Class Attendance**: Class attendance is **required**. After the third absence, you must bring a doctor’s excuse. However, if you are **sick**, do **not** come to class!

**Late Policy**: Class will start promptly at 5:35 pm.

**Cell Phones**: Turn them off during class.

**Eating and Drinking**: No loud food items. If you bring food or drink, do not leave trash behind.

**Grading**:
- Revised Latina Paper 15%
- Public Opinion/Media Assignment 15%
- Legislative/Activism Assignment 15%
- Hispanic Interest Group Assignment 15%
- Participation 15%
- Presentation & Final Paper 25% (Media Production, see me)

**Total Grade**: 100%

**Extra Credit**: Latino/a Event Paper, this must be approved by me.

Final grades will be determined based on the following scale:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>93+</td>
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You must have a C or better if you are taking this course pass/fail.

**Grade Appeals**: If you believe that I have made an error in evaluating any of your papers, I will be happy to reread your work. **HOWEVER**, I try to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Therefore, I reserve the right to reread your entire paper. Since I will no longer have the rest of the papers to put yours in context, I may find I was overly generous the first time. **Warning--this has happened.**

**Honor Code**: See Blackboard: External Links

**Disabilities, Academic and Personal Support Services**: See External Links

**Emergency Preparedness**: See Blackboard External Links
Tentative Course Outline

Jan 12 Wed 5:30 8:00pm

Introduction: Syllabus Review: Going Green and Course Overview


Readings:


“Huntington’s Theory of Hispanization.” Pp 22-23. In O’Connor & Sabato. (Blackboard Course Documents)


Topic: Historical origins of Latina/o social and political movements and the role of movements and activists in policy reform and social/political change.

Readings:


Guest Speaker: Carmen Delgado Votaw, Civil Rights Activists

Student Introduction:
Readings:


Feb 2 Wednesday 5:30 8:00 pm

Topic: Hispanic Public Opinion and Polling
“Your Latina” Draft Paper due by 5 pm
Assignment 2: Public Opinion Assignment, Due: February 16.

Greenblatt, A. “Changing U.S. Electorate (May 2008)." CQ Researcher, 18, 457-480 (Course Documents)

“Future of the GOP” (Mar 2009). CQ Researcher, 19, 249-272. (Course Documents)

Latinos and the 2010 Census: The Foreign Born Are More Positive
The Latino Vote in the 2010 Elections
Latinos and the 2010 Elections: Strong Support for Democrats; Weak Voter Motivation
2008 National Survey of Latinos: Hispanic Voter Attitudes
Hispanics and the New Administration 1/15/09

Guest Speaker: Mark Lopez, PEW Hispanic Center
Student Introduction:

Feb 9 Wednesday 5:30 8:00 pm

Topic: Today’s Latinas

Readings: View: “Listening to Latinas” and the Executive Summary
http://maldef.org/education/public_policy/listening_to_latinas/
http://maldef.org/assets/pdf/ListeningtoLatinas-ExecSummary.pdf
“U.S. Latinas by the Numbers” Center for American Progress
http://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/2008/latinas_numbers.html
PEW Hispanic Women in the U.S. 2007." (Course Document)

Hispanics, High School Dropouts and the GED

**Feb 16 Wednesday 5:30 8:00 pm**

**Topic:** Latinas and the Mass Media

**Public Opinion assignment due, must be emailed to me by 5 pm.**

Hispanics in the News: An Event-Driven Narrative
Latinos’ Choices in News Media are Shaping their Views of their Communities, the Nation and the World
Rosario Dawson on: Voto Latino
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iSezi09Liw&feature=channel
Voto Latino on Hardball MSNBC:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iSezi09Liw
Voto Latino’s Public Service Announcement
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfmLHv7sG64&feature=channel

**Readings:**


**Guest Speaker: Antonieta Cadiz, Washington Correspondent, La Opinion.**

**Student Introduction:**
Feb 23  Wednesday  5:30  8:00 pm

**Topic:** Latina Motivation and Participation

**Assignment 3:** Legislative/Activist Profile, Due March 2.

**Readings:**


March 2  Wednesday  5:30  8:00 pm

**Topic:** Latina Politics

**Legislative/Activist Profile Assignment must be emailed to me by 5 pm.**

**Readings:**

Beltrán, Cristina. Conclusion: "Latino Is a Verb, Democracy, Latinidad and the Creation of the Political." *The Trouble with Unity*.


March 9  Wednesday  5:30  8:00 pm

**NO Class Spring Break**
March 16  Wednesday  5:30  8:00 pm

**Topic:** Latinas and the Judiciary

**Readings:**

http://www.slate.com/id/2231166/
"Latino & Latina Critical Theory": An Annotated Bibliography (Course Documents)
“Review: In the Criminal Injustice System.” (Course Documents)
PEW Incarceration Report (Course Documents)
“A Rising Share: Hispanics and Federal Crime”
“Hispanics and the Criminal Justice System: Low Confidence, High Exposure”

Guest Speaker: Maria Manon, Esq. Grossman Law, LLC

Student Introduction:

March 23  Wednesday  5:30  8:00 pm

**Topic:** Immigration

**Readings:**

Main Page
http://pewhispanic.org/topics/?TopicID=16
Mexican Immigrants: How Many Come? How Many Leave?
A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States

**Revised Latina Paper Due by 5 pm**
March 30  Wednesday  5:30  8:00 pm

**Topic:** Latina Health Issues

**Assignment 4: Latina Interest Group Assignment, Due April 6**

**Readings:**
Hispanic Health: Divergent and Changing


**Potential Guest Speaker:** Rebecca Medina, MPH, Policy Analyst, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

**Student Introduction:**

April 6  Wednesday  5:30  8:00 pm

**Topic:** Latina Leadership

**Latina’s Interest Group Assignment due--must be emailed to me by 5 pm.**

**Readings:**
National Latino Leader? The Job is Open


Latina Style Magazine  http://www.latinastyle.com/video2.html
April 13  Wednesday  5:30  8:00 pm

Class Presentations of Final Paper (Or Video).
You will have approximately 10 minutes

April 20  Wednesday  5:30  8:00 pm

Course Evaluations, Remaining Presentations and Final discussion

Vamonos!

April 27  Wednesday  5:30 p.m.

No Class: Final Paper: Must be emailed to me by 5:30 pm

Assignment Forms Below
Latina Interest Group Profile

Please fill out this information sheet on the Latina/o interest group of your choice that has a PAC. This organization should be pertinent to “Your Latina.” You should use all available resources to find the answers (web sites, newspapers, etc.). Please cite your sources and attach a formal bibliography of the resources you have used to complete this assignment. Please email to me April 6 at 5 p.m.

Your Name:_____________________________________________________________

Name of interest group: ____________________________________________________

**Background Information:**

Founded: ______________ Founding members: ____________________________

Was there a particular event that contributed to the creation of the group? Explain. _____
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Headquarters located: _____________________ D.C. office: ______________

Membership group: __________ If yes, number of members: ______________

State affiliates: ______________ Single or multi-issue group: ______________

List Leadership Positions held by Latinas:____________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Policy-making Activities:**

Main issue concerns of the group: __________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Major political activities (i.e. lobbying Congress, filing *amicus* briefs): __________
________________________________________________________________________

Three of its most recent policy-making successes/failures: _____________________
Common coalition partners: ____________________________________________

**Political Activities:**

Political action committee: _____  If yes, name of PAC: _______________________

2007/8-2009 PAC contributions:

Top recipients:  

1. ____________________________________________________________  _________
2. ____________________________________________________________  _________
3. ____________________________________________________________  _________

Does the group rate MOCs: Yes or No. If yes, date of most recent ratings: ________

Highest rated member: ___________________________  Rating: ___________________

Lowest rated member: ___________________________  Rating: ___________________

Does the interest group seem to support one political party over another: __________

If yes, which party seems to get more support: ________________________________

Why do you think this occurs: _____________________________________________

Was this organization one of the 25 Hispanic Interest groups that sent a Letter to Senator Sessions concerning Sotomayor vote:  Yes_______  No_______.

Other pertinent information about this group:
Latina Legislative or Activist Profile

Please fill out this information sheet on Your Latina. Use all available resources to find the answers (web sites, newspapers, Library etc.). Please cite your sources and attach a formal bibliography of the resources you have used to complete this assignment. Must be emailed to linda.mancillas@ by 5 pm on March 2, 2011.

Your Name: _____________________________________________________

Name of Latina: ___________________________________________________

State (or state of origin): _____________ Political party or Affiliation: ____________

**Personal Information:**

Marital status: _______________ Number of children: _______________

Ethnicity: __________________ Religous Affiliation: ________________

High school education/Conferring institution: ________________________________

College education/Conferring institution: ________________________________

**Legislative or Leadership Involvement:**

Year first elected to Congress: ________ Or appointed to leadership position: ______

Seniority in party or organization: ______________

Previous appointed or elected office(s) held:

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Committee or Board of Director assignments:

_____________________________________________________________________

Leadership positions in organization or political party: __________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

**Interest Group Ratings for Latina National Elected or Appointed Officials:**

ACU: _____ ADA: _____ Chamber of Commerce: _____ Christian Coalition: _____

Describing the District of your Latina (Residence):

Median age ______  Average income _________  Average household size ______
Pct. urban _____%  Below poverty line _____%  With bachelor’s degree ____%

Major industries:__________________________________________________________

District party registration or Group Affiliation: Democrat ____% Republican: ____% Independent: ____%

District presidential vote in 2008:  Obama: ____%  McCain: ____%
Or Endorsement in the Primary:  Obama_____  Clinton _____  McCain______

For Elected Officials  Last Election:

Opposition in the primary (y/n):_______  Opposition in the general (y/n):_______
Primary opponent(s): ________________  General opponent(s): ________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Primary margin of victory: ________%  General margin of victory: _________%

Top campaign contributors or Name top contributors to Latina’s Organization

Amount

1. _____________________________________________________  __________

2. ________________________________  ______________________  __________

3. _____________________________________________________  __________

Latina’s Positions:

Using “support” or “oppose,” note your Latina’s position on these issues; then note your own position.

Abortion: ______________________  Agree_____  Don’t agree_____

Immigration: _______________  Agree_____  Don’t agree_____
Defense of Marriage Act: ________  Agree____ Don’t agree____
Gun control: ________________  Agree____ Don’t agree____
Afghanistan War:_____________  Agree____ Don’t agree____
Obama’s Health Care Reform: ____________  Agree____ Don’t agree____

Other pertinent information relative to our class about Your Latina’s legislatives activity or special interest activism.
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________.
The goal of this assignment is to get you thinking about how Hispanic public opinion both affects and reflects attitudes in American society. To this end, you will be asked to examine polls taken on the Latina/o population. Analyze what these polls seem to indicate about the past midterm congressional election.

In this research, your goal is to find polls on Latino voting behavior relevant to the last elections. Suggestions include the president’s approval ratings, national priorities, the economy, foreign policy, and other hot button issues. Synthesize your research into a three page (no more) essay that addresses some aspect of what present polling data could mean for the congressional elections. Some questions you could address are:

- Do polls matter? If not, why do we bother to conduct them, and why do officials pay so much attention to what they say? If so, how can polls’ findings best be utilized?
- How much impact does the president’s approval rating have on the conduct of congressional midterm elections and campaigns?
- Do issues matter in campaigns? If so, which issues seem to resonate with the American public?
- Do Americans feel secure domestically, internationally, and economically?
- Who has sponsored the polls you are examining? Does this indicate that there might be a bias in their result?
- What is the population being polled? Does this have an impact on the validity of the polling data?

You are by no means limited to these questions and are encouraged to go beyond these questions. They are simply a guiding force to get you thinking about the data you have acquired. If you come up with another angle to explore, please pursue it. If you are unsure whether your approach is appropriate or have any other questions please see me for clarification.

Please include a bibliography (on a separate page) with either parenthetical citations or footnotes. If you are unsure how to properly cite your polls or other research please visit http://www.library.american.edu/subject/citation.html and use either APA or APSA style. Your bibliography and/or footnotes will not count toward your page limit.

You will be graded on three components: 10% of your grade will be based on whether you have a properly formatted bibliography and citations. 10% of your grade will be based on grammar, spelling, and clarity. The remaining 80% of your grade will be based on the strength of your thesis, how well you supported that thesis and the depth of analysis you gave in your paper. For every day your paper is late you will lose 10 percentage points.