Mexican-American Politics  
Political Science 464/Chicano Latino Studies 464

Mexican Americans are now the second largest ethnic minority group in the United States. As a group they face problems of poverty, unemployment, and discrimination. At the same time, Mexican Americans are culturally, economically and politically diverse. How the dynamics of race, class, and ethnicity shape Mexican American politics and Latino politics is the central focus of this class. In order to understand change and continuity in race relations, this class will emphasize the historical conflict between Mexican and Anglo Americans. The final third of the course will be dedicated to contemporary political issues.

The following texts are on reserve and have been ordered at the Rainbow Book Store for purchase:

Ignacio Garcia. *United We Win: The Rise and Fall of La Raza Unida Party.*

Other readings distributed in class.

**Course Requirements**

I. **Class Participation**

Regular attendance at lectures is indispensable; the reading material is designed to supplement and not duplicate the lectures. In addition to keeping up with the assigned reading, I encourage you to subscribe to a good daily newspaper like the *New York Times* (available at a substantial discount to students). Reading a good newspaper will enhance your understanding of the lectures and make you better able to participate in class discussions.
I encourage class participation. Extra credit will be given for thoughtful questions, arguments and debate.

II. Book Critiques

Time will be set aside to discuss all of the assigned books. You will be required to write five (5) book critiques. You are asked to analyze the author’s thesis, methods, evidence, and conclusions of the reading assignments. Guidelines will be handed out in class.

Everyone is required to critique the assigned sections of Benjamin Johnson’s book, *Revolution in Texas*. You can then choose four other books (excluding *I am Joaquin*) on the reading list to critique. Remember, even if you have not written a book critique during a given week, it is still essential that you read the assigned books each week before coming to class. It is not possible to put off any of the readings before the final exam and expect to do well in the class.

III. A Research Paper

Your research paper will include a transcript and analysis of an interview with an individual, not affiliated with the University of Wisconsin System, who is involved in Mexican American politics or community affairs. The finished product should be about fifteen to twenty pages in length. Guidelines will be distributed in class.

*Note:* All paper topics and persons to be interviewed must be cleared with me by October 15th. Please make an appointment to see me in my office. Bring a one-page description of your project with you. The final paper is due on December 13th.

IV. A Comprehensive Final Examination

See Timetable for time and place. Format to be announced.

Course Evaluation

The grade will be determined according to the following criteria:

- Book Critiques (10% each) 50%
- Research Paper 25%
- Final Examination 25%
- Class Participation (Up to) 5% Extra Credit

Students must complete all required work in order to be eligible to receive a passing grade in the course. In calculating the final grade, number rather than letter grades will be averaged. Make-
up exams will be given only in the case of a medical emergency. Students affiliated with the McBurney Center should see me about exam arrangements and any other accommodations.

**Office Hours:** My office hours are on Wednesdays from 11:00 to 12:00 and 1:15 to 2:15 or by appointment. Please feel free to make an appointment or drop by during my office hours. I welcome students.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week One. September 4th & 6th:** Course Requirements, Socio Economic Overview

a. Syllabus distributed. Introduction to class format, grading, etc.
b. Introduction to Mexican American politics.

**Week Two. September 11th & 13th:** The History of Anglo and Mexican American Conflict

a. Overview of Mexican American earnings, education, employment patterns
b. Early Southwestern settlement patterns
c. Book critique guidelines distributed

**Week Three. September 18th & 20th:** Immigration from Mexico and Urbanization after 1900

a. Mexican migration patterns. Areas settled, employment patterns

**Week Four. September 25th & 27th:** Organizing Against Racism and Segregation.

a. Debating race, class and culture
b. The Mutualistas and Labor Unions
c. Civil Rights Groups

**Week Five. October 2nd & 4th:** The Chicano Movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

b. Social and political origins of the Chicano Movement.

**Week Six. October 9th & 11th:** The Chicano Movement (continued).

a. Chicano Movement (continued).
b. The ideology of the Chicano Movement. Video "I Am Joaquin."
Week Seven. October 16th & 18th: The Chicano Movement (continued).

a. Political organizations and goals  
b. Thursday October 18th, class discussion of Garcia. *United We Win*. Critique due.

Week Eight. October 23rd & 25th: Politics after the Chicano Movement.

a. Theories of Assimilation and Identity Politics  
b. Theories of Social Change

Week Nine. October 30th & November 1st: Social Change After the 1960s (continued)

a. The Environmental Justice Movement  

Week Ten. November 6th & 8th: Politics and Identity in the Contemporary Period

a. Organizing Janitors, Day Laborers, and Garment workers  
b. Business and Professional Associations


a. Voting and representation.  

Week Twelve. November 20th: Contemporary Immigration


****Thanksgiving Recess November 22nd – 25th****

Week Thirteen. November 27th & 29th: Contemporary Immigration (continued).

a. Immigration from Mexico, Latin America, and Asia.  
b. Mexican immigration in a global context.

Week Fourteen. December 4th & 6th: Bridging the Racial (and Generational?) Divide

a. The Alinsky school of organizing in Mexican American neighborhoods  
b. December 6th, class discussion of Myers *Immigrants and Boomers*. Critique due.

Week Fifteen. December 11th & 13th: Bridging the Racial Divide

b. Review for final exam.