



COURSE SYLLABUS

Introduction to Latin American & U.S. Latino Studies

LALS 101.01E

FALL 2025

Tuesday/Thursday 2:00pm-3:15pm

Room: BA 312

Tuesday, **August 26** through Tuesday, **December 9, 2025**

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Robert G. Rodríguez
Professor of Political Science
Associate Department Head, Social Sciences
Coordinator, Sports Media Studies

Office Location: Ferguson Social Science Building, Room149

Office Hours:

TU/TH 11:30am-2:00pm or by appointment in person or on zoom.

The BEST way to contact me is via email; I will normally respond within 24 hours (48 hours maximum). Zoom Video Chats may be arranged upon request.

Office Phone: 903-468-3094, however, the best way to contact me is by email.

University Email Address: **robert.rodriguez@etamu.edu**

Check the Syllabus to see if your question is answered FIRST.

****CHECK YOUR EMAIL AND D2L FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS DAILY****

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change at any time at the professor's discretion.

‘Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the interdisciplinary study of Latin America and the Latin American Diaspora in the United States, as manifested through politics, history, demographics and popular culture. Students will be exposed to the principal themes and methodologies of Latin American and U.S. Latino Studies, by synthesizing contributions from various disciplines. The course emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration across various fields of study and provides students with a basic knowledge base for understanding Latin America and Latino/as in the United States in both a contemporary and historical perspective.

*****This course is required for completion of the LALS Minor. If you would like to declare the minor in LALS or would like more information about the LALS minor, please send me an email.*****

Format:

This is an IN-PERSON course that may have some components online by logging into the course through **D2L Brightspace** on your **MyLEO** account. Each class session will involve lectures and robust discussions about the assigned readings. You will regularly be asked to contribute your opinions about the assigned readings and answer questions about the readings. In addition to the assigned readings listed in the syllabus, we will regularly discuss current topics that are related to Latin Americans and Latinos in the United States.

The course schedule is organized into three learning modules (Units). Learning materials and activities include **in-person lectures, discussions and exams** for each unit in addition to a **poster presentation** that will be displayed at a symposium at the end of the semester.

Note: You will NOT be told what to think in this course. Rather, you will be provided with the tools to make your own assessments about the topics covered in this course.

***LAPTOPS, CELL PHONES,
HEADPHONES AND SMART
WATCHES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN
THE CLASSROOM***

YOU WILL NEED TO BRING A NOTEBOOK AND PEN/PENCIL TO CLASS.

OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN CLASS AT ANY TIME.

IF ANY ELECTRONIC DEVICES ARE BEING USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE THAN ACCESSING COURSE READINGS, THE INDIVIDUAL(S) RESPONSIBLE MAY BE DIRECTED TO LEAVE THE CLASSROOM IMMEDIATELY. THIS WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT ONE'S PARTICIPATION GRADE.

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Book

None. The *reading assignments for this course will be accessible through D2L.*

The course materials are divided into THREE units:

- **Unit 1 (INTRODUCTION): Introduction to Latin American & U.S. Latino Studies; Latino Diversity in the U.S.; (August 26-September 25)**
 - *Student Statement of Personal Responsibility **DUE THURSDAY, September 4***
 - ***UNIT 1 EXAM THURSDAY, September 25***
- **Unit 2 (POLICIES): U.S.-Latin American Relations; U.S. Latino Immigration Policy (September 30-November 4)**
 - ***UNIT 2 EXAM TUESDAY, November 4***
- **Unit 3 (POPULAR CULTURE): Latin American and U.S. Latino Music and Film; Sports in Latin America and among U.S. Latinos (November 6-December 9)**
 - *Poster Presentation at **LALS Research Symposium THURSDAY, December 4** (Location TBA)*
 - ***UNIT 3 EXAM TUESDAY, December 9, 1:15pm-3:15pm (note time)***

Learning Outcome:

Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain Latin American and U.S. Latino Studies.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade will consist of:

A) THREE Examinations (worth 21% each, 63% total)

B) One Poster Presentation (24%)

C) Attendance (10%)

D) Participation (3%)

E) Your submitted **Student Statement of Personal Responsibility (1% Extra Credit-- IF submitted to me by the deadline).**

A 90-100%; B 80-89.9%; C 70-79.9%; D 60-69.9%; F Below 60%

Each element of your grade is described below.

A) Examinations: In this course, **all students are required to take THREE exams**, each of which will consist of 20 questions in a multiple-choice format. Exams will be held in-person unless otherwise announced. Together, these exams will comprise **63%** of your grade (each exam is worth 21%). The exams are NOT comprehensive. There is NOT a final exam in this course, but you will have to take Exam 3 during Finals Week.

If you do not complete an exam during the designated class session, you will receive 0% for that exam.

If you have a **legitimate reason** for not completing an exam during the designated date (e.g. severe illness or injury *requiring professional medical care*, emergencies in your *immediate* family, participation in *official* university activities, legal *obligations*) **AND** you have **supporting documentation** for your inability to take the exam, then you may **request** an extension of the date to take the exam.

Requests for taking the make-up exam must be **submitted in writing VIA EMAIL and include **SCANNED documentation**** explaining and substantiating why your inability to take the exam during the designated date was legitimate. An approval to extend the period for you to complete the exam **will be based solely upon the professor's evaluation of your request and any supporting documentation.**

EXAM DATES

- *UNIT 1 (Exam 1) Tuesday, September 25*
- *UNIT 2 (Exam 2) Tuesday, November 4*
- *UNIT 3 (Exam 3) Thursday, December 9 (1:15pm-3:15pm)*

B) Poster Presentation: You will be assigned to create a poster presentation focusing on a Latino heritage group (Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, Dominicans, etc.) OR a Latin American country (Peru, Guatemala, Argentina, etc.). Half of the class will be assigned a US Latino heritage group, while the other half will be assigned a country. This assignment is an INDIVIDUAL project, not a group project. You will be provided with detailed instructions as we get closer to Thanksgiving Break, and MUST follow the provided instructions and format to successfully complete this assignment. You will present your poster at a LALS research symposium that will be held during our class time on **THURSDAY, December 4**. The research symposium will be held on-campus and will open to the entire university community.

You must obtain approval of your specific topic from the professor. Your poster presentation is worth **24%** of your grade in this course.

POSTER PRESENTATION

- o *Poster Presentation Thursday, December 4 during our class time at a location to be announced*

C) Attendance: 10% of your grade is based on your class attendance. Students are required to attend class and attendance will be taken at each class session. Signing in a student who is not present or asking a student to sign you in when you are absent constitutes academic dishonesty (see p. 12). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have signed in. Arriving late and/or leaving early will negatively impact your attendance grade. *Attendance is critical, discussions are irreplaceable, and course sessions cannot be "made up."*

I will not be managing any excuses for absences. It is not necessary to provide me with any excuses for absences (unless you are absent during an examination-read previous section.)

You can miss up to three class sessions without penalty for any reason. More than three absences will result in a reduction in your grade.

The attendance grade scale appears below:

- 0 absences = you will get a bonus of 2% added to your grade
- 1-2 absences= no penalty
- 3 absences= -2% from your grade
- 4 absences= -3% from your grade
- 5 absences= -4% from your grade
- 6 absences= -5% from your grade
- 7 absences= -6% from your grade
- 8 absences= -7% from your grade
- 9 absences= -8% from your grade
- 10 absences= -9% from your grade
- 11 or more absences= -10% from your grade

- **Attendance Note 1: I will NOT reply to any emails asking what we did in class during your absence- We will follow the syllabus. If you miss class, get notes from a classmate and ask him/her if there were any announcements.**
- **Attendance Note 2: Students who attend ALL class sessions and do not have ANY unexcused OR excused absences will receive a bonus of 2% added to their attendance grade.**
- **Attendance Note 3: ARRIVE ON TIME! The classroom door will not be opened for late arrivals 5 minutes after class starts. Notify the professor in advance if you need to arrive late or leave early.**

D) Participation: 3% Your participation in this class is worth up to **3%** of your grade.

Your contributions to the class discussions are highly desirable and will make class sessions more interesting. Positive participation includes responding to my questions, asking your own questions, and contributing to class discussions. All of these activities will positively impact your participation grade.

Negative participation includes: sleeping in class, side-talk with your neighbors, coming to class late, and any other class disruptions- any of these activities will negatively impact your participation grade, even if you contribute to class discussions. If you use personal electronic devices in class that will result in a pop quiz for the entire class and your removal from the classroom, and it will negatively impact your participation grade. Also, if you misbehave in class or disrupt class in any way you may be directed to leave the classroom and your participation grade will be negatively impacted.

Your participation grade will be calculated as follows:

Almost Always/Always Contributes to Class Discussions:	3%
Often Contributes to Class Discussions:	2%
Rarely/Sometimes Contributes to Class Discussions:	1%
Never Contributes to Class Discussions:	0%

E) STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:

YOU MUST SUBMIT A STATEMENT ON D2L ACKNOWLEDGING YOU HAVE READ AND AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY BY THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2024 by 11:59 p.m. This is a requirement to remain enrolled in this course and **1% extra credit** will be added to your total grade in this course **IF** you submit it to me by the deadline.

****DO NOT EMAIL YOUR STATEMENT TO ME- IT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. I WILL PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CLASS ON HOW TO SUBMIT A FILE ON D2L****

Statement: I have read the syllabus in its entirety, and understand the guidelines and agree to the policies detailed therein as a condition of being enrolled in this course. I

understand my obligation to adhere to these guidelines and policies in this course, and that failure to do so may result in serious consequences, including (but not limited to) being dropped from the course, and/or receiving a grade of "F" in the course.

STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY DUE DATE:

o *Thursday, September 4, by 11:59pm*

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

All course readings will be found under the "content" tab of our course in D2L.

- **Unit 1 (INTRODUCTION): Introduction to Latin American & U.S. Latino Studies; Latino Diversity in the U.S.; (August 26-September 25)**

Required Reading:

- The first unit of this course is centered upon an extensive PowerPoint Presentation designed by your professor: "Latino Diversity in the United States"
- Readings will be announced by your professor and posted under the "CONTENT" section of D2L.

- o *Student Statement of Personal Responsibility **DUE THURSDAY, September 4***
- o ***UNIT 1 EXAM THURSDAY, September 25***

- **Unit 2 (POLICIES): U.S.-Latin American Relations; U.S. Latino Immigration Policy (September 30-November 4)**

Required Reading:

- The second unit of this course is centered upon an extensive PowerPoint Presentation designed by your professor: "An Overview of US-Latin American Relations"
- You will be required to read the following article on D2L: "U.S. Immigration Policies in Historic Context: A Latin American Case Study"

- o ***UNIT 2 EXAM TUESDAY, November 4***

- **Unit 3 (POPULAR CULTURE): Latin American and U.S. Latino Music and Film; Sports in Latin America and among U.S. Latinos (November 6-December 9)**

Required Reading:

- The Third unit of this course will focus on Latino political participation in Presidential elections in the United States. We will discuss the 2024 presidential election in the context of the US Latino community extensively.
- Additional Readings for this section of the course found on D2L include: “Latinos in US Sport” and “Generals and Goals”

Required Activities:

- Watch film “My Family, Mi Familia” on YouTube on the Tuesday of Thanksgiving Break (November 25):
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYdawHjNIL8>
 - *Poster Presentation at LALS Research Symposium **THURSDAY, December 4** (Location TBA)*
 - ***UNIT 3 EXAM TUESDAY, December 9, 1:15pm-3:15pm (note time)***

UNIVERSITY/COURSE POLICIES

1. **Electronic devices** (such as cell phones, smartwatches, laptops, ipads, earbuds, etc.) of any kind are NEVER permitted during class, with the possible exception of your laptops to access readings ONLY. You will be directed to stop using these items and/or leave the classroom immediately if you have an electronic device visible or are using your laptop inappropriately.

2. **Disruptions of any kind** (as determined by your professor, such as side-conversations and ANY display of disrespect to anyone) are absolutely prohibited in a university classroom. You will be directed to cease this type of activity and/or leave the classroom immediately if you disrupt class in any way. Persistent disruptions will be reported to the Dean of Students office for further action and you will be prohibited from attending class until the Dean of Students has authorized your return.

3. **Be on time. The class door will be closed and locked 5 minutes after class begins**, and will not be opened for anyone until class is dismissed. If you know you will be arriving late or need to leave class early for any reason, you must inform your professor before class begins.

4. Follow the Code of Student Conduct: All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. Faculty have the authority to direct students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the classroom and may refer serious offenses to the University Police Department and/or the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. Failure to comply with the Code of Student Conduct and commonsensical directions listed above may result in a verbal request to cease inappropriate behavior, your immediate removal from the class, being dropped from the class, and/or a review by an appropriate university disciplinary agency. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook: http://www.tamuc.edu/student_guidebook/Student_Guidebook.pdf

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

Communication and Support

If you have any questions, are having difficulties with the course material, or have any unique circumstances that may affect your performance in this course, please communicate with your professor. I will assist or guide you in any way that I can to do well in this course.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced.

Email

Before you ask me a question in an email, check to see if the syllabus answers your question FIRST. I generally reply to emails within 24-48 hours, Monday-Friday. Emails sent to me over weekends will be replied to on Mondays. I do not reply to emails that ask questions about items covered in the syllabus.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx).
<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the University attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx).
<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>
<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

If you have any doubt as to what may constitute academic dishonesty, please consult with me prior to submitting any assignments.

TAMUC COVID-19 Statement

A&M-Commerce recommends the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories.

TAMUC Counseling Center Statement

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel.

Students with Disabilities-- 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 have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

<https://www.tamuc.edu/campuslife/campuservices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/default.aspx>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

****Some activities in this course will require accessing D2L Brightspace****

Minimal Technology Required

USE CHROME OR FIREFOX BROWSERS WITH D2L—DO NOT USE Microsoft EDGE as this tends to have bugs when using this learning platform

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Using the learning management system

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>