THE NEW POLITICAL MAINSTREAM?

Prof. Rodolfo de la Garza
Department of Political Science &
School of International and Public Affairs/EMPA
Fall 2003
Saturdays 2:00-4:00

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office hours: Wednesday 3-5

Course description:
This course will examine the ways in which the political mainstream in the US has changed since WWII as a result of various influences. Factors to be considered include new populations (“new immigrants” such as Asians and Latinos), the changing role of old populations (e.g., women and African Americans), institutional developments, and the introduction of new issues into the political arena. We will explore how these influences interact, and attempt to answer the question of whether there is, in fact, a new mainstream in American politics.

In addition to considering specific populations, we will examine major policy developments relevant to our theme, including the Voting Rights Act, affirmative action, and immigration policy, as well as the evolving meaning of citizenship. Over the course of the semester, we will discuss such topics as the traditional political milieu, the role of the Congress and public opinion, and major institutional developments, including the extent to which institutions such as the courts (particularly the US Supreme Court) have participated in or led change. The course will involve guest lecturers, discussion, and two written assignments.

Written assignments:
1. 10-page essay on a topic related to topics discussed in weeks 1-6 (midterm). Topic must be approved by instructor.
2. 20-page paper on a topic of your choice (final). Topic must relate to major themes discussed in the class and be approved by instructor.

Course outline:

September 6
Political Milieu (Prof. Lieberman)


September 13
Overview (Prof. de la Garza)

September 20
Congress (Prof. Wawro)


Wawro, Gregory and Eric Schickler, “Majority Rule or Liberum Veto?: Obstruction and Lawmaking in the Pre-cloture Senate” (manuscript)

September 27
Courts (Prof. Cameron)


October 4
Public Opinion (Prof. Shapiro)


October 11
Voting Rights Act and Affirmative Action (Prof. de la Garza)


midterm due
October 18
Urban Politics (Prof. Falcon)


October 25
Gay Politics (Prof. Yang)


November 1
holiday

November 8
Women (Prof. Varnum)


November 15
Asians (Prof. Junn)


Lien, Pei-te, Janelle Wong and M. Margaret Conway. “Party Identification Among Asian Americans: Acquisition & Patterns” (manuscript)

**November 22**
Latinos (Prof. de la Garza)


**November 29**
holiday

**December 6**
A New Mainstream? (Prof. de la Garza)

final due