

University of Florida
Department of Psychology
PCO 4270 Section: 20385
Latinx Psychology (Seminar in Counseling Psychology)
Spring 2026

Instructor: Teresa Vazquez, M.S.
Class Days/Times: PSY 151; Thursdays, 4:05 PM – 7:05 PM
Office Hours: By appointment only
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Course Description

According to 2024 Census data, over 68 million Latinx people live in the United States. This group represents about 20% of the U.S. population, the nation's second-largest racial or ethnic group after non-Hispanic whites. As of July 2021, Latinx people comprise 26-28% of the population in Florida (compared to 20% of Latinx people in the United States). The information and experiences provided in this course will better prepare you to engage in culturally responsive services with one of the largest ethnic minority groups in the United States.

This course consists of three parts, beginning with a historical understanding of the ancestry of Latinx people, followed by a study of postcolonial trends in Latin America, and concluding with a deep dive into the impact of immigration and subsequent contemporary mental health topics affecting Latinx people in the U.S. currently. Taking a historical approach to understanding the current mental health difficulties of Latinx people allows for a more nuanced understanding of the characteristics that make up Latinx communities to comprehend their behavioral presentation. Discussing the impact of immigration will further allude to the hardships of Latinx communities as they transition from their country of birth to the United States. Lastly, we will discuss the Latinx mental health concerns in the United States using a strength-based empowerment approach (in contrast to a deficit approach) while concluding the information we gathered throughout the course. Specifically, this course will examine the strengths and resilience of Latinx people and critically examine structural and societal barriers in the United States that result in psychological distress for members of this group.

Course Outcomes

At the end of the course, students will demonstrate:

1. General knowledge of the history of Latinx people, including ancestry, colonization, immigration, cultural values and practices, and their relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean
2. The impact of immigration and acculturation on Latinx people as it relates to mental health and family functioning
3. Awareness of the current status of the mental health of Latinx people in the United States
4. Understanding of the strengths of Latinx people and Latinx culture
5. Awareness of societal and systemic barriers (e.g., education, immigration, mental health infrastructure) that negatively impact U.S. Latinx people
6. Approaches to the treatment of mental health for Latinx communities

Collective Knowledge

This course has been built and influenced by different mentors and scholars who teach Latinx psychology and related courses at other universities across the United States, including Drs. Roberto L. Abreu, Cristalís Capielo Rosario, Nayeli Y. Chavez-Dueñas, Hector Adames, Julio A. Martin, and Edward Delgado-Romero. Their collective knowledge, wisdom, and consejos (advice) helped build and strengthen this course. I also invite students to bring and share their ideas and cultural experiences throughout the semester. I hope we will learn and grow as a collective throughout this course! Please share topics and resources that may expand our discussion in areas you believe our class needs strengthening.

Creating a *brave* space

I believe it is crucial to create a *brave* space where sensitive issues of race and intersectionality can be addressed. Thus, we need to explore our reactions (both cognitive and affective) to the readings and class discussions. Creating a *brave* space involves vulnerability, perspective taking, leaning into fear, critical thinking, examining intentions, and mindfulness. To accomplish this, I am asking you to respect one another's contributions; this does not mean you have to agree with all positions; it simply means letting others voice their opinions without interruptions or fear of being attacked personally.

Learning Process and Teaching Philosophy

Learning occurs when students can make meaningful connections to the material presented. The meaning-making process occurs through relationships with 1) the readings, 2) the instructor and peers, and 3) the self. This course's assignments, expectations, tasks, and goals are created to facilitate the interaction of these relationships. Suppose students are to benefit and learn from this course. In that case, it will take a collaborative effort in which each student and the instructor are fully engaged in a joint effort to understand and make relevant the material that is to be learned. This includes challenging each other! I will practice clarity, transparency, authenticity, humility, and genuineness in the course and our relationship. I hope that you will afford me the same and that you will engage meaningfully in all aspects of the course.

Provision of Changes to the Syllabus

The included schedule, policies, and assignments are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances or by mutual agreement between the instructor and class participants.

Email Communication

I will respond regularly to emails between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM Monday –Friday. If I have not responded to your email after two (2) business days, please resend the email. **I will communicate all course-related materials and announcements to your UF email account and/or Canvas.**

University Honesty Policy

University of Florida students are bound by the Honor Pledge. On all work submitted for credit by a

student, the following pledge is required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Student Honor Code and Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code, as well as the process for reported allegations and sanctions that may be implemented. All potential violations of the code will be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If a student is found responsible for an Honor Code violation in this course, the instructor will enter a Grade Adjustment sanction which may be up to or including failure of the course. For additional information, see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

Accommodations

Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. Students need to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Evaluation of this Course

I appreciate and value your feedback so that I can continue to improve upon this course and my teaching skills.

Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Because I believe that student feedback is crucial for the success of a course, I will seek your feedback throughout the course. We will discuss patterns about what is working and not working for you, and we will make reasonable changes for the rest of the semester accordingly.

Sexual Harassment and Disclosures of Sexual Violence

Sexual Harassment is not tolerated in this class, in the Department of Psychology, or at the University of Florida. Sexual harassment includes: the inappropriate introduction of sexual activities or comments in a situation where sex would otherwise be irrelevant. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and a violation of state and federal laws as well as of the policies and regulations of the university. All UF employees and students must adhere to UF's sexual harassment policy, which can be found here: <https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/1-006/>. Please review this policy and contact a university official if you have any questions about the policy.

As mandatory reporters, university employees (e.g., administrators, managers, supervisors, faculty, teaching assistants, staff) are required to report knowledge of sexual harassment to UF's Title IX

coordinator. Title IX violation includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, domestic/intimate partner violence, etc. For assistance or to inform Title IX any incident(s) that may constitute a Title IX violation, please complete the Title IX Information Form here: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/report/> or email inform@titleix.ufl.edu, or call 352-273-1094.

Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, [352- 392-1575](tel:352-392-1575), or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call [352-392- 1575](tel:352-392- 1575) for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call [352-392-1161](tel:352-392-1161) for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call [352-392-1111](tel:352-392-1111) (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call [352-733-0111](tel:352-733-0111) or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call [352-273-4450](tel:352-273-4450).

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at [352-392-4357](tel:352-392-4357) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, [352-392-1601](tel:352-392-1601). Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](tel:866-281-6309) or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- [Teaching Center](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](tel:352-392-2010), or to make a private appointment: [352-392- 6420](tel:352-392- 6420). Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](tel:352-846-1138) | Evening (5:00pm- 7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information](#).

Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information](#).

Assignment Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

All assignments will be submitted via Canvas on the date indicated by each assignment, not through email or hard copies. Course assignments and grades are as follows:

1. **Attendance and Participation (20% of overall course grade):** Given the nature of this course, attendance, being punctual to class time, and active class participation by everyone are mandatory. I expect that you will have completed the readings for each week prior to class in order to be ready to participate in class discussions. With that said, I understand that we are living through unprecedented times. Therefore, please do not hesitate to reach out if you need accommodations and/or need to be absent.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

2. **Weekly Reflection Papers (50% of overall course grade).** Each student will be responsible for completing the assigned readings and submitting a brief, one-to-two-page double-spaced reflection paper (APA format) by the **Wednesday before class at 11:59PM**, on designated weeks (10 short reflection papers total). Keep in mind the following questions while completing readings:
 - What stood out from the text?
 - What reactions am I having to the information? How does this information relate to my experience or others I know?
 - How does this information help me understand Latinx people?
 - How can I use this information to understand the mental health of Latinx people?
 - **Must include: one discussion question/topic for the class to discuss**

Please refer to the class schedule and class reader for assigned readings and assignments.

3. **Midterm Reflection Paper (10% of overall course grade as detailed below):** You will complete a midterm reflection paper in which you will write about the historical and contextual factors that influence mental health difficulties for Latinx people. You will write a two-to-three-page double-spaced (APA format) essay on:
 1. What have you learned from the course thus far (what was expected, unexpected, surprising, etc.)?
 2. How does information about the origins and history of Latinx people help you understand mental health difficulties for Latinx communities?
 3. What factors continue to influence Latinx people's behavior that could bring about personal identity conflict? And
 4. How do these factors, combined with experiences through immigration and in the U.S., impact Latinx mental health?

Remember to incorporate class readings, discussions, and personal experiences in your thinking. Grading will be based on your ability to answer the three prompts.

4. Case Study Analysis and Presentation (20% of overall course grade): Each student will conduct a case study analysis to apply what they learned from the course. The case studies will describe a Latinx person's demographics, contextual factors, brief history, and current difficulties. The student will consider the information as it relates to the case's mental health concerns. The student will answer the following questions in their case study analysis/presentation:

- 1) What factors influence the presenting problems of the case?
- 2) What are the barriers to obtaining psychological well-being for the person?
- 3) What can benefit the client or their conditions that will alleviate their mental health symptoms?

The report should be a two-to-three-page double-spaced (APA format) and include references as needed.

Grading System

Assignment	Points
Attendance & Participation	20
Reflection Papers	50
Midterm Reflection Paper	10
Case Study	20
TOTAL Points	100

Grading Scale

A	> 92%	C	72%-77%
A-	90%-91%	C-	70%-71%
B+	88%-89%	D+	68%-69%
B	82%-87%	D	62%-67%
B-	80%-81%	D-	60%-61%
C+	78%-79%	E	< 59%

Late Assignments

It is my intent that all assignments will be turned in on time (see dates on the course schedule below). Assignments cannot be made up except in the case of extreme circumstances that meet the criteria of the University of Florida policy for an excused absence. Make-ups are only given for illnesses that require medical treatment, valid emergencies, and valid scheduling conflicts. With this said, as described earlier in the syllabus, we are living through unprecedented times. Therefore, please do not hesitate to reach out if you need accommodations.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Class Topic	Week's Reading	Assignments
1	January 15	Introduction to Latinx Psychology Class	See Module 1 on Canvas	
2	January 22	African and Indigenous Ancestry	See Module 2 on Canvas	Reflection Paper due 01/21 by 11:59PM
3	January 29	<i>Mestizaje</i> and Impact of Colorism on Latinx Families	See Module 3 on Canvas	Reflection Paper due 01/28 by 11:59PM
4	February 5	Impact of National Identity	See Module 4 on Canvas	Reflection Paper due 02/04 by 11:59PM
5	February 12	Complexities of Latinx culture	See Module 5 on Canvas	Reflection Paper due 02/11 by 11:59PM
6	February 19	Immigration	See Module 6 on Canvas	Reflection Paper due 02/18 by 11:59PM
7	February 26	Latinx people in the U.S.	See Module 7 on Canvas	Reflection Paper due 02/25 by 11:59PM
8	March 5	Mental Health of Latinx people Health Disparities & Health Service Utilization	See Module 8 on Canvas	Reflection Paper due 03/04 by 11:59PM
9	March 12	Strengths of Latinx communities	See Module 9 on Canvas	Reflection Paper due 03/11 by 11:59PM
10	March 19	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	Midterm Reflection due 03/18 by 11:59PM

11	March 26	Western and non-Western Approaches	See Module 10 on Canvas	Reflection Paper due 03/25 by 11:59PM	
12	April 2	Culturally Adapted Interventions/Ethical Considerations	See Module 11 on Canvas	Reflection Paper due 04/01 by 11:59PM	
13	April 9	Case Study Discussions	See Module 12 on Canvas	Case Study Presentations	
14	April 16	Class Reflections	See Module 13 on Canvas		
	April 25	Case Study Analysis Paper due 04/25 by 11:59PM			

The schedule is subject to change