



SERVICE LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

**DR. ANITA CHADHA, CHRIS SIERRA | UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON - DOWNTOWN**

## **MOBILIZING MOBILES: TUNING OUT OR TUNING OUT**

---

### **ABSTRACT:**

Political scientists have long argued that personal contact with the voter is the most effective strategy in encouraging voter turnout. And that face-to-face interactions from canvassing to phone/text banking provided the strongest boosts to turnout. Differences in turnout additionally arise in whether non-profits or political parties do phone or text banking. We test these theories across two different communities in the Houston, Texas area finding that personal contact through canvassing was the most effective while phone/text banking from non-profits versus political parties were additionally effective. We also found that language barriers often deter community members from turning out to vote, one that is depressing their vote.

### **THEMATIC FOCUS:**

**Shifting Foundations: Modern fundamental changes in how communities form, change, and represent themselves.**

### **BIO:**

Dr. Chadha is an associate professor in the Department of Social Science. She has participated in various service-learning project through UH's Impact learning office for several years. Notably she has involved herself and her students in phone/text banking and canvassing efforts prior to the 2020, 2022, 2024 and for the upcoming 2026 presidential and midterm elections.

Houston, TX | March 26-28, 2026