

DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN STUDIES
RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

LATINO/A AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Prof. Ben. Sifuentes Jáuregui

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Office Hours: Mondays, 9:30 - 11:30 AM

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Fall 2007

01:050:240:01

DC RAB-001

MW 3:55 – 5:15 PM

Objectives:

This course will examine novels, short stories, films, and music by and about Latinas/os in the United States. Through a close analysis of these works, students will learn to formulate questions pertaining to Latino/a experiences in the US. Above all, students will examine how Latino conceptualizations of national, racial and ethnic communities are formed; moreover, how the idea of “community” relates to issues of exile, integration and assimilation, political presence, criminality, and “back home” nationalism.

Although the class will study different Latino/a groups, special attention will be given to the migration experiences of Mexican-American (Chicano), Puerto Rican, Cuban and Dominican communities. Students will be encouraged to do research about other Latino/a communities in the US.

Readings:

- Augenbraum, Harold & Ilan Stavans, eds. *Growing up Latino: Memoirs and Stories*. (1993).
- Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. (1991).
- Díaz, Junot. *Drown*. (1996).
- Garcia, Cristina. *Dreaming in Cuban*. (1992).
- Rodriguez, Richard. *Hunger for Memory* (1982).
- Thomas, Piri. *Down These Mean Streets*. (1967).

[Texts for this course may be found at the Douglass Co-op. Supplementary readings will be available online through Sakai. *Students must print out online material and bring story or essay to class.*]

Activities and Grading

[1] 2 examinations: 20% each = 40%

[2] Take-home examination: 20%

[3] Final essay (5-7 pages): 30%

[4] Class attendance and participation: 10%

- ◆ Class attendance is fundamental to getting a good grade; furthermore, participation is required. Students are encouraged to engage in all class and group discussions, if not with commentary on the reading material, certainly by asking questions. This course is designed for intellectual exchange: every student is responsible for reading and preparing the assigned texts *before* class meetings.

All discussions or interventions will be made individually, in pairs or small groups. Remember: not staying on top of the reading is unfair to your classmates who depend on your participation.

- ◆ All papers and exams must be turned in on time; no material will be accepted late unless accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation.
- ◆ *The professor reserves the right to give impromptu quizzes during the semester.*

Grading Scale:

92→100=A; 87→91=B+; 81→86=B; 77→80=C+; 70→76=C; 60→69=D; 0→59=F

Office hours

Students are strongly advised to consult with the professor about any problems that might arise regarding any text, ideas for final essay, presentations, etc. **Office hours are Mondays between 9:30 and 11:30 AM—or by appointment.** Do not bottle up all questions for the session before the exams or essays.

Academic Integrity:

Except for collaborative assignments officially approved by the instructor in advance, all work that a student submits must be his/her own independent effort. Students must cite properly all outside sources consulted in preparing written assignments. Students should review the university policy on Academic Integrity (see the web site for the Teaching Excellence Center: <http://ctaar.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>).

The Writing Program maintains a web site that defines and discusses plagiarism:

http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/201/plagiarism_policy/.

These sites clarify many issues regarding the University’s policy on academic integrity. Failure to comply with this policy may result in failure of the course.

This course will require supplementary research. Remember that

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotations marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. (cited from University Regulations)

Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member. For information on proper documentation, consult “Acknowledging Sources,” the guide prepared by the Rutgers American Studies Department, which will be distributed in class. If you have further doubts regarding citation, please consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (6th Ed.) to resolve any problem. Prof. Sifuentes-Jáuregui has a copy available for reference.



Course of study		
(**) Denotes texts in Augenbraum, <i>Growing up Latino</i>		
Date	Topic	Reading / Assignment
September		
W5	Introduction	
M10	Conceptualizing the Nation	Anderson, <i>Imagined Communities</i> (online)
W12	Reading the Chicano Plain	Rivera, ... <i>And the Earth Did Not Devour Him...</i> (online) **Rivera, "On the Road to Texas: Fonseca"
M17	Chicano Urbane	**Candelaria, "The Day Cisco Kid Shot John Wayne" **Acosta, "Autobiography of Brown Buffalo"
W19		Oboler, "Hispanics? That's What <i>They</i> Call Us" (online)
M24	Gender and the City	Cisneros, <i>The House on Mango St.</i> , pp. 1-52
W26		Cisneros, <i>The House on Mango St.</i> , pp. 53-110
October		
M1		**Exam #1**
W3	New York Spaces	**Colón, "Kipling and I" **Mohr, "Mr. Mendelson" Mohr, "A Very Special Pet" (online)
M8	Racial Turfs	Thomas, <i>Down These Mean Streets</i> , pp. 1-154
W10	Racialization and Sexuality	<i>Down These Mean Streets</i> , pp. 155-254
M15		<i>Down These Mean Streets</i> , pp. 255-331
W17	Magical Realist Narratives	García, <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i> , pp. 3-95
M22	Exile Refunctioned	García, <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i> , pp. 97-160

W24	Remembering	García, <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i> , pp. 161-244
M29		**Exam #2**
W31	Success?	**Villarreal, “Pocho” Oboler, “Language, National Identity, and the Ethnic Label Hispanic” (online)
<i>November</i>		
M5	Good Education vs. Buena Educación	Rodríguez, <i>Hunger of Memory</i> , chps. 1-3
W7	Strange Desires	Rodríguez, <i>Hunger of Memory</i> , chps. 4-6
M12		Glatzer & Westmoreland, <i>Quinceañera</i>
W14		Glatzer & Westmoreland, <i>Quinceañera</i>
M19	*Review*	
Th21-Thanksgiving		
M26	Femininity through Race	Fusco, <i>The Incredible Disappearing Woman</i> (online) **Take-home exam due**
W28	Monstrous Identities	Díaz, <i>Drown</i> , pp. 1-65
<i>December</i>		
M3	New Jersey Irony	Díaz, <i>Drown</i> , pp. 67-160
W5	Behaving Identities	<i>Drown</i> , pp. 161-208
M10	The Immigration Debate	
W12	Conclusions	Final Paper Due