

Black and Latinx Intersections: Race and Power in the United States



Professor

Marisol LeBrón / lebronm@dickinson.edu

Time and Location

Tuesday/Thursday 10:30am – 11:45am
Denny 110

Office Hours

Monday 11am – 2pm
Denny Hall 302

COURSE DESCRIPTION

As Latinx population growth outpaced African American population growth over the course of the 2000s, a discourse of conflict and competition painting the two groups as at odds started to take center stage in national discourse. Scholars, journalists, and pundits argued that the new status of Latinxs as the “majority minority” population in the United States would diminish the political and economic power of the Black community and exacerbate simmering tensions between Black and Latinx groups. This course troubles sensationalistic accounts of Black and Latinx conflict by focusing on what interactions between Black and Latinx groups illuminate about race and power relations in the United States. While this course asks what real and perceived moments of tension tell us about structures of inequality experienced by both groups, the readings in the course move beyond the dominant conflict paradigm to look at the complex relationship between Black and Latinx communities and the structural forces and contexts that shape their interactions. In particular, this course will focus special attention on moments of interracial coalition as Black and Latinx groups have labored alongside one another to challenge the existing power structure and create a more just society. By the end of the course, students will see the limitations of “conflict” and “ethnic succession” as models for understanding Black and Latinx relations and instead cultivate a nuanced comparative analysis that is attentive to the shifting history of racial power relations in the United States and the cross-coalitional organizing undertaken by marginalized groups in order to affect social change.

COURSE MATERIALS

Lauren Araiza, *To March for Others: The Black Freedom Struggle and the United Farm Workers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

Gaye Theresa Johnson, *Spaces of Conflict, Spaces of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

Gordon K. Mantler, *Power to the Poor: Black-Brown Coalition and the Fight for Economic Justice, 1960-1974* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

Vanessa Ribas, *On the Line: Slaughterhouse Lives and the Making of the New South* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).

All other readings for this course will be available online [marked *]. You are expected to bring these readings to class. If you are having issues purchasing the books for class, please come speak to me.

EXPECTATIONS

During our time together, you will engage in discussion-based intellectual exchange with your fellow classmates and rigorous, original analysis of the weekly readings. Our class sessions will help you to develop critical thinking capacities that will prove indispensable both in the classroom and beyond.

We are collectively responsible for the quality of our time together. In other words, you will get out of this class what you invest in terms of preparedness and effort. Therefore, you are expected to arrive to each session on time, having read the assigned material, having determined relevant questions and points for discussion, and ready to engage each other respectfully in the classroom.

A NOTE ON DIFFERENCE, DISCOMFORT, & RESPECT IN THE CLASSROOM

Respect for difference, in all its forms, is essential to building a classroom environment where everyone feels able to learn and contribute to class discussions. The material covered in this course will engage with questions of how difference produces distinct forms of knowledge and diverse experiences. The experiences and ways of knowing discussed in the course materials may be similar or different from your own experiences, both of which can result in questions and possibly even feelings of discomfort. When these moments arise, I encourage you to view them as valuable and important components of learning.

Thus, this course will ask you to think critically and thoughtfully about social differences and societal inequalities in ways that may expand or challenge previously held ideas. That said, the goal of this class is not to “force” certain ways of thinking onto anyone, but, rather, to expose everyone to ways of thinking and being in the world that may or may not be different from their own. I expect and encourage students to disagree with the course material, fellow classmates, and me; however, I expect that everyone will remain respectful and willing to listen at all times. Although you are under no obligation to agree with the course materials, the instructor, or the other students, you are still responsible for displaying a comprehension of the texts assigned and the conversations taking place.

If you have concerns about course content or the expectations regarding the classroom environment, please consult with me during the first week to determine whether this class is a good fit for you. If you are uncomfortable with or uninterested in discussions of race, gender, sexuality, class, histories of colonization, exploitation, capitalism, and violence, this class may not be for you as these will be central themes covered throughout the semester.

COMMUNICATION

Email: You are welcome to email me with any questions or concerns. I expect, however, that you be timely and considerate with your emails. Requests or questions related to scheduled assignments that are received less than 12 hours before the assignment is due may not receive a response. Please be professional in your email communications with all your professors, including me.

Office Hours: Do not hesitate to come see me if you have any questions regarding the course materials or your written work. If you are unable to attend my scheduled office hours, contact me to set up another time by appointment.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Attendance at all classes is required. Students will be allowed **two** absences without penalty. All other absences will lower your participation grade for the course. ***Students with 4 or more absences will automatically receive a ZERO participation grade for the course.*** Students are expected to arrive to class on time; students arriving to class more than 15 minutes after the class has started will be marked absent for the day.

If an extenuating circumstance requires that you be late or miss a class session, please consult with me ahead of time. Please note that, in addition to contacting me, it is *YOUR* personal responsibility to attain and review notes for any missed classes from your fellow students.

You are expected to attend every class and be fully present in our collective space. Therefore, ***cell phones must be put on silent and remain out of sight. Additionally, all laptops, iPads, tablets, and digital notebooks are prohibited in class,*** unless there is a documented need for students who require specific learning accommodations. Because this is a discussion-based class, you will not need to take digital notes. Also, you must remember to bring the readings with you to class in order to appropriately reference and engage them during our discussions.

LATE PAPER POLICY

No Late Papers Will Be Accepted Without Penalty. A FULL letter grade will be deducted for every day that a paper is late (i.e., B+ to C+). Late papers also may not receive written comments. Papers cannot be rewritten. If you are having difficulty with an assignment, please come see me during my office hours.

PAPER FORMAT

All papers must use 12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spacing, and 1" margins on all sides. All students must use the following header:

Your name
The class title
The assignment (i.e. midterm essay)
The date you handed in the paper (not the due date)

Students should use either Chicago or MLA style citations in a consistent manner throughout their written assignments. For more see the Library's Guide to Citing Sources: <http://libguides.dickinson.edu/citing>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any breach of academic integrity will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary review. I expect all students to familiarize themselves with and adhere to Dickinson College's policies regarding academic misconduct, which can be accessed here: [http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/dean-of-students/content/Conduct---Community-Standards/#Academic Misconduct](http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/dean-of-students/content/Conduct---Community-Standards/#Academic_Misconduct)

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism is the appropriation of someone else's work or ideas – whether they are written or not – without acknowledgement, proper identification of the source, or citation. It is irrelevant whether this was done intentionally or not. Further, a lack of knowledge about U.S. standards of academic citation is not an excuse or explanation. While the most egregious forms of plagiarism use entire phrases, sentences, or paragraphs verbatim without quotation marks or citation, paraphrasing someone else's work without attribution *and* altering a few words to pass someone else's ideas off as your own also constitute equally serious forms of plagiarism. The inclusion of non-textual images (i.e. drawings, maps, graphs, charts, and photos) in a paper is also considered plagiarism if the images are not properly cited.

It is *YOUR* responsibility to consult with your instructor, a librarian, or writing tutor if you are unsure or unclear about how to properly use citations.

For more information about plagiarism, please consult the Purdue Online Writing Lab's webpage dedicated to avoiding plagiarism: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

NEED HELP WITH WRITING ASSIGNMENTS?

I strongly recommend visiting the Eberly Writing Center. At the Writing Center, you can work one-on-one with a trained writing tutor. Please avail yourselves of this wonderful resource – you will not regret it. For more information and to make an appointment:

http://www.dickinson.edu/info/20158/writing_program/2829/the_norman_m_eberly_multilingual_writing_center

ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMMODATIONS

Dickinson College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodations must make their request and provide appropriate documentation to Disability Services in Biddle House. Because classes change every semester, eligible students must obtain a new accommodation letter from Director Marni Jones every semester and review this letter with their professors so the accommodations can be implemented. The Director of Disability Services is available by appointment to answer questions and discuss any implementation issues you may have.

Disability Services proctoring is managed by Susan Frommer, she can be reached at (717)-254-8107 or proctoring@dickinson.edu. Address general inquiries to Stephanie Anderberg at (717)-245-1734 or e-mail disabilityservices@dickinson.edu.

NAMES & PRONOUNS

If you prefer to be called by a different name or referred to by a different gender pronoun than the one under which you are officially enrolled, please inform me. Students are expected to respectfully refer to each other by preferred names and pronouns during class discussions.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Class Participation: 15%

On-time completion of the reading assignments, active listening during lectures and in-class discussion, and adding to discussions by making comments and asking questions are all required of you in this course.

Critical Media Responses: 35%

You will be required to write **five** responses (2-3 pages, double spaced) summarizing, analyzing, and evaluating the content of media reports about the intersections of Blackness and *Latinidad*. Your paper should address what kinds of assumptions the author(s)/creator(s) make about Blackness, *Latinidad*, and the relationship between the two. Additionally, you should use the course readings to analyze, contextualize, and evaluate the claims being made in the media reports. You must cite information from the course materials to support your reading of the media pieces you are writing about.

The following are the articles and deadlines for your responses:

- Joe Brewster, Blair Foster, and Michèle Stephenson, “A Conversation with Latinos on Race,” *New York Times* Op-Docs, February 29, 2016, <http://nyti.ms/1TKs4DB> **(DUE: 2/6)**
- Walter Thompson-Hernández, “Cardi B Reminds Us That Latinos Have A Complicated Relationship To The N-Word,” *Mitú*, September 21, 2017, <https://wearemitu.com/street-culture/cardi-b-and-the-n-word/> **(DUE: 2/20)**
- Aaron G. Fountain Jr., “Latinos, Police Brutality and the Blame Game,” *Latino Rebels*, July 19, 2016, <http://www.latinorebels.com/2016/07/19/latinos-police-brutality-and-the-blame-game/> **(DUE: 3/22)**
- Tanvi Misra, “In South L.A., a Common Front to Fend Off Gentrification,” *CityLab*, November 2, 2016, <http://www.citylab.com/housing/2016/11/in-south-la-a-common-front-to-fend-off-gentrification/506213/> **(DUE: 4/10)**
- Cord Jefferson, “How Illegal Immigration Hurts Black America” *The Root*, February 10, 2010, http://www.theroot.com/articles/politics/2010/02/how_illegal_immigration_hurts_black_america/ **(DUE: 4/26)**

Presentation and Discussion Facilitation: 15%

In groups, students will be responsible for facilitating one class discussion over the course of the semester. I will, of course, assist, direct, and add to the conversation as necessary, but for our first half hour together, you will be responsible for the structure and progression of class discussion. Although the format is flexible, and you are encouraged to be creative, you must be sure to address the following:

- the central argument/thesis of the text(s)
- how the author(s) develops their argument (i.e. the organization of the text)
- the author's/authors' methodology
- the evidence or examples the author/authors use to support their claims
- things you would have like the author to address/address
- what connections, if any, the day's text(s) have with other readings from the course

Although you will be going over central claims and examples, please note that this is NOT simply a presentation summarizing the text. Rather, you are being asked to pose questions to your classmates and facilitate an engaging discussion of the text. As a group, you should plan ahead and work together to get creative with this assignment. For instance, you might consider incorporating debate, small group discussions, primary source analysis, multimedia, and/or other materials and exercises. Additionally, feel free to discuss how readings about particular historical moments might connect to contemporary issues. Again, please DO NOT just plan to summarize the readings and lecture the class for 30 minutes – that will be highly unpleasant for everyone. **You should prepare a PowerPoint presentation to accompany your discussion.** You will be graded based on the thoughtfulness of your presentation/discussion plan, the clarity of your analysis, your grip on the text and the relevant context, and your effectiveness in engaging your classmates.

Final Essays: 35%

For your final, you will be given a series of essay prompts. Students will select two questions and write 4-5 pages for each prompt selected (8-10 pages in total). Papers must seriously engage the readings and address the questions posed, demonstrating an understanding of key concepts and arguments from the course. Questions will be handed out on Tuesday, April 18th at the start of class. This is a take home exam, which will be **DUE THURSDAY, MAY 10 at 12PM**. No late essays will be accepted – finals handed in after the deadline will receive an automatic ZERO on the assignment.

Week One: Racial Formation in the Americas I

Tuesday, January 23

- Introductions and review of syllabus

Thursday, January 25

- Ariel E. Dulitzky, "A Region in Denial: Racial Discrimination and Racism in Latin America" *
- Miriam Jiménez Román, "Looking at that Middle Ground: Racial Mixing As Panacea?" *

Week Two: Racial Formation in the Americas II

Tuesday, January 30

- No class – Professor LeBrón will be delivering a lecture at the Claremont Colleges.

Thursday, February 1

- Selections from Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* *

Week Three: Presumed Conflict?

Tuesday, February 6

- Selections from Nicolás C. Vaca, *The Presumed Alliance: The Unspoken Conflict Between Latinos and Blacks and What it Means for America* *

Thursday, February 8

- Excerpt from John D. Márquez's Introduction to *Black-Brown Solidarity: Racial Politics in the New Gulf South* *
- Ed Morales, "Brown Like Me?" *

Week Four: Jim Crow's Transnational Reach

Tuesday, February 13

- Ruth Glasser, "From 'Indianola' to 'Ño Colá': The Strange Career of the Afro-Puerto Rican Musician" *

Thursday, February 15

- Frank Guridy, "Destination Without Humiliation: Black Travel Within the Routes of Discrimination" *

Week Five: Coalitions for Economic Justice

Tuesday, February 20

- Mantler, *Power to the Poor*, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2

Thursday, February 22

- Mantler, *Power to the Poor*, Chapter 3 and 4

Week Six: Poor People Power

Tuesday, February 27

- Mantler, *Power to the Poor*, Chapter 5 and 6

Thursday, March 1

- Mantler, *Power to the Poor*, Chapters 7 and 8 and Epilogue

Week Seven: Black and Brown Freedom Struggles

Tuesday, March 6

- Araiza, *To March for Others*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Thursday, March 8

- Araiza, *To March for Others*, Chapter 2 and 3

Week Eight: SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, March 13

- No class – enjoy!!

Thursday, March 15

- No class – enjoy!!

Week Nine: From Cultivating Mutual Respect to Action

Tuesday, March 20

- Araiza, *To March for Others*, Chapter 4

Thursday, March 22

- Araiza, *To March for Others*, Chapter 5 and Conclusion

Week Ten: Spaces of Musical Belonging I

Tuesday, March 27

- Johnson, *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Thursday, March 29

- Johnson, *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity*, Chapter 2 and 3

Week Eleven: Spaces of Musical Belonging II

Tuesday, April 3

- Johnson, *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity*, Chapter 4

Thursday, April 5

- Johnson, *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity*, Chapter 5 and the Conclusion

Week Twelve: NO CLASS

Tuesday, April 10

- No class – Professor LeBrón at the Death by Policing conference at UIUC

Thursday, April 12

- No class – Professor LeBrón at the Death by Policing conference at UIUC

Week Thirteen: What's New About the New South?

Tuesday, April 17

- Ribas, *On the Line*, Chapters 1 and 2

Thursday, April 19

- Ribas, *On the Line*, Chapter 3

Week Fourteen: Resentment and Race Talk

Tuesday, April 24

- Ribas, *On the Line*, Chapter 4

Thursday, April 26

- Ribas, *On the Line*, Chapters 5 and 6

Week Fifteen: Prismatic Engagement

Tuesday, May 1

- Ribas, *On the Line*, Chapters 7 and 8

Thursday, May 3

- Wrapping up

**FINAL PAPERS DUE THURSDAY, MAY 10 at NOON.
NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED – NO EXCEPTIONS!**