

## Introduction to Mexican American and Latina/o Studies



*Mural in memory of Alex Nieto, a victim of gentrification*

### Professor

Marisol LeBrón

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Office Hours: W 11am – 2pm

GWB 2.328

### Teaching Assistants

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### Class Time and Location

TTH 12:30pm – 2:00pm

BUR 112

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine historical and contemporary examples of Latina/o/x political, social, and cultural practices in the United States through an interdisciplinary lens. We will explore the transnational nature of *Latinidad* and how Latina/o/x culture and identity is shaped by power relations and socio-political dynamics both in the United States as well as in countries of origin. This course will begin with discussions of what constitutes Latino/a/x identity and what constitutes Latino/a/x studies, laying the foundation for the analytical work we will do for the remainder of the semester. We will turn to themes ranging from colonialism and conquest, to sexuality and gender, to transnationalism and immigration, to race, poverty, and spatial inequality, to language, music, and media representations. Within each section of the course, students will be asked to articulate their thoughts via both written work and class participation, creating a classroom environment wherein students collectively think through the politics, histories, and implications of Latina/o/x identity.

## COURSE MATERIALS

Lisa García Bedolla, *Latino Politics*, 2nd. edition (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015). **[marked LP]**

Gina M. Perez, Frank A. Guridy, and Adrian Burgos Jr., eds., *Beyond El Barrio: Everyday Life in Latina/o America* (New York: New York University Press, 2010). **[marked BB]**

All other readings for this course will be available on Canvas **[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, we will engage in 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

You are expected to attend every class and be fully present in our collective space. ***Students will be allowed three absences without penalty – no questions asked.*** All other absences will lower your 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.

Please remember to bring the readings with you to class in order to appropriately reference and engage them during our discussions.

## LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

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

## 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 UT's policies regarding academic misconduct, which can be accessed here: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>

## 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 University 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://uwc.utexas.edu/>

## ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Services with Students with Disability at 512-471-6259 or [ssd@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ssd@austin.utexas.edu) as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. For more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>

## 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 appropriate names and pronouns during class discussions.

## ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

### *Student Attendance and 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. I will assign this grade in consultation with your TAs who will monitor your attendance and assess your preparedness and participation in class.

### *Latin History for Morons Response Paper: 15%*

We will watch *John Leguizamo's Latin History for Morons* in class on March 5. If you miss class on this date you are still responsible for watching the show. Following the screening you will write an 800-1000 word response paper placing the show in conversation with the course texts. Detailed instructions will be distributed in class and posted on Canvas.

### *Pop Quizzes: 20%*

Pop quizzes will be administered several times over the course of the semester and will test students' knowledge of the day's reading. Quizzes will be multiple choice format.

### *In-class Exam: 25%*

This exam will test your knowledge and understanding of key themes and concepts in the course thus far. The exam will be a mix of multiple choice, true /false, and short answers. This exam will be administered Tuesday, **April 2** during class.

### *Final Exam: 25%*

This exam will test your knowledge and understanding of key themes and concepts in the course from week 10 onward. The exam will be a mix of multiple choice, true /false, and short answers. The exam will be administered Tuesday, **May 21**, 9:00 am-12:00pm. Location will be confirmed prior to exam.

## **Week One: Who is Latina/o? What is Latina/o Studies?**

**Tuesday, January 22**

Introduction to the course

**Thursday, January 24**

- Juana María Rodríguez, “Latino, Latina, Latin@” \*
- Frances R. Aparicio, “(Re)constructing *Latinidad*: The Challenge of Latina/o Studies” \*

### **EVENT: LATINX STUDIES CELEBRACIÓN**

Welcome back event to start off the semester.

Winner of the poster competition will be announced. Free food and Latinx Studies swag!

Tuesday, January 29 @ 4PM (Gordon White Building)

## **Week Two: What’s in a Name? Or, What’s up with the X?**

**Tuesday, January 29**

- Lourdes Torres, “Latinx” \*
- Richard T. Rodríguez, “X Marks the Spot” \*

**Thursday, January 31**

- Nicole Trujillo-Pagán, “Crossed out by LatinX: Gender Neutrality and Genderblind Sexism” \*
- Salvador Vidal-Ortiz and Juliana Martínez, “Latinx Thoughts: Latinidad with an X” \*

## **Week Three: Colonialism, Conquest, and War I**

**Tuesday, February 5**

- García Bedolla, “Mexican Americans: Conquest, Migration, and Adaptation ” [LP]

**Thursday, February 7**

- García Bedolla, “Puerto Ricans: From Colonized People to Political Activists ” [LP]

## **Week Four: Colonialism, Conquest, and War II**

**Tuesday, February 12**

- García Bedolla, “Cuban Americans: Occupation, Revolution, and Exile Politics” [LP]

**Thursday, February 17**

- García Bedolla, “Dominicans: Political Upheaval, Imperialism, and Transnational Activism” [LP]

## **Week Five: Colonialism, Conquest, and War III**

**Tuesday, February 19**

- García Bedolla, “Central Americans: Inequality, War, and Solidarity” [LP]

**Thursday, February 21**

- Marilyn Espitia, “The Other ‘Other Hispanics’: South American-Origin Latinos in the United States” \*

**EVENT: JONATHAN ROSA LECTURE**

“Looking Like a Language, Sounding Like a Race:  
Raciolinguistic Ideologies and the Learning of Latinidad”

Thursday, February 21 @ 4pm-5:30pm (Gordon White Building)

**Week Six: Race, Ethnicity, and *Latinidad***

**Tuesday, February 26**

- Miriam Jiménez Román, “Looking at that Middle Ground: Racial Mixing As Panacea?” \*
- Silvio Torres-Saillant, “Problematic Paradigms: Racial Diversity and Corporate Identity in the Latino Community” in *Latinos: Remaking America* (2002) \*

**Thursday, February 28**

- Nicholas Vargas, “Latina/o Whitening?: Which Latinas/os Self-Classify as White and Report Being Perceived as White by Other Americans” \*
- Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, “On Being a White Person of Color: Using Autoethnography to Understand Puerto Ricans’ Racialization” \*

**Week Seven: Latin History for Morons?**

**Tuesday, March 5**

- In-class screening of *John Leguizamo’s Latin History for Morons* (2018)

**Thursday, March 7**

- **Take home essays due at the start of class**
- In-class discussion: *Latin History for Morons*

**EVENT: MARISOL LEBRÓN BOOK PRESENTATION**

Policing Life and Death:

Race, Violence, and Resistance in Puerto Rico

Monday, March 11 @ 12pm-1:30pm (Benson Latin American Collection)

**Week Eight: Linguistic Subversion**

**Tuesday, March 12**

- Gloria Anzaldúa, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” \*
- Ana Celia Zentella, “‘Dime con quién hablas, y te diré quién eres’: Linguistic (In)security and Latina/o Unity” \*
  - **Lecture by Rubi Leal Cavazos**

**Thursday, March 14**

- Maria Elena Cepeda, “Singing the ‘Star-Spanglish Banner’: The Politics and Pathologization of Bilingualism in U.S. Popular Media” **[BB]**
- Nicole Guidotti-Hernández, “Why Sebastien de la Cruz Should Be Respected and Protected,” in *The Feminist Wire* <http://thefeministwire.com/2013/06/why-sebastien-de-la-cruz-should-be-respected-and-protected/>

### **Week Nine: Spring Break**

#### **Tuesday, March 19**

- NO CLASS – ENJOY!

#### **Thursday, March 21**

- NO CLASS – ENJOY!

### **Week Ten: Performing *Latinidad***

#### **Tuesday, March 26**

- María Elena Cepeda, “Putting a ‘Good Face on the Nation’: Beauty, Memes, and the Gendered Rebranding of Global *Colombianidad*” \*
- Michelle Rocío Nasser De La Torre, “Bellas por naturaleza: Mapping national identity on US Colombian beauty queens” \*

#### **Thursday, March 28**

- Karen Mary Davalos, “La Quinceañera: Making Gender and Ethnic Identities” \*
- Rachel González-Martin, “Barrio Ritual and Pop Rite: Quinceañeras in the Folklore-Popular Culture Borderlands” \*

### **Week Eleven:**

#### **Tuesday, April 2**

- IN CLASS EXAMINATION

#### **Thursday, April 4**

- NO CLASS – PROFESSOR LEBRÓN ATTENDING AAG CONFERENCE

### **Week Twelve: Sexuality and Sexual Health in Latina/o Communities**

#### **Tuesday, April 9**

- Lorena Garcia, “Studying the ‘Other’ Girls” and “The Sexual (Mis)Education of Latina Girls” \*

#### **Thursday, April 11**

- Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, “Gay Latino Histories/ Dying to be Remembered: AIDS Obituaries Public Memory, and the Queer Latino Archive” [BB]
- Carlos Ulises Decena, “Surviving AIDS in an Uneven World: Latina/o Studies for a Brown Epidemic” \*

### **Week Thirteen: Transnational Lives, Transnational Communities**

#### **Tuesday, April 16**

- Dolores Inés Casillas, “¡Puuurrooo MÉXICO!’: Listening to Transnationalism on U.S. Spanish Language Radio” [BB]
- Cary Cordova, “The Mission in Nicaragua: San Francisco Poets Go to War” [BB]
  - Lecture by Alheli Harvey

#### **Thursday, April 18**

- NO CLASS – PROFESSOR LEBRÓN GIVING TALKS AT NORTHWESTERN AND UIC

### **Week Fourteen: Gentrification, Displacement, and Resistance**

#### **Tuesday, April 23**

- Gina Pérez, “Gentrification, Intrametropolitan Migration, and the Politics of Place” \*

#### **Thursday, April 25**

- Rebecca Solnit, “Death By Gentrification: The Killing that Shamed San Francisco,” in *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/mar/21/death-by-gentrification-the-killing-that-shamed-san-francisco>
- Abdallah Fayyad, “The Criminalization of Gentrifying Neighborhoods,” in *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/12/the-criminalization-of-gentrifying-neighborhoods/548837/>

### **Week Fifteen: Latinxs and the Military**

#### **Tuesday, April 30**

- Gina Perez, “Hispanic Values, Military Values: Gender, Culture, and the Militarization of Latina/o Youth” [BB]
- George Mariscal, “Nowhere to Go: Latino Youth and the Poverty Draft,” in *Public Affairs Magazine* <http://www.politicalaffairs.net/no-where-else-to-go-latino-youth-and-the-poverty-draft-print-edition/>

#### **Thursday, May 2**

- Hector Amaya, “Mediating Belonging, Inclusion, and Death” \*

### **Week Sixteen: Criminal Injustice**

#### **Tuesday, May 7**

- Victor M. Ríos, “The Hyper-Criminalization of Black and Latino Male Youth in the Era of Mass Incarceration” \*

#### **Thursday, May 9 [last class session]**

- Jerry Flores, Ariana Ochoa Camacho, and Xuan Santos, “Gender on the Run: Wanted Latinas in a Southern California Barrio” \*