

History 298
Latinos in the Americas
University of Oregon
Winter 2015
Professors Julie M. Weise & Claudia Holguín Mendoza

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email hours:

24-hr response on weekdays,

48-hr response on weekends

Classroom: 119 Pacific Hall

Class hours: M, W 12-1:50 pm

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Office hours: M 2-3 pm, Tu 4-5 pm

(Weise); MW 3-3:50 pm (Holguín)

This course will introduce students to the historical experiences of Latino/a groups, while helping them increase their Spanish comprehension abilities and comfort with the language overall. It spends the most time discussing the historical experiences of the numerically largest group, Mexicans, while comparing and contrasting them to the experiences of immigrants and Americans of Caribbean and Central American origin.

We begin with brief discussions of the initial colonization of the Americas, and then spend most of the quarter discussing the period 1800 to the present. We will investigate the major themes in Latina/o history. These include: colonialism, race and racialization, migration, identity, labor, politics, and culture. Students will analyze Latina/o migration history through the lens of not only U.S. history but also the histories of Latin American nations, thus gaining familiarity with the practice of transnational analysis. Finally, the course will consider the histories of Mexicans alongside those of Central Americans and Caribbean migrants, particularly Puerto Ricans and Cubans. The focus on these four groups will enable the course to discuss diverse aspects of the Latina/o historical experience: Legal inclusion/exclusion (Mexicans), U.S. citizenship and colonialism (Puerto Ricans), and political exile (Cubans and Central Americans).

This course employs an innovative bilingual pedagogy that will allow students to build their proficiency in Spanish while studying the content outlined above. It is most appropriate for students who have at least basic familiarity with Spanish: two years of high school study or one year of university study, or who grew up in a bilingual household. Fluency in Spanish is neither expected nor required.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of Latinos in the Americas, students will be able to:

Liberal Arts/General Education outcomes:

- Read, understand, and interpret scholarly writing
- Write a strong and concise paragraph that uses evidence to defend an argument

- Distinguish between important and unimportant information to take appropriate notes on lecture and discussion

History outcomes:

- Critically analyze a primary historical source
- Identify and explain the historian's argument in a secondary source
- Formulate and defend their own positions in Latino history debates
- Draw on the Latino past to better explain the Latino present

Spanish outcomes:

- Derive meaning from Spanish-language texts even if they lack fluency in the language
- Enjoy greater comfort and proficiency in Spanish speaking and writing

Readings and assignments

Students will be expected to read 20-50 pages of primary or secondary sources each night, to watch a documentary providing background, or to conduct their own research in original sources available on the internet. All readings are posted on Blackboard, and in some cases, different student project groups will be assigned different readings of comparable length. Because this course's bilingual pedagogy is entirely novel, the professors will be learning along with students over the course of the quarter. They therefore reserve the right to substitute homework assignments with others of roughly equal effort, as long as they provide students at least one week of notice.

Bilingual classroom

Unlike most Spanish classrooms, in which students are required to communicate exclusively in Spanish, ours will be a bilingual classroom, in which Spanish, English, and Spanglish are equally welcome. The instructors' goal is to create a playful, fun, non-judgmental environment for students with all manner of Spanish strengths and weaknesses to further their language skills even through the inevitable mistakes and difficulties that language learning entails. While Spanish *comprehension* (mostly written texts, with occasional audio exercises supported by written texts) will figure into students' graded assignments, students who choose to *write* or *speak* in Spanish cannot negatively affect their grade by doing so, though they may positively affect it by impressing the instructors in the area of class participation. Spanish *comprehension* is a required part of the course; examples of additional Spanish exercises students may *choose* to complete include:

- Speaking in Spanish or Spanglish in small groups or all-class discussions
- Writing informal reading responses partially or entirely in Spanish (or writing them in English, then substituting Spanish words you know and teaching yourself some new ones)
- Responding in Spanish or Spanglish on exams
- Completing formal writing assignments in Spanish (because this one assignment hews to formal writing conventions, it should be in Spanish or English but not Spanglish)

Work and evaluation

Reading and reading response for each class meeting (5% of grade for “Individual preparation” responses, 15% for “Group preparation” responses)

On Blackboard, the instructors pose a comprehension question for each night’s assignment. Students should respond in a single paragraph that contains strong analysis with specific examples from the reading, but their responses need not be grammatically perfect. Responses may be in English, Spanish, or Spanglish. Responses are due via BB one hour before the start of class. Students may skip one “individual preparation” responses with no penalty to their grade; all “group preparation” responses are mandatory. Questions will be posted at least one week in advance of their due date.

Additionally, students still be asked to complete short (35-minute) language assessments over the course of the quarter, to help the instructors and the university evaluate the effects this pedagogy has on students’ Spanish abilities. These assessments will not be graded, but students are required to complete them. They will count as reading responses in the “individual preparation” category.

Individual participation group work and class discussions (20%) and group work products (20%)

Students will also be expected to participate actively in all-class discussions and small group activities. During group work time, professors will converse with groups and assign individual grades to students (check, check plus, check minus) based on their effort and performance in their assigned role; not every student will be evaluated every class. Similarly, professors will note and evaluate student participation in all-class discussions. Speaking up in class does not come naturally to every student; yet, it is a critical part of the learning experience for you and your peers. Students who are reluctant to speak in class are encouraged to visit office hours early in the term to discuss their concerns and establish a strategy for increasing class participation.

When groups are required to present findings to the class in writing or orally, professors will evaluate this work and assign the same grade to every member of the group.

Short formal writing assignments (15%) and final portfolio (15%)

At 5 pm on the Friday following the conclusion of each major unit, students must turn in via Blackboard and SafeAssign a well-written, grammatically strong, well-argued essay *of no more than one double-spaced page using 12-point font and 1-inch margins* that answers one of the “Key questions” for that unit and defends their answer with evidence from assigned primary and secondary sources. This is the only assignment that requires formal writing, and therefore that must be completed in English or Spanish (but not Spanglish). Professors will provide detailed writing feedback to students. Students will then revise their essays into a final portfolio, which they will submit together on the last Friday of the term.

Midterm (5% of grade) and Final (5% of grade) essays

Both essay exams are administered as take-home exercises on Blackboard. Students are allowed to use any book, note, and internet resource they like, and are encouraged to prepare for the exam in groups. However, *they are strictly prohibited from communicating in any way with any human being, classmate or otherwise, while they have the exam open.* Each essay exam will last 90 minutes, and will

require students to write a single longer essay that makes thematic connections across material covered in the class so far. Students will be expected to reference all relevant lectures, discussions, documentaries and readings in their answers.

Class policies

Distraction-free class environment

Research shows that all of us (including your professor) have ever shorter attention spans thanks to our smart-phones, iPads, and laptops. Research also shows that *students who take notes by hand perform better than those who take notes on their laptops* (see studies posted on Blackboard). Therefore, our classroom will utilize technology deliberately, not indiscriminately. At times, particularly during lectures, the instructors will mandate a device-free oasis from distraction, during which we focus on the material at hand, the professor and our classmates. We will discuss note-taking strategies to ensure that students are able to benefit from this policy even if it is a change of pace for them. *On the other hand, research also shows that electronic devices can enhance the quality of group work.* To that end, we will often utilize university-issued iPads to consult course materials, engage in collaborative assignments, and conduct further research.

Late work and missed exams

The intent of the late work policy is to acknowledge students' complex lives while also creating accountability. Reading responses (both individual and group preparation) contribute in an integral way to timely activities for all members of the class, and therefore are not accepted late. On the other hand, the five formal writing assignments may be turned in late, but will receive a penalty of 10% per 24-hour period, to a maximum of 10 days late at which time the grade becomes a zero. Students who have experienced illness or injury, or the death, injury, or serious illness of an immediate family member are encouraged to provide written documentation for these legitimate excuses, at which time the professor will set a firm alternate deadline with no penalties. Students have 48 hours to complete take-home exams, reducing the range of acceptable excuses for missing them. Make-up exams *must be scheduled as far in advance as foreseeable*, and will be offered only for one of the preceding two reasons or due to unavoidable religious observances, jury duty or government obligation, or official university activities (artistic performances, intercollegiate athletics, etc.). Students who miss an exam without providing, in advance, written documentation of one of the above circumstances will receive a zero on the exam.

Cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct

All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. Building on work from a previous course may be permissible but will constitute plagiarism if not discussed with the professor in advance. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, and paraphrases) must be properly cited (see Blackboard for course citation policies), and anything not inside quotation marks must be substantively paraphrased. Additional advice for avoiding plagiarism is available at <<http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>>.

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express

written permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act.

Accessibility

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Schedule

Assignments are listed on the date they are due. An asterisk is placed next to dates whose reading responses count as "Group preparation"; all other reading responses count as "Individual preparation."

Introduction

1/5: Introduction to Latino history and bilingual class

Unit 1: Colonialisms through 1910

1/7: Watch PBS "Latino Americans" Episode 1, and Episode 2 (through minute 21)
Complete Blackboard survey

1/12: *Read primary source on Texas secession (English)
Read your group's secondary source on the "downward spiral" of Mexican Americans

Unit 2: Revolution, Migration, Deportation: 1910-39

1/14: Finish watching PBS "Latino Americans" Episode 2
Read Sánchez, "Farewell Homeland"

By Friday 1/16 at 5 pm: Submit formal writing assignment for Unit 1

1/19: No class, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observed

1/21: *Read assigned Spanish-language life history three times
Summarize (in BB reading response), and mark particularly difficult passages and words

1/26: Watch "The Lemon Grove Incident" film on Youtube

1/28: *Read your group's secondary source on the "Caucasian strategy"

By Friday 1/30 at 5 pm: Submit formal writing assignment for Unit 2

Unit 3: War, liberalism, economic growth and civil rights: 1939-91

2/2: Watch PBS “Latino Americans,” Episode 3, and Episode 4 (minutes 1-20 and 34-41)

2/4: *Oral history research assignment in online Bracero History Archive (instructions on BB)

By Friday 2/6 at 5 pm: Submit take-home midterm on Blackboard.

2/9: Watch PBS “Latino Americans,” Episode 5

2/11: *Read Stephen, “The story of PCUN,” 1-55
Class meets in Knight Library, Room 201 (Special Collections classroom)

2/16: Read other students’ primary source projects and answer reading response question

By Friday 2/18 at 5 pm: Submit formal writing assignment for Unit 3

Unit 4: Cold War Latinos, 1954-91

2/18: *Watch PBS “Latino Americans,” Episode 4 (minutes 20-34 and 41-end) and Episode 6 (beginning through minute 12) and read primary source on Cuban exile

2/23: *Watch PBS “Latino Americans,” Episode 6 (minutes 12-24)
Read/listen to Central American immigrant oral history

By Friday 2/25 at 5 pm: Submit formal writing assignment for Unit 4

Unit 5: The ubiquitous Latino (1991-present)

2/25: Watch PBS “Latino Americans,” Episode 6 (minute 24-end)
Read assigned primary source on anti-immigrant movements

3/2: *Read assigned scholarly article on Latino “crossover” performing artists

3/4: *Read assigned scholarly article on black-Latino relations in new destinations

3/9: *Complete research assignment on recent protest movements in Spanish-language database on Ethnic Newswatch

3/11: Complete research assignment comparing English- and Spanish-language coverage of Latinos’ challenges and opportunities since the crash of 2008

By Friday 1/30 at 5 pm: Submit final Portfolio (including formal writing assignment for Unit 5)

Thursday, 3/19 by 12:15 pm: Submit take-home final essay on Blackboard