Women of Latin America

Spring 2016
HIST 487
Wednesday 2:30-4:20pm
Rice 017

Instructor: Professor Terrazas Williams

Office Hours: Mondays 2-3pm, Tuesdays 1-2:30pm and by appointment
Office: Rice 309
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Course Description:

This course explores the lives of remarkable women in Latin America from the colonial period to the present. Trailblazing scholars, world-renowned poets, industrious administrators, political powerhouses, and local community activists have contributed to the rich history of women throughout Latin America. We will examine how some became prominent historical figures, what was at stake in their public voices, and how and why their histories have captured the minds of people in their home countries and abroad. Women such as Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz of Mexico, Chica da Silva of Brazil, Rigoberta Menchu of Guatemala, and Reyita of Cuba not only shaped their communities and their countries, but their histories, preserved through autobiography, ethnography, documentaries, or through the scarce details of colonial archives, influence our understanding of gender, race, agency, and belonging. In addition to “celebrated” personages, we will also explore the lives of women on the margins of society who very rarely receive the recognition for the feats they accomplish at the community level. Some of these women now form part of a national imaginary of triumph, whereas others serve as placeholders for social anxiety. As both utilitarian and problematic for the conception of the nation, these “public” women offer varied and complex histories of Latin American society and culture.

Course Objectives:

1. Introduce students to the history and contributions of women throughout Latin American history.
2. Challenge students to interrogate discourses of gender, race, ethnicity, and belonging in Latin America.
3. Enhance students’ ability to identify, comprehend, and critique historical debates.
4. Increase students’ experience analyzing written and visual primary sources.
5. Improve students’ research, oral presentation, and writing skills.

Learning Activities:

Below is the breakdown of the weight of your final grade:

- Class Participation - 15%
- In-class Activities - 15%
- 1st Paper - 10%
- 2nd Paper - 15%
- Annotated Bibliography: 10%
- Introduction: 5%
Allen Exercise: 5%
Class Presentations: 5%
Final Paper - 20%

Participation is weighed as much as the final, so please be mindful that active engagement in class discussions will significantly affect your final grade. Participation is graded on a 1 to 10-point scale for each class session. Full credit (10 points) is assigned when there is clear evidence that the student has read and prepared for class and demonstrated active participation. Points are deducted for lack of preparation. You cannot expect to do well if you do not attend class regularly and participate in the discussions. Please see me if you are having difficulty contributing to class discussions so that we may discuss class preparation strategies.

In-class Assignments include a number of activities completed during the class period, such as map quizzes, response papers, and smaller group exercises. Each assignment will carry varying point values that will account for a cumulative grade. In-class assignments can be made-up with an excused absence only.

First Paper: This 4-page paper consists of extended annotated bibliography entries for works on Doña Marina/Malintzin/La Malinche, arguably Mexico’s most infamous female colonial personage. From the chronicles of the conquest by conquistadors to more contemporary interpretations of her role as mother of mestizaje, cultural mediator, and often “traitor,” your paper should focus on how these outside voices make sense of a young woman and former slave’s trajectory in the Mexican and international imaginary. The first completed draft is due in Week 5 and the final version due in Week 7.

Second Paper: This 7-page paper is an examination of the testimonio genre through Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century. This exercise will ask you to interrogate the testimonio of Reyita, be vigilant of its weaknesses and decide on its strengths with regard to its “testimony” on family, gender, and race. Importantly, the paper will ask you to think about how scholars decide on the all-important question: How do we trust a source? Finally, you will reflect on Elizabeth Dore’s question, “Why is the storyteller telling her/his story?”

We will be visiting the Allen Museum in Week 8 and doing an in-museum analysis of some works produced by Latin American women.

Class presentations: You will be asked to bring in a newspaper article dated from THIS YEAR on a “public” woman. She may fall into any of the broad categories we explored this year.

The annotated bibliography will be compiled from the sources chosen for the final historiographical paper. Each entry must include the Chicago Style citation, and a paragraph (approx. 150 words) describing the central argument of the work, the types of sources utilized, and a critique of its strength. For more resources on how to best organize and write an annotated bibliography, please visit: http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography

You will submit your introduction AND an outline of the subtopics for your final paper.

The final is a 10-12 page historiographical paper on one of the women or groups of women from the syllabus. This will require you to incorporate assigned readings and to conduct outside reading. You must include 8 books/articles of the body of literature and identify the major debates/trends of the secondary literature. The paper should also attend to the “public” nature of historical and contemporary women and how they may or may not have had agency in the construction and preservation of their public/documented lives.

Of the required number of sources, you must include at least 3 books. You may also use no more than one documentary source as one required cited, but please feel free to gather information from documentaries and include them in your bibliography. If you plan to use other media forms, please see me to discuss their appropriateness.
The penalty for late papers is one half step down in grade for each day late (i.e. B+ to a B for 1 day late, B+ to B- for two days). All papers are due at the beginning of class. The late penalty and 24hr-extension begins after the start of class. So if you decide to turn it in after 11am, the extra day penalty has already occurred.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance and participation are REQUIRED and are weighed heavily in your final grade. As this is a seminar, you must come prepared to engage with the materials and to dialogue with the group. Excused absences include family emergencies, religious holidays, and illness with doctor’s note. Four unexcused absences will result in a FAIL FOR THE ENTIRE COURSE.

General Course Policies:

You are responsible for participating in a supportive and stimulating communication dynamic with your classmates and professor. In addition to adhering to the college standards for student conduct and honor code, you are also expected to become aware of the ways in which your participation (or lack thereof) affects the classroom. Students are responsible for fostering a generous and supportive intellectual community where others are able to explore their ideas and engage with them in intellectual dialogue and debate.

The highest standards involve actively fostering respectful dialogue and debate in the pursuit of academic goals and to participate in creating an academic community within our classroom throughout the term where all students are free to share and explore their ideas as part of engagement with course materials.

Other Policies:

I respect the decision of students to observe religious holidays, but please send me an email notifying me of your absence. I respect and uphold college guidelines that prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, race, gender, or religious affiliation. For students who require accommodations for enhanced accessibility, please make an appointment with me to discuss the College’s options.

The audio and/or video recording of lectures (in whole or in part) is strictly prohibited without the professor’s express, written consent.

The use of technology in the classroom should be limited and used with great consideration to your fellow classmates. If your use of technology becomes a distraction, your use may become restricted to respect the learning objectives of others.

Communication:

Outside of office hours, my preferred mode of communication is email (dterrraza@oberlin.edu). I will answer emails within 48 hours of their receipt. I will not answer emails after 9pm.

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense.

I am required by College policy to report any instance of verified or perceived violation of the Honor Code.
You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism and any other violations of the honor code that affect your coursework. Oberlin College’s Honor Code outlines plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Please review the following site: http://www.oberlin.edu/studentpolicies/honorcode/concepts.html

Examples of plagiarism include (but are NOT limited to): using outside materials (paper or electronic) for a closed exam, copying from published or unpublished materials or electronic sources without proper citations, paraphrasing someone else’s work without proper citations, buying and using a paper that is already written, recycling your own work (wholly or in part) from another class without previous permission granted from both me and the other instructor, and citing materials you have not reviewed. For a more detailed explanation of plagiarism and its consequences, please consult the Honor Code. Violators will face sanctions in accordance with the college’s protocol.

Please review information on avoiding plagiarism: http://www.oberlin.edu/library/avoiding-plagiarism.html

Reading Schedule:
Please bring assigned reading materials to class. All readings are to be completed the day they are assigned in order to actively participate in class discussions.

Required Books:
The required books can be found On Reserve at Mudd Library
All articles and book chapters assigned in part are located on Blackboard.

Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World
Poems, Protest, and a Dream
Caetana Says No: Women’s Stories from a Brazilian Slave Society
Chica da Silva: A Brazilian Slave in the Eighteenth Century
Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century
I, Rigoberta Menchu

UNIT 1: Introduction

Week 1
Welcome, Syllabus review, What is Historiography?
Review of the field as of 2016

Week 2
Afterword, pp. 177-187
Levine, “The Cautionary Tale of Carolina Maria de Jesus,” pp. 55-83
In-class Examination of photos published in Child of the Dark
UNIT 2: Colonial Trajectories

Week 3: Early Complexity, Contemporary Debates
Dona Marina/Malintzin/La Malinche
“Dona Marina, Cortes’ Translator: Primary Sources, Bernal Diaz del Castillo,” pp. 1-5
Alarcon, “Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism,” pp. 57-87
Candelaria, “La Malinche, Feminist Prototype,” pp. 1-6
Taylor, “Malinche and Matriarchal Utopia: Gendered Visions of Indigeneity in Mexico,” pp. 815-840

Week 4: Colonial Gender Representations
Catalina de Erauso
Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World, Forward – Chapter 26, pp. xii-80
Sherry Velasco, The Lieutenant Nun: Transgenderism, Lesbian Desire, and Catalina de Erauso, Chapter 4 “From Cinema to Comics: The Re-Lesbianization of the Lieutenant Nun in the Twentieth Century,” pp. 113-165

Week 5: Confronting Patriarchy
Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz
Poems, Protest, and a Dream
Introduction pp.xi-xliii, Letter to Sor Filotea pp. 2-75
In-class examination of her poetry
***First Paper Draft DUE

Week 6: Slave Narratives
Caetana Says No: Women’s Stories from a Brazilian Slave Society
Prologue pp. xix – Epilogue pp. 158

Week 7: Disrupting Race and Class
Chica da Silva
Chica da Silva: A Brazilian Slave in the Eighteenth Century
Chapters 2-7 pp. 40-210
Chapter 11 pp. 284-304
In-class analysis of contemporary media representations of Chica da Silva
***First Paper DUE

SPRING BREAK, MARCH 19-27TH

UNIT 3: Revolutionary Memories

Week 8: Twentieth-Century Imaginations
Lore Cole, “‘How do you Imagine Latin America?’: Questioning Latin America Art and Identity in Print,” pp. 110-133

***Allen Museum Visit and Exercise

Week 9: Testimonials
Reyita
*Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 1 – 170, please pay special attention to pp. 116-170
Tania Triana, “Sombras de Pueblo Negro: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Memory in 1930s Cuba,” pp. 109-127

Week 10
Frida Kahlo: Tragedies and Triumphs
*The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait*
Introduction and Essay, pp. 7-34,
Corinne Andersen, “Remembrance of an Open Wound, Frida Kahlo and Post-Revolutionary Mexican Identity,” pp. 119-130
Guy Trebay, “Frida is Having a Moment,” pp. 1-6
Please watch the Miramax Studios production of *Frida* (2002) available in Mudd
In-class examination of Frida Kahlo’s diary entries

***Annotated Bibliography DUE

Week 11: Troubling Narratives
Rigoberta Menchu
*I, Rigoberta Menchu*
We will be reading all of this text, but please pay special attention to the following sections:
Laura Butterbaugh, ‘Guatemala: Rigerta Menchu: ‘I have a right to my own memories’,” pp. 8

UNIT 4: Visibility and Mobility

Week 12: Political Inclusion and Exclusion
Sujatha Fernandes, “Gender Agenda of Pink Tide in Latin America,” pp. 3900-3901
We will be watching this documentary in class: Benedita da Silva – “I was born a Black woman” (NACSI MULHER NEGRA)

***Second Paper DUE

Week 13
Mini Presentations

***Introduction DUE

FINAL PAPER DUE: Sunday, May 15th at noon.