Oberlin College
Comparative American Studies 286
Latina Feminisms
Fall 2013

Professor: Dr. Myrna García
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Course Information: MWF, 1:30-2:20PM, King 101
Office Hours: Mondays, 4:30-6:30 PM, Wednesdays, 4:30-5:30pm, or by appointment
Office Location: King 141 H
Office Phone Number: (440) 775-6288

Course Description:
This course examines the heterogeneous experiences of Latinas in the United States across space and time. Historically as well as epistemologically, we will discuss central concepts and examine what constitutes Latina feminism in its multiple forms. Latina feminists offered an alternative mapping of political thought and activism. Working within an interdisciplinary framework, we will investigate how Latina feminists define and understand their respective struggles and activism. Moreover, we will study how Latina feminist thought breaks with and intersects with mainstream models of feminism. To that end, we will interrogate the complex intersections between race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality and other social dimensions, such as age, education language, and citizenship. We will also discuss how Latina feminists have made important historical, academic, cultural, and political contributions and have inspired change and activism in innovative ways.

Course Objectives:
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
• Achieve a basic understanding of key concepts, theories, and methods in Latina feminist thought(s);
• Recognize and analyze the intersecting structures of inequality in society, to include racism, class structure, and gender relations, and its collective impact on Latinas;
• Theorize and generate concrete strategies to eradicate gender inequality and oppression;
• Prepare and deliver interactive presentations; work collaboratively; analyze primary sources; and conduct research.

***This course counts toward the Gender, Sexuality, & Feminist Studies major.***

Required Texts & Materials:

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard. You must bring the readings and your notes to class each week (hard or soft copies).
Course e-resources:
These resources listed are attended to equip you with further information & resources. https://docs.google.com/a/oberlin.edu/document/d/15UhttZyiJJkgvxJtcuQ-BUwUMibxiR5yJ_1Ta_K04k/edit?usp=sharing

Course Policies and Procedures

Attendance: It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet each time our class meets. If you must be absent, then it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from one of your classmates. I will not provide you with class notes and/or meet with you to present and deliver the material as a result of your absence.

If you must arrive late or leave early, please notify me in advance and sit in a place that will not disturb your classmates when you leave. Excessive lateness or leaving class early will result in a loss of participation points.

If you anticipate missing class, please let me know via email prior to your absence. You are allowed two absences for emergencies; however, you must provide some form of documentation and you must complete additional work to makeup for the classroom instruction lost. Three unexcused absences will reduce your final grade. More than three unexcused absences sets the grounds for receiving no participation points.

Principles of Interaction: There will most likely be a wide range of opinions among students, many of which may be rooted in personal experiences. Our goal in this classroom is to stimulate critical analysis, challenge paradigms, and raise questions and issues so that as a class we may engage in respectful and considerate debate and discussion. Offensive and insulting contributions to class discussions or behaviors and/or comments that otherwise disrupt the learning process are not acceptable. Abusive and harsh language will not be tolerated in this classroom. Accordingly, we will develop acuerdos [agreements] to ensure we maintain a safe classroom environment conducive to learning. Please keep the principles of interaction in mind in all of your e-correspondence with your peers and myself. Be professional at all times and in all forms.

For e-mail etiquette, see: http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/professors-guide/2010/09/30/18-etiquette-tips-for-e-mailing-your-professor

Furthermore, in order to maximize our learning environment, there is absolutely no cell phone/text usage or similar electronic devices during class. You are also expected to put away any extraneous materials before class begins. Appropriate and usage of a laptop or IPAD/tablet is allowed. However, your usage must not become distraction to you or others in the classroom. There may be times during our class meeting that I will explicitly ask everyone to refrain from using laptops. If this rule is violated, then I will ban the usage of laptops, IPAD/tablet, or other devices in the classroom.

Oberlin Honor Code: Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic matters. Your written work must be your own. By enrolling in this class you are agreeing to abide by Oberlin’s Honor Code System. For more information, please review the following link:
https://new.oberlin.edu/conservatory/academic-resources-and-support/honor-code.dot

Remember to include an honor code statement in your assignments, such as “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment.”

**Special Needs:** Appropriate accommodations will always be granted to students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability that requires modified instructional procedures, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester. Any questions about the necessary process of documenting disabilities should be addressed to Jane Boomer, Director of Services for Students with Disabilities. For further information, call (440) 775-5588 or visit http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/

**Virtual Learning Environments:** This course has a site on Blackboard, the online course information site at Oberlin College. I will post the syllabus and important course documents. I will also be relying on the usage of Google Drive Documents and other electronic course management systems. I will alert you accordingly.

**Format:** Unless noted otherwise, your assignments should be double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font, Chicago Style. Include your name, date, course information, course assignment, and title on the upper left hand corner. There is no need for a title page.

**Grading:** Written work needs to be submitted on time. Unless there is an extenuating circumstance (and I know in advance), I do not accept late papers. This is out of consideration of your peers. Any late work that I have authorized to accept will not receive written feedback. Depending on the specific circumstances, you may also risk receiving an automatic reduction in points. We’ll discuss this on an individual basis.

If you would like to contest your grade, you must do so in writing within a week of receiving your grade for a particular assignment. Please send me written contestation before coming to office hours. Be sure to specifically state what you are contesting and why you feel your grade should be raised.

See the general grading guide below:

- **A** – You must complete all work assigned on time and it must be of excellent quality. It should fully respond to the assignment. It should be well-organized, provide support or evidence for any arguments made. A-level written work must also demonstrate in-depth reflection on and analysis of the assigned task and your ability to apply insights creatively from your past course work and other experiences to the assignment.
- **B** – Your written work must be submitted on time and demonstrate most of the qualities above. However, it may be lacking in quality, such as the depth of analytical insights or the clarity of writing.
- **C** – Most of your written work is submitted on time. There’s an attempt to respond to the assigned task, but may do so in a superficial or uneven way.
- **D** – Work turned in is incomplete and fails to fully respond to the assignment.
- **Fail** – A substantial proportion of the assignments are missing and those that are turned in are inadequate, or all work is turned in but it consistently reflects a poor grasp of the task and the ability to complete it. Poor writing can contribute to a grade of F.
**All students must fulfill all course obligations to receive a passing grade or credit.**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION:**

**Attendance and Active Participation 10%**

This is a participation-intensive course; most of each class will be dedicated to active learning. This means you will be prepared to contribute to classroom discussions, group activities, blackboard exercises, and other forms of activities within and beyond the classroom walls. Be sure to bring any assigned readings, notes, questions/comments, and other relevant material that will facilitate your active engagement with the course. This aspect of your grade depends in part on the quality of preparation for class and your class involvement. In other words, I will assess your ability to discuss, debate, question, argue, and problematize the course material. Your grade will be penalized if you repeatedly disrupt or distract the learning environment, such as, but not limited to cell phone rings/vibrates/beeps or any unauthorized Internet searches. I also expect you to prepare 10 analytical commentaries throughout the term. These responses are not graded but are factored into your final participation grade.

**Analytical commentaries:** Craft a meaty paragraph that demonstrates your careful reading and understanding of the assigned material. Your response can and should engage with the authors’ arguments. Avoid simply repeating the authors’ arguments. For example, you can analyze and discuss the significance of 1-2 salient quotes, concepts, or issues from the readings. You will be expected to pose one thoughtful, productive question based on the readings. The idea is that your question should lead to a clear understanding of the readings, or at least highlights the nuances of the texts.

Consider these guiding questions: What are the main ideas the author is trying to convey? How does the author support and develop the argument (sources, evidence, examples)? Is the argument convincing? Why or why not? What issues do you see that might emerge as a consequence of the argument? How might you change/adapt/shift the argument differently?

Post your response on the discussion thread on blackboard twenty-four hours before the assigned reading is due. For example, if you respond to the assigned reading due on Wednesday, then **you must post the commentary by Tuesday at 1:30pm.** You must submit ten analytical responses. Select which days you’d like to respond to. **However, you cannot submit an analytical response on the day you are assigned to lead discussion.** Think of these commentaries as preparation for your examinations and analytical essays.

**Electronic participation/beyond the classroom:** Explicitly connect the readings to historical or contemporary experiences at the local, national, and/or global level. In other words, bring the assigned reading(s) alive by connecting them to a news article, photograph, video, performance artist, policy report, historical record, song, poem, or other form. Post/upload your cultural or media product and then write a brief explanation (3-4 sentences) of how it connects. Do so by 5pm the day prior to the assigned reading. For example, if you select to respond to the assigned reading on Friday. Post your
response no later than Thursday at 5pm. I will provide some time for you to share your findings/connections. Select any 5 readings except the ones to which you are leading discussion or are already preparing an analytical commentary.

**Discussion Leaders 10%**
You will work in pairs or triads to lead discussions on the assigned reading for fifteen minutes during your assigned class session. Begin with a five-minute overview of the authors’ main interventions, and then share a roadmap on how you will guide the class discussion. My expectation is that you will keep the discussion moving along. Prepare critical thinking questions, striking quotes, and/or hands-on learning activities i.e. games, scenarios, debates, role-plays, art, creative writing exercise.

Guided by the key concepts and arguments in the course readings, you will contextualize how and why activists, organizations, or policies are addressing, resisting, alleviating, or perpetuating a Latina feminist issue. You will also apply the ideas in the assigned readings to another space and time whether locally, trans/nationally, or globally. Be sure to bring in outside materials, such as film, art, or multi-media, to illustrate any concepts/points/arguments. Creativity is highly encouraged to stimulate provocative classroom discussions.

Create a handout of your “lesson plan” with a brief abstract of the assigned reading, discussion questions, and any other relevant information such as discussion questions/information/resources. Electronically upload your handout by **Tuesday at 3 pm** prior to your interactive presentation. You must also share any other materials i.e. powerpoint/charts/games. You must meet with me to discuss your plan. In others, be sure to send me a rough/working draft of your ideas before seeing me during office hours.

**My day to facilitate class is: ______. My partner(s) is/are: _____________________.

**Midterm Examination 35%**
You will have a three part, take-home midterm exam. Each part will be due on a different day. The parts and due dates are as follows:

**Part I: Identification & Significance.**  
Friday, October 4, 2013

**Part II: Analysis of Primary Sources.**  
Friday, October 11, 2013

**Part III: Two Short Essay Responses.**  
Friday, October 18, 2013

More details will be provided in class and posted on Blackboard.

**Creative Project & Reflection 10%**  
**DUE: Monday, December 9, 2013**

Individually or in a small group, develop a project that thoughtfully and creatively captures the course material and inspires change or action. The purpose of this assignment is to share with others what you have learned in a creative form in order to make a critical intervention on a Latina feminist issue. Choose your intended audience (elementary, high school, or college students or perhaps teachers, community members, or academics), and provide a rationale. Be prepared to present your project to an audience of invited guests. (Time allotment: 10 minutes). Your creative project can take a variety of forms that include, but not limited to: visual artwork (drawing, photography, sculpture,
poster), video (documentary, short film), writing (poem, song/rap, play, lesson plan, brochure), performance presentation (spoken word, dance), or workshop (teach-in).

Provide an explanation of what the project’s possible implications (community, academic, policies). Your reflection should capture important learning moment(s) and the significance of that learning (2 paragraphs). Your reflection can be submitted separately. In order to receive credit, you must upload your creative project and reflection. If you can’t upload your project, simply take a picture of your work and then upload it.

**Final Analytical Essay 35%**  
**DUE: Saturday, December 21, 2013 at 11am**

The final analytical essays (5-6 pages) are intended to allow each student to make an argument by connecting a specific Latina feminist issue or trend to a broader context of literature and ideas. Use a narrative form. Open with a story that grabs the readers’ attention and nicely leads into your discussion, and why it is important to explore (your academic intervention). Explicitly state your thesis (main arguments); you must make an argument. Make sure you provide supporting evidence (your research) throughout your paper to support your arguments.

Integrate the necessary (historical, social, and/or economic) contextualization for your topic. Thoughtfully engage with the key course concepts in your paper. Conclude with a discussion on the potential contributions, and/or implications (politically, academically, and/or locally) of your work.

The final paper can take various approaches. Some of the options include: media analysis, cultural artifact analysis, literature analysis, or a policy analysis. I will provide more details in class and will post a handout on Blackboard.

***The course schedule is not necessarily fixed; it is subject to change at my discretion. In other words, I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus. Any changes will be announced in class and via Blackboard.***
COURSE SCHEDULE:

UNIT I
Setting the (Theoretical & Methodological) Stage

Week 1: Introduction 9/4, 6
W: Overview, Principles of Community/Acuerdos [Agreements]

F: Social Constructions of Race, Gender, and Sexuality.
Betsy Luca, “What It Means to Be Gendered Me: Life on the Boundaries of a
Dichotomous Gender System,” *Gender and Society* 13, no. 6 (December 1999): 781–797.

Kristen Schilt and Laurel Westbrook, “Doing Gender, Doing Heteronormativity: ‘Gender
Normals,’ Transgender People, and the Social Maintenance of Heterosexuality,” in

*Tomboy* (10 min.) Barb Taylor, Karleen Pendleton-Jimenez, (In-class film)

Week 2: Intersectionality 9/9,11,13
M: Patricia H. Collins, “Pushing the Boundaries or Business as Usual: Race, Class, and
Gender Studies and Sociological Inquiry,” in *Sociology in America: A History*, ed. Craig
Calhoun (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2007), 572-604.

W: Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and
1299.

Discussion Leaders: ____________________________

F: Lisa A. Flores, “Reclaiming the ‘Other’: toward a Chicana feminist critical

Week 3: Historical (Re)Considerations 9/16, 18, 20
M: Emma Pérez, “Queering the Borderlands: The Challenges of Excavating the Invisible

W: Vicki Ruiz and Virginia Sanchez-Korrol, *editors, Latina Legacies: Identity,
Biography, and Community*, Intro, Chapter 7 (Luisa Capetillo), 11(Luisa Moreno)
http://obis.oberlin.edu/record=b2856181~S4

Discussion Leaders (focus on the intro & Ch 7): ____________________________

F: Vicki Ruiz and Virginia Sanchez-Korrol, *editors, Latina Legacies: Identity,
Biography, and Community*,
http://obis.oberlin.edu/record=b2856181~S4
Homework: You will be assigned a reading and group. In your assigned group, prepare a creative presentation to highlight what you learned. This can take any form (art, blog, game, journal entry, poem, news article, skit, etc.). You will then electronically share your work with the class.

Week 4: Positionality, Privilege, & Testimonials 9/23, 25, 27


UNIT II
(Hetero)Normative Expectations, Disruptions, and Interventions

Week 5: Sexism & Homophobia in the Movement 9/30, 10/2, 4

*Yo Soy Joaquin* [I am Joaquin] (Luis Valdez, 1969) (in-class film)


Discussion Leaders: _________________________


***MIDTERM EXAM, PART I DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF FRIDAY’S CLASS.***

**Week 6: Feminist Alliances, Herman(i)dad: Tensions & Possibilities** 10/7, 9, 11


Discussion Leaders: _________________________

F: Rosario Morales, ”We Are All in the Same Boat,” in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, eds. Cherrie L. Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldua (Berkeley, CA: Third Women Press, 2002), 97-100.

***MIDTERM EXAM, PART II DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF FRIDAY’S CLASS.***

**Week 7: Mestiza & Political Consciousness** 10/14, 16, 18


Discussion Leaders: _________________________

***MIDTERM EXAM, PART III DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF FRIDAY'S CLASS.***

FALL BREAK

**Week 8: Latina Feminist Frameworks: New Considerations**


Discussion Leaders __________________


UNIT THREE
NARRATING LATINA EXPERIENCES

**Week 9: (Hetero) Familias and the Politics of Sexuality**

**M:** Garcia, Lorena, “‘Now Why Do You Want to Know About That?’ Heteronormativity, Sexism, and Racism in the Sexual (Mis)education of Latina Youth,” *Gender & Society* 23, no. 4, (August 2009): 520–541.


Discussion Leaders: _____________________________


**Week 10: Education, Language, Identities**


Additional article TBA.

**Discussion Leaders:**

In-class film: Aurora Guerrero, *Mosquita y Mari*, Part 1

**F:** No assigned reading. Instead, you will do homework assignment based on the film. Details will be provided.

In-class film: Aurora Guerrero, *Mosquita y Mari*, Part 2

**Week 11: Trans/Gender Violence** 11/18, 20, 22

**M:** Antonia I. Castañeda, “Chicanas/Latinas y Las Nuevas Garras del Imperialismo.” *Chicana/Latina Studies* 4, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 96-108.


**Discussion Leaders:**


**Week 12: Engendering Migration** 11/25, 27


**UNIT FOUR**

**CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS & INTERVENTIONS**

**Week 13: Multiple Feminisms, Creative Expressions** 12/2, 4, 6
W: Writers’ Workshop, Part 1
F: Writers’ Workshop, Part 2

**Week 14: Creative Project Presentations  12/9, 11**
M: ______________________
W: ______________________

**FINAL ANALYTICAL ESSAYS DUE - Friday, December 20, 2013, 2-4PM**
**Upload a copy in Blackboard and submit a hard copy. I’ll be in my office ready to collect your essays.**