According to pundits, politicians, and scholars, Latinos were key to President Obama’s reelection in 2012, and the Latino (or Hispanic) vote promises to be critical for future presidential bids. While Latinas/os are increasingly visible in electoral and political discourse, many scholars argue that there continues to be limited understanding of Latinas/os and their various communities, both past and present. This course examines the varied experiences of Latinas/os and provides a basis for comparing Latina/o communities in the United States. The variety of Latina/o cultural forms, identities and experiences are embedded in particular histories, regional economies and political processes both in the United States and the countries of origin of Latina/o groups. They also emerge in a context of changing and unequal power relations. In this course, we will pay particular attention to issues of immigration, poverty, ethnicity and transnationalism among Latinas/os and how gender, sexuality, race and class intersect with each debate. While this course assumes a panethnic label, course readings and lectures provide the intellectual foundation for us to discuss and analyze the diversity (as well as unity) among Latinas/os; the sources of this diversity; how Latinas/os are understood by policy makers and academics; and important issues affecting Latinas/os today.

The course is divided into two parts: Part I provides an historical understanding of various Latina/o groups in the United States. While this grouping certainly does not include all Latinas/os, it represents some the largest Latina/o groups residing in the United States. Students interested in exploring other Latina/o groups are encouraged to use their response papers (see below) as a vehicle for applying the course’s analytical and theoretical tools. Part II explores contemporary issues particularly relevant to U.S. Latinas/os and uses a range of texts such as novels, ethnographies, and film to analyze the material conditions of Latina/o communities in the U.S.

The principal goal of this course is to provide all of you with the intellectual foundation for understanding structural similarities and differences among Latinas/os. To this end, I have selected readings from anthropology, history, sociology, cultural studies, and literature in order to demonstrate how different methodologies further our understanding of social groups and social phenomena. This comparative, interdisciplinary approach is a guiding principal for both this class as well as other courses in the Comparative American Studies major.

This course is an elective course that counts for the GSFS major.
**Course Goals:**

- to provide students with the intellectual foundation for understanding structural similarities and differences among U.S. Latinas/os
- to equip students with skills to engage with popular and scholarly representations of Latina/o communities
- to explore the interdisciplinary field of Latina/o Studies
- to understand the origins, strengths and limitations of panethnic labels
- to enhance students’ ability to participate effectively in controversial debates such as immigration and inequality in their writing and public speaking
- to raise awareness of policy, economic, social and cultural issues directly effecting Latinas/os in the United States
- to understand and utilize key terms in the fields of Latina/o and American Studies such as intersectionality, agency and constraint, and transnationalism

**Required Readings**


All textbooks can be purchased at the college bookstore and many are on Reserve at Mudd. Articles are available on Blackboard.

**I. COURSE POLICIES**

**Classroom Learning Community**

The success of this course depends on our collective, thoughtful engagement with the texts and with the comments, critiques and issues raised by your classmates and your instructor. Therefore, your attendance, timely arrival, and informed participation in class are absolutely required and constitute 10% of your final grade.

While there will be some time dedicated to lecture, class will primarily involve the discussion of reading materials and other relevant issues. Sometimes we will discuss readings in the large groups, but I will frequently break you into smaller groups for discussion as well. I am aware that the materials in this course easily lend itself to a discussion of one’s opinions and/or experiences. Certainly those kinds of discussions and debates are encouraged when appropriate. Your participation in class, however, must be informed primarily by course readings so that you can discuss, debate, question, and argue respectfully and intelligently about issues raised in the reading assignments.
Throughout the course, we will explore a number of controversial issues about race, immigration, violence, exploitation, and inequality that may provoke heated debate, discomfort, and disagreement. My goal is not to smooth over these differences; rather my objective is for us to create a space for respectful, engaged and honest dialogue and to help you develop skills to articulate your positions and engage others respectfully. To that end, I ask that each member of the seminar respond thoughtfully and carefully with each other and with various course topics.

Please be aware that some issues in this course may be personally difficult for people to discuss. I cannot always anticipate what those topics will be, but I will do my best to respond appropriately if these situations arise and I encourage you to come and speak with me if you have any concerns.

**Writing Associate**
We are fortunate to have a Writing Associate for this course. Pablo Cerdera is available to meet with you and help you throughout the course of this semester. His assistance will be invaluable as you work on drafts of your essays and your media reviews. I strongly encourage you to speak with Pablo and share your work with him as well as your peer review partners.

**Course Readings**
The readings for this course vary from week to week, and there will be moments in which the reading load will be significant. Rather than focus on reading every word for every reading, direct your efforts to understanding the key arguments, concepts, research methods and sources in the readings. Also try to make connections between the assigned reading and class discussions. Please come and talk with me and if you would like to discuss reading strategies for the semester.

**Blackboard Postings**
I firmly believe in the power of writing to enhance your learning. To that end, I ask that students post questions and/or comments to each seminar’s readings on Blackboard by *midnight the night prior to class*. These postings are not graded but are required and are factored into your final participation grade. You may also feel free to use blackboard to continue conversations/debates from class time.

**Attendance Policies**
If you anticipate missing class, please inform me by email of your absence prior to class. Two unexcused absences will reduce your participation grade by 1/3 (from an A to an A-, for example).

I absolutely require students to arrive to seminar on time. This is essential for fostering a respectful learning environment. If you are arrive to class once class has begun, you will be considered absent.
**Classroom Etiquette**

Once you arrive to seminar, please turn off all cell phones. Texting is not permitted. Laptops are useful (and sometimes necessary) for taking notes and reading assigned articles. For that reason I allow students to use them in class for those purposes only. Students found to be using their laptops to checking email, surf the web, or engage in social networking will be asked not to bring their laptops to class in the future.

**Course Deadlines**

All assignments must be completed on time. Papers not turned in at the specified time on the specified date will be considered late and will be penalized 1/3 grade for each day it is overdue. Late papers will not receive written comments, and must include on the first page the date you turned in the assignment. On the rare occasion I agree to grant an extension on an assignment, you must include a cover sheet stating that you were granted an extension and the new due date. If you fail to do so, the assignment will be regarded as late and penalized accordingly.

**P/NP**

If you are taking this course P/NP, you must fulfill all course obligations and complete all assignments in order to receive credit for the course.

**Academic Incompletes**

Assignments will not be accepted past the end of reading period without an approved incomplete from the Dean of studies. Extensions of final projects need an approved incomplete from the Dean of Studies. These are College-wide policies and there are no exceptions.

**Honor Code**

The policies described in the Oberlin College Honor Code and Honor System apply to this class. Written work must include proper citations and must be the product of your own work. You are also required to include the following statement on all written assignments: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment."

If you have any questions about how to properly cite sources or about the Honor Code, please feel free to approach me. For more information on the Honor Code, see http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code2.html

**Students Needing Special Assistance**

Please speak with me if you need disability-related accommodations in this course. Student Academic Services is also an important resource for students needing academic assistance. Please contact Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, Peters G27, extension 58467 for assistance developing a plan to address your academic needs.

**Student Athletes**

If you are a student athlete and member of an Oberlin College sports team and your athletic schedule will cause you to miss a class, please come and speak with me.
II. Written Assignments

This course requires a number of written assignments designed to develop critical reading, writing and analytical skills. Papers will be evaluated according to the following criteria: critical analysis and understanding of texts; clarity of thought; the ability to synthesize texts and materials presented and discussed in class; and theoretical grounding of your arguments. All papers should be typed and remain within the page limits specified for each assignment.

An important goal of this course is to develop student writing with a focus on writing process. In order to achieve this goal, students will work in peer review groups of 3 to 4 where you will exchange drafts of assignments, provide each other feedback and focus on revising your written work.

A. Critical Media Reviews, 4-5 pages. 3 assignments due throughout the course of the semester
You will be required to write three short papers summarizing, analyzing, and evaluating the contents of an article about Latinas/os and/or issues related to Latinas/os from a reputable newspaper, magazine, or journal of your choosing. An important goal of this course is to raise your awareness of policy, economic, social and cultural issues directly effecting Latinas/os in the United States and to encourage you to engage with these questions critically. To that end, you will be expected to identify an article; provide a copy of the text; properly cite your sources; and provide an analysis that draws on the materials presented in the course. These assignments should not exceed 5 pages and are an opportunity to link classroom discussions and readings with current events and issues of importance to Latinas/os today.

B. Essays, 5-7 pages. 2 papers and 1 final project
In addition to critical media reviews, you are will also be expected to write three essays. These assignments will be based on course readings and discussions and will be evaluated according to the criteria listed above. I will provide the topic for each paper at least one week before the assignment is due.

Prior to submitting the first two essays, you will work with your peer review partners to develop a clear thesis and argument for each essay and will have the opportunity to exchange your work in your group during the class times indicated on the syllabus.

C. Blackboard Responses
You are required to post a response to the readings the evening before class. You may raise questions from the readings, make connections between the texts assigned for the next day, and you are encouraged to dialogue with each other about readings and class discussions (although you still need to reference the assigned reading for the following day). These responses are not graded but are factored into your final participation grade.
SUMMARY OF KEY COURSE DEADLINES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMR #1 Idea/Draft</td>
<td>September 25 (in class with partner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMR #1 Final Draft</td>
<td>October 3, 5pm, Blackboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay #1 Introductory Paragraph</td>
<td>October 9 (in class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #1</td>
<td>October 17, 5pm, Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMR #2</td>
<td>November 7, 5pm, Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #2 Introductory Paragraph</td>
<td>November 13 (in class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #2</td>
<td>November 21, 5pm Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMR #3</td>
<td>December 5, 5pm Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>December 20, 9pm Blackboard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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SUMMARY OF GRADING POLICY

- Participation and attendance: 10%
- Three 4-5 page Critical Media Reviews: 30%
- Three Essays: 60%

CLASS SCHEDULE

Part I: History and Origins

**Week 1: Introduction: Why Latina/o Studies?**
September 2: Introduction to course and to readings for Thursday
September 4: *Border Crises, Activism, and Latina/o Dreams*
  Nazario, “The Children of the Drug Wars”
  Seif, Ullman and Núñez-Mchiri, “Mexican Immigrant Students and Education”
  Unzueta Carrasco and Seif, “Disrupting the Dream”

**Week 2: Labels, Language and Identity**
September 9: *Origins and Challenge of Panethnic Labels*
  Mora, “Preface” AND “Introduction: Making Hispanics”
September 11: *Race, Language, and Power*
  Zentella, “José Can You See?”
  Rosa, “Learning Ethnolinguistic Borders”
  Gándara et al., “Forbidden Language”
Week 3: Immigration, Citizenship and Nation

Week 4: Gender, Migration, and Transnational Families
*Bring media review #1 idea/draft to class to exchange with peer review partner*

Week 5: Conquest, Empire, and Labor Migrations under Capitalism
September 30: *Contract Labor, Past and Present*
Hondagneu-Sotelo “History of Mexican Undocumented Settlement”
Whalen “Colonialism, Citizenship, and the Making of the Puerto Rican Diaspora”
October 2: *Exile, Politics and Migration*
Hernández, “The great exodus”
Garcia Bedolla, “Cuban Americans” *Prompt for essay #1 provided in class.*

Critical media review #1 due Friday October 3rd, 5pm Blackboard

Week 6: Migration, Violence and the State
September 7: *Central American Migrations*
Garcia Bedolla, “Central Americans”
Stephen, “Los Nuevos Desaparecidos”
October 9: *Heteronormativity and Im/Migration*
La Fountain-Stokes, “On Queer Diasporas”
Luibhéid, “Introduction to Queering Migration and Citizenship”
Peña, “Introduction” to *Oye Loca!: From the Mariel Boatlift to Gay Cuban Miami*
*Bring introductory paragraph of essay to class to share with peer review partners.*

Part II: Contemporary Issues and Challenges

Week 7: Citizenship and Belonging
October 14: *Delinquent Citizenship and Militarization*
Ramos-Zayas, “Delinquent Citizenship, National Performances”
Amaya, “Latino Immigrants”
*Film screening: New American Soldier (24 minutes)*
October 16: Sexuality, Archives, and Memory
Roque Ramirez, “Gay Latino Histories”
Lara, “Uncovering Mirrors”

**ESSAY #1 Due at 5pm Friday October 17th, Blackboard**

***************October 18-26 Fall Break***************
Week 9: Political Economy and Reproductive Justice

Weeks 10: Race, Displacement and the Power of Place
November 4: Urban Histories and Political Economies
   Fernández, “From the Near West Side to 18th Street”
   Dávila, “The Times-Squaring of El Barrio” *Prompt for Essay #2 provided in class*
November 6: Environmental (In)Justice
   Peña, “Tierra y Vida”
   Berman Santana, “Vieques”
   *Screening clips of “Maquilopolis.”*

Critical media review #2 due Friday November 7th, Blackboard

Week 11: Masculinity, Criminalization and Latinidad
November 13: Rios, *Punished*, chapters 5-conclusion (Part II: Consequences)
   *Bring introductory paragraph of essay to class to share with peer review partners.*

Week 12 and 13: Schools, Racialization and Inequality
November 18: *Gender, Race and Schooling*
   Lopez, “Race-Gender Experiences in Schooling”
   Noguera, “Joaquin’s Dilemma” and “And what will become of children like Miguel Fernández?”
November 20: *The Struggle for Ethnic Studies*
   Cammarota, “The Generational Battle for Curriculum”
   O’Leary and Romero, “Chicana/o Students Respond”
   Dávila, “The ‘Disciplining’ of Ethnic Studies”

ESSAY #2 Due 5pm Friday November 21st, Blackboard

November 25: *Screening and discussion of “Precious Knowledge”* (70 minutes)
November 27 THANKSGIVING NO CLASS

Week 14 and 15: Culture, Power and Representing Latinidad
December 4: Díaz, *Oscar Wao*, pp. 204-335

Critical media review #3 due Friday December 5, 5pm Blackboard

December 9: Screening of *La Quinceañera* (90 minutes, please plan to spend extra time after class)
December 11: Discussion of film and final thoughts

Final Project Due Saturday December 20th, 9pm Blackboard.
**Article Bibliography**


Peña, Susana. 2013. *¡Oye Loca!: From the Mariel Boatlift to Gay Cuban Miami*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.


