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 the presidential election in 2016. In fact, with two Cuban American candidates, Senator Marco Rubio (Florida) and Ted Cruz (Texas), vying for the 2016 Republican candidacy, some have argued that this is an historic primary, while others have criticized Rubio and Cruz for being race traitors and “not Hispanic enough.” What these debates reveal is an important contradiction in American public life: While Latinas/os are increasingly visible in electoral politics, political discourse, and popular culture, there continues to be limited understanding of the complexity of Latinas/os and their various communities, confusion and even hostility. 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 identities, experiences and cultural expressions 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, citizenship, and transnationalism among Latinas/os and how gender, sexuality, race and class intersect such phenomena. 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 policymakers and academics; and important issues affecting Latinas/os today.

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.

As a larger class, I will do my best to balance class time between lecture and discussion. Sometimes we will discuss readings in the large groups, but I will frequently break you into smaller groups for conversations 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.

**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.

I value and welcome honest debate about controversial issues; and in the current political climate, immigration, criminalization and citizenship invite some of the most heated and vitriolic exchanges. I may not always agree with various perspectives students may share, nor do I assume everyone will agree with me or with each other at all times. And while I do not want to smooth over differences in opinions, I do want to create a space where people can disagree without being judged or devalued. I value respectfulness, kindness, and honest engagement with questions that are incredibly important for us as a class to think through carefully. *If these are not values you share or believe will be difficult to abide by, this might not be the right class for you, and therefore I ask that you please come and talk with me after the first day of class.*

**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. Course Assignments**
This course requires a range of different assignments designed to develop critical reading, writing and analytical skills. Throughout the course of the semester, you will be required to write two essays and a final project. In addition to these written assignments, you will be required to participate regularly on the class blog. These different kinds of written requirements are a way to have you think about audience and voice in your writing, as well as provide you with opportunities to connect and apply what you are learning through the readings to the broader political, cultural, economic and social contexts in which ideas and information about Latinas/os are produced, circulate and are consumed by a broader public.

**Course Readings**
This course requires you to do very little reading beyond the assigned texts for the course. For that reason, you are expected to read the assigned readings and come prepared to discuss them in class each day. The reading load varies 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 if you would like to discuss reading strategies for the semester.
**Formal Essays**
Throughout the course of the semester you will write three formal essays (two during the semester and one final project due during finals week) based on course readings and discussions. I will provide you with a prompt for each essay and each one will be evaluated based on clarity of argument, your use of evidence, and careful engagement with the course themes. 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 are encouraged to work with your classmates and meet with me to develop a clear thesis and argument for each essay.

**Class Blog**
Images and information about Latinas/os and Latina/o communities circulate broadly within American popular culture and media. As I note in the course goals for this class, one of my hopes is that this course will equip each of you with histories, knowledge, and skills to engage with popular and scholarly representations of Latina/o communities. To that end, students are required to participate in a class blog. There are two ways students will do so:

- Working in groups of 3-4, students will sign up for one week in which they manage the class blog. During that week the group will look for relevant news media, popular cultural representations, videos, images, music relevant to the week’s topic and post them on the blog and provide relevant context for making connections between these posts and the readings for the week. **It is not sufficient to simply post images: You need to write on the blog—provide historical or political or economic context; or you can provide analysis and invite debate.** Unlike some blog posts or comments we often read online, this blog is mean to be generative, invite thoughtful dialogue, and not to condemn, attack, belittle, or denigrate the opinions of others. The bloggers for the week are responsible for posting at least 3 times (you may choose to post more) and will be provided time in class each day that week to share insights, comments, and pose questions that link the blog postings to the week’s readings. Be creative—draw on your interests to connect issues of citizenship, for example, to Latina/o artists and political activism; or look for music videos and songs that challenge the criminalization of Latino youth or the hypersexualization of young Latinas. You can also draw out attention to current events that fit with the week’s themes. The goal of this assignment is to connect your reading and learning in this class to the media we consume in a variety of ways.

- Students who are not in the group managing the blog for the week are required to post at least once to the blog each week. You must engage what the group has contributed and you may do so either by writing to or responding directly to their posts, drawing on readings that engage with your classmates’ contributions, and you can also post your own materials and comments and narrative to the blog that fit with their posts and readings. Again, constructive engagement is absolutely essential. You should feel free to make connections between what is posted and your interpretation of the readings for the week. A single sentence response is not considered sufficient participation: the goal is for you to engage substantively with images, ideas, questions your classmates pose. **You are encouraged to make explicit references to readings we have done in class. And be sure to cite your sources for images, articles, songs, that you include in your blog entries. Your grade for these assignments will be based not only on the quality of your posts, but on how you demonstrate your understanding of course readings. Blog posts will begin Week 3 and end the last day of Week 13.**
SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS

Participation and attendance 10%
Group Blog Assignment 20%
Blog Responses 10%
Three Essays 60%

CLASS SCHEDULE

Part I: Latina/o Labels, Latina/o Lives
Politics, Media and

Week 1: Why Latina/o Studies Now?
February 1: Introduction to course and to readings for the week
February 3: Latinas/os and American Politics
  • Beltran, “Introduction: Sleeping Giants and Demographic Floods” (BB)
  • Jordan, “’He’s Cuban. I’m Mexican: Can Rubio and Cruz Connect with Latino Voters?” https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2016/01/10/32d20f8e-b4bc-11e5-a842-0feb51d1d124_story.html

February 5 Understanding and Responding to the Deportation Nation
  • Golosh-Boza, Preface AND Conclusion to Deported: Immigrant Policing, Disposable Labor and Global Capitalism (BB)
  • Beltran, “No Papers, No Fears” (BB)
Week 2: Debates on Labels, Identities and Representation

February 8: *Origins and Uses of Panethnic Labels*
- Mora, “Preface” (BB)
- Mora, “Introduction: Making Hispanics” (BB)
- Reichard, “Why We Say Latinix”

*Further suggested reading:*
- Sharron-del Rio and Aja, “The Case for Latinix”
  http://www.latinorebels.com/2015/12/05/the-case-for-latinx-why-intersectionality-is-not-a-choice/
- Alamo, “The X’ing of Language: The Case Against Latinix”
  http://www.latinorebels.com/2015/12/12/the-x-ing-of-language-the-case-against-latinix/

February 10: *Race and Latinidad*
- Candelario, “Displaying Identity” (BB)
- Silver, “Remembering Abuela” (BB)

February 12: *Latinas/os and U.S. Media*
- Molina, “Introduction: Mapping the Place of Latinas in the U.S. Media” (BB)
- Paredez, “All About My Absent Mother” (*Beyond el Barrio*).

Week 3: Immigration, Citizenship and Nation

February 15: *Defining the Latino Threat Narrative*
- Chavez, “Introduction” (BB)
- Chavez, “The Latino Threat Narrative” (BB)

February 17: *Media Spectacles*
- Chavez, “The Minuteman’s Project Spectacle” (BB)
- Chavez, “The Immigrant Marches of 2006” (BB)

February 19: *Consequences of the Latino Threat Narrative*
- Film Screening: Sin Pais (20 Minutes)
  *I will provide you with the prompt for the first essay in class.*

Week 4: Gender, Migration, and Transnational Families

February 26: Abrego, *Sacrificing Families*, pp. 159-196
Week 5: Queer Latinidades
February 29: *Heteronormativity and Im/migration*
  • La Fountain-Stokes, “On Queer Diasporas” *(BB)*
  • Peña, Introduction to *Oye Loca!: From the Mariel Boatlift to Gay Cuban Miami* *(BB)*
March 2 *Sexuality, Archives, and Memory*
  • Roque Ramirez, “Gay Latino Histories” *(Beyond el Barrio)*
March 4: *Spaces of Recognition*
  • Lara, “Uncovering Mirrors” *(BB)*
  • Tijerina-Revilla, “Are All Raza Womyn Queer?” *(BB)*

**Essay #1 Due, March 4, Midnight, Blackboard**

Week 6: Citizenship and Belonging I: Legal Status and Education
March 9: Gonzalez, *Lives in Limbo*, pp. 73-119
March 11: Gonzalez, *Lives in Limbo*, pp. 120-207

Week 7: Citizenship and Belonging II: Language and Power
March 14: *Lives on the Line*
  • Gonzalez, *Lives in Limbo*, pp. 208-236
  • **FILM:** *Life on the Line* (27 minutes)
March 16: *Mock Spanish and Racialization of Language*
  • Zentella, “José Can You See?” *(BB)*
  • Rosa, “Learning Ethnolinguistic Borders” *(BB)*
March 18 *Songs of Inclusion and Protest*
  • Cepeda, “Singing “The Star Spanglish Banner'” *(Beyond el Barrio)*

***********************SPRING BREAK**************************

Part II: Risky Landscapes
Criminalization, Surveillance and Militarization

Week 9: Masculinity, Criminalization and Latino Youth
March 30: Rios, *Punished*, chapters 5-conclusion (Park II: Consequences)
April 1: FILM: *A Sentence Apart*

Week 10: Latina Sexuality and Agency
April 4: Garcia, *Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself*, pp. 1-82
April 8: Lopez, “Negotiating Different Worlds”
Week 11: Militarization and Latina/o Communities
April 11: *Latinas/os and Military Work*
- Plascencia, “The military gates to US citizenship: Latina/o ‘aliens and non-citizen nationals’ and military work” (BB)

April 13: *Military Marketing*
- Guerra, “Yo Soy El Army” (BB)
- Pérez, “Hispanic Values, Military Values” (*Beyond el Barrio*)

April 15 *Posthumous Citizenship*
- **Film screening:** New American Soldier (24 minutes)

*Essay #2 Due, April 15, Midnight, Blackboard*

Weeks 12: Race, Displacement and the Power of Place
April 18: *Urban Histories and Political Economies*
- Fernández, “From the Near West Side to 18th Street” (*Beyond el Barrio*)

April 20: *Latinas/os and the Neoliberal City*
- Dávila, “The Times-Squaring of El Barrio” (BB)
- Guryidy and Burgos, “The Usual Suspects” (*Beyond el Barrio*)

April 22: *Folklore, Resistance and Urban Highways*
- Avila, “Introduction: The Invisible Freeway Revolt,” accessed through OBIS [https://obis.oberlin.edu/search~S4/?/aAvila%2C+eric/aavila+eric/1%2C1%2C3%2CB/frameset&FF=aavila+eric+++++1968&1%2C%2C3](https://obis.oberlin.edu/search~S4/?/aAvila%2C+eric/aavila+eric/1%2C1%2C3%2CB/frameset&FF=aavila+eric+++++1968&1%2C%2C3)

Week 13: Activism Across Borders
April 25: *Performance and Queer Activism*
- Rivera-Servera, “Moments of Hope” (BB)

April 27: *Bridges of Solidarity*
- Cordova, “The Mission in Nicaragua” (*Beyond el Barrio*)

April 29: *Radio as an Acoustic Ally*
- Casillas, “PUUUURO Mexico!” (*Beyond el Barrio*)

Week 14: Culture, Power and Representing Latinidad
May 4: Díaz, *Oscar Wao*, pp. 204-335
May 6 LAST DAY OF CLASS

*Final Project Due May 11, 9pm*