

**UGC 211**  
**American Pluralism and the Search for Equality**  
Latina, Latin American and Caribbean Studies Section

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Tu/Th 12:30pm - 1:50pm  
Office Hours: Tu/Th 2-3:30

**Description:**

This section of American Pluralism focuses on the historical experience of Latinas and Latinos in the United States, and how these experiences have been shaped by the U.S.'s role in Latin America over the past two centuries. Taking into consideration the complex histories of different Latin American group's migration to the United States, we study how "Latina/o" identities have been formed over the past century and a half. We examine the history of Latinas and Latinos in the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a way of understanding the key topics of UGC 211—i.e. the history and experience of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality— and how they inform and shape present day American society.

This class requires close, careful consideration of shared readings in history, popular culture and literature; active, engaged and thoughtful in-class discussion of sources and themes; and a major writing assignment. As you will see in the reading list below, I have structured this class around weekly assignments of challenging readings; however, the class will be student led – driven by questions, discussion, and debate. Because of this structure, the course can only succeed through energetic student participation. Thus, if you choose to take this class, you must be willing to take on the responsibility and challenge of coming to class prepared to articulate and debate your thoughts and interpretations each and every week

**Required Texts:**

David Guitierrez, ed., *Columbia History of Latinos in the United States*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004 [CHL]

Judith Hellman, *The World of Mexican Migrants: Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, New Press, 2009. [WMM]

**Recommended Reading:**

Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop*, Durham: Duke University Press. [EW]

**Internet Sites**

The following internet sites are relevant to the course, and good sources of reference material:

Latin American Network Information Center (LANIC) <http://www.lanic.utexas.edu/>

Latin American Resources <http://www.oberlin.edu/~svolk/latinam.htm>

The Latino History Project <http://www.latinohistory.com>

**Learning Outcomes:**

Critical Reading: Students will learn to more incisively and creatively read scholarly texts and connect their insights to analyzing everyday experiences and places.

Writing: Students will practice and improve the fundamentals of critical writing, in both informal (blog) and formal (midterm and final exam) writing.

Debate: This class is heavily weighted toward discussion and debate. Students will have the opportunity to better these skills through the courses' presentation-response.

## **Requirements:**

**Participation 20%** Presence and participation are key aspects of this course. Attendance is clearly a prerequisite for participation: if you are not present, you cannot participate. Therefore, we will adhere to a strict attendance policy in the class. After the first nonattendance, you will be docked two percent of your *final* grade for every unexcused absence. You will lose an additional half letter grade (B+ to B, B to B-, etc) for each absence after the fourth unexcused absence. You automatically fail the course after six unexcused absences. In extraordinary circumstances, and/or with previous consultation, I will allow you to submit a written report on the day's reading in lieu of presence in one class.

However, attendance does not equal participation. Participation is worth a full 20% of your final grade. I expect all students to be active listeners, and active participants in class discussion. You must come to class having read, and ready to talk about, the assigned readings. Recent studies have shown that student's engagement with material declines drastically behind a laptop screen. Therefore, Laptops will not be allowed in class during lecture unless you require a laptop unless you require them for reasons of disability. You may bring your laptop for group work and activities. Because of the nature of the class, texting, chatting, facebook, emails, etc are strictly prohibited.

Part of your participation grade involves participating in our class' joint online discussion forum or **blog**. Each student must complete *at least* five posts during the semester, due the night before the class for which the reading assignment is due. I encourage you to engage each other's writing; particularly active presence in online discussions will lead to particularly high participation grades.

**Pop Quizzes 10%** Randomly, but at least every other week, we will have a short, in-class quiz. These will straightforward, factual quizzes (i.e. when was the first major wave of Puerto Rican immigration to NYC?) that take up 5-10 minutes of class time. The purpose is not to trip you up, but rather to make sure that we are all on the same page regarding reading and interpretation. If you miss a quiz because you are absent from class, you may substitute a two page reading response that identifies the reading's thesis, and engages the reading's key points, but only once during the semester. I may also ask you to write short reading responses in class or before class at select points throughout the semester in lieu of pop quizzes.

## **Class Presentation (15% of your final grade)**

This requirement has 4 parts (A to D below):

Before class (and in preparation of the assignment) your group must:

A) Meet with the professor by the Tuesday before your presentation, at the latest, in which you come ready to discuss a written draft of reading/discussion questions, the proposed activity, and proposed learning outcomes including how you will achieve these goals.

B) Circulate discussion/reading questions that same Tuesday before your chosen class;

In class:

C) Your responsibilities are multiple. Most important, though, is that this is *not* your usual class presentation. I will not ask you to stand in front of the class and present the readings. Rather, your group must choose one day/topic in which you will 'co-teach' the class with me. I will give a short presentation to the class, providing the basic structure to the class. Your responsibility is to devise a well thought out, organized, well executed in-class activity for the day, and lead discussion for the session.

The goal of the activity is to address a set of the crucial questions regarding that day's reading, discussion questions that your group formulates and circulates before class. The shape that that activity takes is your choice, within the following parameters.

i. You must present a set of well thought out questions that need to be answered (i.e. you must have a lesson plan and learning outcomes that you articulate to me before hand, and can then tell me if/how you attained them)

ii. You split the class into smaller units, and each group member leads smaller discussions of a question/issue/topic with one of these units and

iii. You re-convene the class as a whole for a specific, educational activity.

This activity can be as creative as you like (from a simple but dynamic discussion of the questions, to a well thought out game-show, to the staging of a mock protest, a theater piece, etc.). Whatever shape you give it, however, you must be able to provide the reason behind the activity, and the learning outcome you wish to achieve, in writing within 48 hours of your presentation.

Finally, following class:

D) Each individual in your group must submit a one page final report or write-up outlining learning outcomes, how the exercise you chose achieved these outcomes, how you would improve in the future, what role you played and what grade you would assign to yourself and the group. I expect this report to be carefully worded, thoroughly edited, and polished.

A note about discussion questions: A good discussion question raises topics that are central to the reading and genuinely interesting to talk about. It goes beyond basic comprehension. It can't be answered with "yes" or "no." Instead, it both demonstrates, and requires us to demonstrate an understanding of a topic and to critically analyze and apply what we have learned. Good questions cannot be simply answered by a 'yes' or 'no', and instead often includes a "why" or a "how." A good question refers to and uses reading material as a springboard. It may ask us to make a comparison, to critique an author's perspective and assumptions (or our own), and/or to apply a concept, idea, or theory to different situations. For example:

Not a yes/no, but still too vague:

What is racial domination?

Better:

How do the authors challenge common-sense understandings of race as "natural?" What is the symbolic power of "race" and can you provide examples? Why is race such a significant aspect of everyday experience in the U.S., and how has this changed over time? How do ideas of race structure relationships between individuals, between institutions and individuals? What are the strengths and limitations of the authors' definition of race?

**Midterm 25%** Midterm exam, covering the material from the first half of class, up to and including Week 7. Midterm will be a combination of Short Answer, Long Answer, Keyword Identification and Analysis, Image Analysis, and Multiple Choice.

**Final Project 30%** Essay and Project

- 1) In class essay. This first part of the final project is an in-class essay drawing connections between different readings we've more recently addressed. You will have full class period to complete one essay question, which I'll present you at the beginning of class. The essay question will cover the material from the midterm forward, including Judith Hellman's *The Lives of Mexican Migrants*. This part of the project will be graded individually.
- 2) Group Project: working in your original groups, you must find a way of illustrating the relationship between Hellman's argument regarding Mexican migrants and the similarities or differences that you've seen to other immigrant groups and/or thematic analyses we've done throughout the semester. The one caveat is that this CANNOT be in ESSAY form. You must find other, more innovative ways of articulating your arguments – i.e. create a magazine that critically analyzes mainstream depictions of Latin@s through image and text; contact one of the many organizations that work with Latin@s in Buffalo (ie.. Hispanics United of Buffalo) and create a documentary that places your findings there in conversation with Hellman; write a cookbook that shows a critical analysis of the subject, etc. This part of the project will be graded collectively. The average of both grades will make up your final project grade.

### **Policies and Other Important Points:**

**E-MAIL POLICY:** You are welcome to e-mail me at any time, day or night. **I will do my best to reply to your e-mail within 24 to 48 hours** but this will not always be possible, especially on weekends. In most cases, I will respond relatively quickly (and don't forget, you can always stop by during my office hours or make an appointment to see me in my office). Remember that e-mail is an official form of university communication and to check your UB e-mail account regularly. Finally, I am much more likely to respond to your e-mail if you offer me the same kind of respect as you would in person. You are e-mailing a professor, not texting an acquaintance. I expect you to use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation in an email.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** **I expect you to be honest and to complete all course work by yourself.** The University's Academic Integrity policy prohibits cheating and plagiarism - in other words, representing someone else's words or ideas as your own. It is critical that you understand how to properly give credit to your sources, both when using actual quotes and when paraphrasing material. This includes information from the Internet.

**If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating, I will give you a grade of zero on the assignment in question and/or the class, and I will have to formally report you to the university, which could result in expulsion.** All this is laid out in the Undergraduate Catalog. Please follow these policies (<http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml>). I may use plagiarism detection software on your papers and other coursework submitted to me. Please see the librarian or see me if you need help with citations.

**ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES:** “The University at Buffalo has a strong commitment to ensuring our academic and campus facilities and programs are accessible to all students, regardless of disability. Every UB student has a right – and UB faculty and staff have a responsibility to protect these rights – to full and equal educational opportunity. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits UB from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability.” If you have registered with the Disability Services Office, or need to, please see me. <http://www.ub-disability.buffalo.edu/guide.shtml>.

### **MISSED ASSIGNMENTS**

Students with proper medical documentation may speak with the instructor to make up a missed assignment when mitigating circumstances present themselves.

### **SYLLABUS**

This syllabus is at once a contract and a road map. If you choose to take this course, you are agreeing to stick to the rules of the course, and complete the requirements laid out herein. Although we might add or subtract certain readings at different points throughout the semester, everything you need to know, or will be called upon to do, lies in these pages. Use it as your guide through the course. Please note that I expect you to have completed the readings by the day under which they appear in the reading schedule below.

## **Reading Schedule**

Week 1: Introductions

August 27. Introductions

August 29. Definitions: "Latino/a" and "Race"

Reading: Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer, "What is Racial Domination," *Du Bois Review*, 6:2, 2009: 335–355. Read the following subheadings: "Introduction", "What is Race," "Symbolic Category," "Social and Historical Contexts," "Misrecognized as Natural," and "Racial Domination" especially closely.

## **Week 2 The United States and Latin America**

September 3. The US in Latin America

Reading: Grandin, *Empire's Workshop* [EW]: 11-51

Sept. 5. Empire's Workshop?

EW: 52-86 [NO CLASS]

Reading Response/Blog Post: Latin America, the United States and Latin American Studies

## **Week 3. Past and Future of Latino Studies**

Sept. 10. Empire's Workshop? The State of Latin American and Latino/a Studies

Reading: Edna Acosta-Belen and Carlos Santiago. "Merging Borders: The Remapping of America," in Antonia Darder and Rodolfo Torres, eds., *The Latino Studies Reader*: 29-42.

Sept. 12 Latinos/as in the US

Reading: David Gutierrez, *Columbia History of Latinos in the U.S.* [CHL], Preface and Introduction  
Bring a print version of first blog post to class to discuss.

## **Week 4. Borders, Globalization and Mexican Migration**

Sept. 17. Ethnic Mexicans and the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> Century

Reading: CHL Ch 1

Recommended Readings:

Suzanne Oboler, *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of (Re)Presentation in the United States*: Introduction and Chapter 1.

Sept. 19. Shifting Demographics: Mexican New York?

Reading: Ramona Lee Pérez and Babette Audant, "Livin' la Vida Sabrosa: Savoring Latino New York," Annie S. Hauck-Lawson and Jonathan Deutsch, eds., *Gastropolis*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. Chapter 12.

## **Week 5. Puerto Ricans and the Mainland**

Sept. 24. Citizens and Immigrants

Reading: CHL Chapter 2, 87-145

Document: Luis Rafael Sanchez, "The Flying Bus," Alejandra Balestra ed., *Herencia : the anthology of Hispanic literature of the United States*, Oxford ; Oxford University Press, 2002.

Film: *The Flying Bus*

Sept. 26. Migration, Community and Race

Miriam Jiménez Román, "Check Both! Afro-Latin@s and the Census," *NACLA*, November/December 2010. (Insert). Online at: [https://nacla.org/files/A04306040\\_13.pdf](https://nacla.org/files/A04306040_13.pdf)

R. Rivera, "Hip Hop and New York Puerto Ricans." In Habel-Pallan and Romero, eds., *Latino/a Popular Culture*, 2002: 127-143.

### **Week 6. Transnational Ties. Dominicans**

October 1. Transnational Flows: Dominicans in the US

Reading: *CHL* Ch 5

Film: Aaron Mathews and Jennifer Mittelstadt, *My American Girls*, 2001, Part I.

Oct 3. Defining 'Dominican-ness'

Reading: Junot Diaz, *Drown*. Excerpts

Film: Aaron Mathews and Jennifer Mittelstadt, *My American Girls* (2001, 62 min)

Document: My American Girls' characters updates:

[http://www.pbs.org/pov/myamericangirls/film\\_update.php](http://www.pbs.org/pov/myamericangirls/film_update.php)

### **Week 7. Close Connections. Cubans**

Oct. 8. "Exceptional" Communities

Reading: *CHL* Ch 3

Oct. 10. Diasporic Identities

Reading: María de los Angeles Torres, "Encuentros y Enconrazos: Homeland in the Politics and Identity of the Cuban Diaspora," *The Latino Studies Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998: 43-62

### **Week 8. Many Migrations: Central Americans [No Presentations]**

Oct. 15. Many Migrations, Multiple Destinations?

Reading: *EW* Ch 3

Oct. 17. Central America

Reading: *CHL* 4

### **Week 9. Midterm**

Oct. 22. Group Review

Reading: Judith Hellman, *The World of Mexican Migrants: The Rock and the Hard Place*, New Press, 2009. Introduction [WMM]

Oct. 24. Midterm

### **Week 10. Politics**

Oct. 29. Latino/a Politics

Readings: *CHL* Ch. 11

Alfonso Gonzales, "Introduction: Power, Justice, and Survival: Latino Politics Today," *NACLA*, November/December 2010. Online at: [https://nacla.org/files/A04306015\\_5.pdf](https://nacla.org/files/A04306015_5.pdf)

Document: Ilans Stavans, *Latino U.S.A.: a cartoon history*

Oct 31. Race, Ethnicity, and Political Identity

Readings: Arlene Dávila, "The Mexican Barrio: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and the Terrain of Latinidad," in *Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City*, Berkeley: UC Press, 2004: Ch. 5, 153-180.

Marisol Raquel Gutiérrez, "The Power of Transnational Organizing: Indigenous Migrant Politics in Oaxacalifornia," *NACLA*, November/December 2010, online at [https://nacla.org/files/A04306034\\_11.pdf](https://nacla.org/files/A04306034_11.pdf)

### **Week 11. Citizenship and Dream Acts**

November 5. Citizenship and the Production of illegality

Reading: *CHL*, Ch 10

Nov. 7. Citizenship Complicated

Reading: Claudia Sandoval, "Citizenship and the Barriers to Black and Latino Coalitions in Chicago," *NACLA*, November/December 2010. Online at: <https://nacla.org/node/6849>

Chris Zepeda-Millán, "Migrante Mobilization in El Nuevo South," *NACLA*, 43:6, November/December, 2010.

### **Week 12. Borders and Cities**

Nov. 12. Latino/a Cities, Border Cities

Reading: *Tijuana Dreaming: life and art at the global border*, Ch 9, 10, 12 (UBL)

Look at Websites of Teddy Cruz, <http://www.california-architects.com/en/estudio/en/>

Ron Rael, <http://borderwallarchitecture.blogspot.com/>

Nov. 14. Gendered Urban Lives

Readings: *CHL* Ch 7

### **Week 13: Culture and Politics**

Nov. 19. Expressive Cultures

Readings: *CHL* Ch 9

Clip: Guillermo Gomez Peña and Coco Fusco, "Undiscovered Amerindians,"

<http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/UndiscAmerind.html> And, [SPARC Murals](#)

Nov 21. Music

Readings, Deobrah Pacini Hernandez, "Dominicans in the Mix: Reflections on Dominican Identity, Race, and Reggaeton," R. Rivera, W. Marshall and D. Pacini Hernandez, ed., *Reggaeton*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009: 135-164.

### **Week 14**

Nov. 26. *WMM*

Reading: *WMM*, cont'd

Nov 28. **NO CLASS – Winter Recess**

Begin Review

### **Week 15** Conclusions

Dec 3. Review and Discussion of *WMM*

Reading: Finish *WMM*

Dec 5. Final Project Presentations, Part I

### Essay and Research Paper Grading Rubric

Adapted from: Professors Jay Aronson and Marie Norman, courtesy of Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, Carnegie Mellon University

	Excellent (A/A-)	Good (B+-C+)	Needs Improvement (C/C-)	Poor (D/F)	F
Overall Impression	Author directly addresses main question or issue, and adds new insight to the subject not provided in lectures, readings, or class discussions. The author has retained nearly all of the knowledge presented in class. He/She is able to synthesize this knowledge in new ways and relate to material not covered in the course.	Author competently addresses main question or issue, but does not add much new insight into the subject. That said, it is clear that the author has learned a great deal in class and is able to communicate this knowledge to others.	Author attempts to address main question or issue, but fails. The author has retained some information from the course, but does not fully understand its meaning or context and cannot clearly convey it to others.	Essay does NOT address main question or issue, and it is obvious that author has not retained any information from the course.	P L A G I A R I S M
Grasp of reading(s)	Paper represents the authors' arguments, evidence and conclusions accurately, fairly and eloquently. Demonstrates a firm understanding of the implications of the author's arguments.	Paper represents the author's arguments, evidence and conclusions accurately.	Paper represents the authors' arguments, evidence and conclusions accurately though not sufficiently clearly. (and/or...) There are minor inaccuracies	Paper badly misrepresents the authors' arguments, evidence, and/or conclusions.	
Argument	Essay contains a clear argument—i.e., lets the reader know exactly what the author is trying to communicate.	An argument is present, but reader must reconstruct it from the text.	A author attempts, but fails, to make an argument (e.g., starts with a rhetorical question/statement or anecdote that is never put into context).	No attempt is made to articulate an argument.	
Evidence	Provides compelling and accurate evidence that convinces reader to accept main argument. The importance/relevance of all pieces of evidence is clearly stated. There are no gaps in reasoning—i.e., the reader does not need to assume anything or do additional research to accept main argument.	Provides necessary evidence to convince reader of most aspects of the main argument but not all. The importance/ relevance of some evidence presented may not be totally clear. Reader must make a few mental leaps or do some additional research to fully accept all aspects of main argument.	Not enough evidence is provided to support author's argument, or evidence is incomplete, incorrect, or oversimplified. Information from lectures and readings is not effectively used.	Either no evidence is provided, or there are numerous factual mistakes, omissions or oversimplifications. There is little or no mention of information from lectures and readings.	

		Excellent		Good		Needs Improvement		Poor		F	
Counter-Evidence	The author considers the evidence, or alternate interpretations of evidence, that could be used to refute or weaken his/her argument, and thoughtfully responds to it.	Author acknowledges that counter-evidence or alternative interpretations exists, and lists them fully, but does not effectively explain to reader why his/her argument still stands.	Author acknowledges some of the most obvious counter-evidence and alternative explanations, but is not comprehensive in this task. There is little or no attempt made to respond to them.	No acknowledgement of counter-evidence or alternative interpretations.							
Sources	Evidence is used from a wide range of sources, including lectures and course readings. When required, author also consults scholarly books, websites, journal articles, etc. not explicitly discussed in class.	Evidence is used from many sources, but author relies heavily on a more limited set of sources. Some effort is made to go beyond material presented in class when required, but not much. If outside sources are used, they are primarily non-scholarly (i.e., intended for a general audience) and/or web-based.	Uses only a few of the sources provided in class, or does not go beyond what has been provided by professor when required to do additional research.	Does not use sources, only minimally uses sources provided by instructor, or relies exclusively on non-scholarly outside sources.							
Citations	All evidence is properly cited in footnotes or endnotes.	All evidence is cited in footnotes or endnotes, but there are some minor problems with completeness or format of some citations.	Some pieces are unreferenced or inaccurately referenced, and there are problems with completeness and format of citations.	No attempt is made to cite evidence.							
Organization	Essay contains an intro, body, and conclusion. Introduction lays out main argument and gives an outline of what the reader can expect in the essay. The body of the essay supports the argument with convincing evidence, and moves it forward powerfully. The conclusion brings everything together, acknowledges potential shortcomings of the paper, and gives the reader a sense of what further work might be done to advance the subject matter described in the paper.	Essay contains an intro, main introduction lays out the main argument but gives the reader little idea of what to expect in the essay. The conclusion nicely summarizes the main argument and evidence, but does not move beyond what has already been presented in the paper.	Essay contains an intro, main body, and conclusion. The introduction gives the reader an idea of what to expect in the paper, but does not effectively lay out the main argument. It may begin with a set of rhetorical questions, or an anecdote that is never fully explained. The conclusion does little more than restate the problematic introduction. Intro and/or conclusion may be too wordy or short.	Essay has no clear organizational pattern.							

	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Poor	F
Thesis paragraph	<p>Clearly and eloquently identifies a demonstrable and nuanced central argument.</p> <p>Provides the reader with a clear sense of the nature of evidence that will follow.</p> <p>Reveals the organizational structure of the paper.</p> <p>Guides the reader smoothly and logically into the body of the paper.</p>	<p>Thesis paragraph clearly identifies a demonstrable central argument.</p> <p>Gives the reader a reasonably good sense of the nature of evidence that will follow.</p>	<p>Thesis paragraph identifies a central argument that is demonstrable, though not stated sufficiently clearly. (and/or...)</p> <p>Does not guide the reader into the body of the paper.</p>	<p>Thesis paragraph does not have a discernable central argument (and/or...)</p> <p>The argument is not demonstrable.</p>	
Clarity and Style	<p>All sentences are grammatically correct and clearly written. No words are misused or unnecessarily fancy. Technical terms, words from other languages, and words from other historical periods are always explained. All information is accurate and up-to-date. Paper has been spell-checked (ideally by you and somebody else), and contains no errors.</p>	<p>All sentences are grammatically correct and clearly written. An occasional word is misused or unnecessarily fancy. Technical terms, words from other languages, and words from other historical periods are usually, but not always, explained. All information is accurate and up-to-date. Paper has been spell-checked AND proofread, and contains no more than a few minor errors, which do not adversely affect the reader's ability to understand the essay.</p>	<p>A few sentences are grammatically incorrect or not clearly written. Several words are misused. Technical terms, words from other languages, and words from other historical periods are rarely explained. Not all information is accurate and up-to-date. Paper has been spell-checked AND proofread, but still contains several errors. Reader's ability to understand essay may be compromised by these errors.</p>	<p>Paper is full of grammatical errors and bad writing. Several words are misused. Technical terms, words from other languages, and words from other historical periods are rarely explained. Not all information is accurate and up-to-date. Paper has not been spell-checked or proofread, and contains numerous errors. Reader has a difficult time understanding essay because of errors.</p>	