LHCS 01:595:295: Latino and Caribbean Cultural Studies

Course description
Comparative study of Latino and Caribbean cultures by reviewing key definitions of culture, paying attention to the historical and disciplinary development of the term, as well as the key debates on cultural studies in the Humanities. The second part of the course reviews some of the key debates in the study of culture in Caribbean and Latinos studies, such as the links between historical experience, ethnicity, race and culture, the quest for and critique of national and ethnic identities, populism and studies on popular culture, the cultural contacts paradigm and hybridity, the multicultural debate, the Culture Wars of the 1980s, gender and queer studies, the study of cultures in displacement, the ethnic turn in cultural studies, the analysis of visual cultures, and the emergence of pop, media and electronic cultures. Each session will include theoretical readings and cultural texts different disciplinary perspectives. We will read theoretical works by Ferdinand de Saussur, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bordieu, Raymond Williams, José Vasconcelos, Fernando Ortiz, Frantz Fanon, Mary Louise Pratt, Sylvia Wynter, Antonio Cornejo Polar, Néstor García Canclini, Hayden White, Terry Eagleton, Robin Kelley, Alicia Arrizón, José David Saldívar, and Juana Maria Rodriguez among others. Cultural texts include: the Créolité Collective from Martinique, Culture Clash, Gigi Otálvaro-Hormillosa, Richard Rodríguez, Pedro Pietri, Lourdes Casal, Ana Lydia Vega, Guillermo Gómez Peña, Josefina López, Luis Rafael Sánchez, Yolanda López, Santa Contreras-Barraza, and Yoani Sánchez, among others.

Catalog Course Description:
Comparative study of Latino and Caribbean cultures by reviewing key definitions of culture, paying attention to the historical and disciplinary development of the term, as well as the key debates on cultural studies in the Humanities.

Requirements: The class will be conducted in English and all the required readings will be available in English. Credit not given for both this course and Comp. Lit 01:195:295, or American Studies 01:050:295.

Course Structure: Students will read approximately 70-120 pages per week and write brief commentaries on some primary texts. Even though the course is organized thematically, a chronological and geographical approach will also inform class discussions. Each primary text will be introduced through a brief lecture, followed by group discussion.

Texts:
All required readings available on Sakai.

Department Learning Goals:
1. Be familiar with several of the disciplines that comprise the field of Latino and/or Caribbean studies, including but not limited to: anthropology, art history, cinema studies, education, geography, history, literature, media studies, music, philosophy, political science, sociology, and women’s and gender studies.

2. Develop critical thinking skills and the ability to speak and write clearly and analytically.

3. Employ different research methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches in the humanities and/or social sciences, demonstrating proficiency in one or more of the following areas: historical, political, sociological, anthropological, environmental, philosophical, literary, visual, cinematic, musical, and/or performative analysis.

4. Develop multi- and inter-cultural competence and sensitivity to issues particular to Latino and/or Caribbean experience(s).

5. Conduct individual research to formulate rigorous and convincing arguments in the field of Latino and/or Caribbean studies; honors students will perform and present original research.

**Course Learning goals:**

1. Students will learn key definitions of culture, paying attention to the historical and disciplinary development of the term, as well as the key debates on cultural studies in the Humanities. This fulfills the Arts and Humanities requirements of the SAS Core curriculum (p).

2. The course will teach students how to approach studies of culture using an interdisciplinary approach.

3. Students will become familiar with major debates and particular definitions of culture that have been used in the articulation of Latino and Caribbean studies.

4. Students will learn writing skills, through essay exams written in class, workshops conducted during class time to work on peer-editing of their essays, and by writing and re-writing three short “reflexiones” on the primary texts analyzed in class. This fulfills Writing and Communication skills requirement of the SAS Core Curriculum (s1, s2, u, v).

5. The course will also cover a basic historical chronology for Caribbean from 1865 until the present, as well as an overview of the constitution of Hispanic and Latino communities in the United States from 1848 until today.

6. Students will learn how to conduct historically grounded analysis of literary, visual and performative cultural manifestations.
Evaluation:

- Class Attendance and Participation: 10%
- 3 “reflexiones” or 3-4 pages reaction papers: 30%
- Midterm: 15%
- 2 essay exams written in class: 20%
- Pop quizzes: 10%
- Partial Exam on the day of the final exam: 15%

Requirements:

1. Three brief “reflexiones” (1-2 pages, double spaced) written in English and typed. Each “reflexión” will be a commentary of the main topic and discursive strategy developed in one of the primary texts. Rewrites of these short reaction papers are required. Students must complete the revision of each “reflexión” before the deadline for the next written exercise, or the rewrite will not be graded. Rewrites will only be accepted if the first version of the essay was handed in on time.

2. One in-class midterm.

3. Two in-class essay exams (open-book exercises). These essays will be reviewed by the professor and then peer-edited in class. Students will be expected to revise and resubmit their essays incorporating editing suggestions from professor and classmates a week later. The focus of these essays is to develop each student’s academic writing skills. See course program for due dates.

4. One partial test will be administered as a final exam.

5. Weekly pop quizzes on the assigned reading will be administered at the beginning of the class (during the first 10 minutes). Arriving late will cause the student to miss the quiz. No make-ups are offered for missed quizzes. Grade for quizzes is usually calculated using a curve that is based on the highest score.

6. Attendance and participation are expected. Students should come to each class having read the assigned texts and ready to participate in the discussion. Participation will be graded based on attendance, active intervention in class, quizzes, and preparation of short assignments that will be presented in class (such as oral reports on some of the critical readings, as well as on some of the primary literary and audiovisual materials studied in the course). Participation grade will be lowered 10% after 3 absences with no medical excuse. Three late arrivals are equivalent to one absence.

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

7. Grade scale for the department is the following: A = 93 – 100; B+ = 89 – 92; B = 81 – 88; C+ = 77 – 80; C = 70 – 76; D = 65 – 69; F= 64 and below.

8. Papers, quizzes, assignments and exams should be completed by the dates announced in the syllabus. There will be no make-ups for any of the class assignments, and in case of illness students must provide a medical excuse to request any extensions or make-ups.
9. The department has a writing tutor to help our students in writing their class papers. Please go to the department’s webpage and locate the contact information under the link for LHCS Writing Tutor. For more information see the following link: http://latcar.rutgers.edu/writingtutor.htm

10. Plagiarism is not allowed in class. If a student uses any ideas from another person without properly acknowledging the sources used, the evaluation of her/his work will be suspended and the case will be referred to the University’s administration. Plagiarism is understood as follows:

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic, or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "to paraphrase Plato's comment . . ." and conclude with a parenthesis identifying the exact reference by including the last name of the author and the page number from the book or article. Each essay or paper should also include a bibliography at the end, with the full bibliographical entry for each source used. A footnote [or endnote] acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc. need not be referenced; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography.

Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member (4).

For more information, see the following websites:
http://latcar.rutgers.edu/academichonesty.html
http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/201/plagiarism_policy/plagiarism_defined.html

Course Program:

Week # 1: Culture/Language/Knowledge
Class #1:
Frantz Fanon, “The Black Man and Language.” Black Skin, White Masks (1952)

Class # 2:
Trouillot, Michel Rolph. “Culture on the Edges: Creolization in the Plantation Context”
Week # 2: Culture/Language/Knowledge
Class # 3:
Ana Celia Zentella, “The Hows and Whys of Spanglish.” Growing Up Bilingual
Cultural Text: Tato Laviera, AmeRícan.

Class # 4:
Cultural Text: Tato Laviera, AmeRícan.

Week # 3: Social Definitions of Culture: Anthropology and Ethnography
Class # 5:
Raymond Williams, “Culture” “Structures of Feeling” The Sociology of Culture,” Marxism and Literature, pp. 11-20, 128-135, 136-144.
Cultural Text: Clarice Lispector, “The Smallest Woman in the World”

Class # 6:
Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture,” The Interpretation of Cultures, pp. 3-32.
Cultural Text: Clarice Lispector, “The Smallest Woman in the World”

REFLEXION # 1

Week # 4: Cultural Contacts: Inculturation/Acculturation/Transculturation
Class # 7:
Review for first exam

Class # 8:
First Essay Exam in Class: Open Book Composition Exercise

Week # 5: The Racial Turn: Ethnicity, Race and Culture
Class # 9:
Cultural Text: Culture Clash in America, “Bordentown”
First Essay is returned and discussed in class: content and structure.

Class # 10:
Antonio Cornejo-Polar, “Mestizaje, Transculturación and Heterogeneity”, Latin American
Cultural Studies Reader.
Cultural text: Culture Clash in America, “Nuyorican Stories.”
Writing Workshop in class: Peer editing First Essay Exam

Week # 6: Latin American Studies: the “ensayo culturalista” (1930s-1980)
Class # 11:
José Vasconcelos, The Cosmic Race, selections.

Class # 12:
Gigi Otálvaro Hormillosa, Cosmic Blood, Performance
(http://hidvl.nyu.edu/video/000117773.html) (19.5 minutes)
Rewrite of First Essay Exam Due.

Week # 7: Culture of Poverty, Culture of Dependency
Class # 13:
Cultural Text: Pedro Pietri, Puerto Rican Obituary.
REFLEXION #2

Class # 14:
Cultural Text, Pedro Pietri, Puerto Rican Obituary.

Week # 8: Cultural Contacts Again: Hibridity, Multiculturalism
Class # 15:
MIDTERM

Class # 16:
Cultural Text: Re-Imagining Guadalupe: Yolanda López, Alma López and Judith Baca, “La Mestizaje” (visual arts)

Week # 9: The Culture Wars in the 1980s: Disciplinary crisis in and Fictionalization of the Object of Study
Class # 17:
Cultural text: Lourdes Casal, “The Founders: Alfonso”

Class # 18:
Terry Eagleton, “Culture Wars”, *The Idea of Culture*, 51-86.
Cultural text: Lourdes Casal, “The Founders: Alfonso”

**Week 10: Gender, Sexuality and the meaning of Subcultures**
Class # 19:
Cultural Texts: Luis Rafael Sánchez, “Hum!”

Class # 20:
**Second Essay Exam in Class: Open book Composition Exercise**

**Week # 11: Cultures in Displacement: Migration Studies**
Class # 21:
**Second Essay is returned and discussed in class: content and structure.**

Class # 22:
**Writing Workshop in class: Peer editing Second Essay Exam**

**Week 12: Redefining American Studies: Ethnic/Latino/Chicano/American Studies**
Class # 23:

Class # 24:
Ricardo Ortiz, “Diaspora and Disappearance”, *Cultural Erotics in Cuban America*, 1-42.
Women Have Curves (2002).

Rewrite of Second Essay Exam Due.

Week # 13: Visual Arts: Visualizing Difference
Class # 25:

Class # 26:

REFLEXION #3 (review of one of the sessions from the Hispaniola conference)

Week # 14: From Literature to Blogs: Electronic cultures
Class # 27:
Cultural Texts: Yaoni Sánchez, Generation Y (http://www.desdecuba.com/generationy/)

Class # 28:
Cultural Texts: Yoani Sánchez, Generation Y (http://www.desdecuba.com/generationy/)

Second partial exam will be administered on the day assigned by the registrar for the final exam