Introduction to Latino and Latin American Studies

Document published by Marc Becker on Friday, December 1, 2017

llas101fall2017.pdf

Description:

Introduction to Latino and Latin American Studies

LLAS 101-1  Christina Bueno
Fall 2017  c-bueno@neiu.edu (best way to contact me)
T/R 9:25-10:40  office hrs: LWH 4087
FA 255  T/R: 7:30-8:00, 10:45-12:45
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Course Description

Latinos are the largest minority group in the United States. In fact, the growth of the Latino population constitutes the most dramatic demographic transformation the US has ever experienced. By the year 2025, over a quarter of the nation will be Latino. This last statistic alone makes understanding Latino and Latin American population of utmost importance.

This course is an introduction to the interdisciplinary fields of Latin American and Latino/a Studies. It focuses on the commonalities and differences among what are broadly considered “Latinos,” the people of Latin America as well as the people of Latin American origin living in the Unites States. One of the defining features of this group is its tremendous diversity, a theme we will explore throughout the course. The very term Latino encompasses peoples from over 20 different nations with distinct histories, customs, and blends of indigenous, European, African, and other ancestries. Throughout the course we will take a transnational approach, studying Latin Americans and Latinos across national boundaries.
The course is divided into three segments. It begins with a tour of Latin America (through films and readings) in order to understand the histories and cultures of the different regions of the area: Middle America (Mexico and Central America), the Caribbean, Andean America, Brazil, and the Southern Cone (Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay). Throughout this section we will examine Latin America’s historical reality, exploring issues such as colonialism, imperialism, and social inequality, issues which have driven Latin Americans to migrate to the United States.

The second segment of the class will look at Latinos in the United States. Contrary to popular belief, most Latinos are not new-comers but U.S.-born descendants of Latin American immigrants. Yet many, if not most Latinos, retain cultural, kinship, and economic ties with their immediate or ancestral countries of origin. Through readings, films, and discussions, we will focus on the experiences of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Central Americans in the United States. Our goal will be to compare the demographic features and immigration and settlement patterns of each group. In the last segment, the class will move on to examine U.S.-Latino identity as it relates to questions of class, race/ethnicity, gender, and national origins. In this segment we will also look at the backlash against Latino immigration and Latino movements for power.

**Course Mechanics**

This course will be run as a modified seminar. The heart of the course will be readings and discussions rather than lectures. Students should attend every session, be prepared with questions and comments about the readings, and participate fully in the discussions. Otherwise, the class will not work (and you will not do well).

**Course Objectives**

This course will enable students to:

1.) identify the dominant cultural characteristics and historical forces that have shaped Latin America’s different regions

2.) compare/contrast the unique immigration and settlement patterns and experiences of each US-Latino community

3.) discuss controversial issues in a fair and respectful manner

**Texts**


4.) Readings on D2L.

The books can be purchased at the bookstore on campus or through an internet book vendor such as Powells.com. You must access D2L as soon as possible in order to print out the “map quiz and maps” that we will use for class. Please bring these to our next session in order to get full participation credit for that day. (For the date of the actual quiz see below.) To access D2L go to NEIUport.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade will be determined by:

1.) A map quiz on 9/5 (worth 1% of total grade)

2.) Six travel journals due on 9/14, 9/19, 9/21, 9/26, 9/28, 10/3. These will consist of a series of brief written responses to the readings. (Worth 3 points each for a total of 18 points)

3.) Three writing assignments:

Book summary, due 11/9, worth 10%

In-class exam, due 11/16, worth 20%. Study guide will be distributed in advance.

Article analysis, due on 11/28, worth 10%

4.) Three pop quizzes: These will be based on the course readings and appear at random, so make sure you read!

Worth 5 points each. (15%)

5.) Class participation (26%). Your participation grade is made up of the following:
General participation (20%)—Role will be taken every session. Participation grades are based not only on attendance, but also on your level of involvement in discussions. You are strongly encouraged to ask questions and voice your opinion about the material. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE READINGS SHOULD BE DONE BEFORE CLASS! You should bring the texts to class so that we can work with them. In addition, try and keep up with news/current events related to Latin America and Latinos. You will have an opportunity to share this information with your colleagues (if you wish) at the beginning of each class.

Image of Latinos (1%)—In addition, your participation grade will also be based on finding an image which you believe represents how Latinos are portrayed in the media. Due in class on 11/21.

Formal presentation (5%) at the end of the semester on a topic of your choice. You will turn in a series of materials for this presentation on 10/17 and 10/31 and on the day of the presentation, which will occur during one of the last class meetings.

6.) The grading scale is as follows:

90-100%: A
80-89%: B
70-79%: C
60-69%: D
Below 59%: F

Course Policies

1.) Your grade in this class is your responsibility. You should keep abreast of your progress. If you have a problem that interferes with your performance in the course please contact me as soon as possible. Email is the best way to get in touch with me outside of class and office hours.

2.) A note on absences: An excused absence is one that occurs due to a religious holiday, a medical emergency, or the death of a loved one. You will have to provide appropriate written documentation to explain the absence. All other absences are unexcused. Please do not contact me about an unexcused absence unless it falls on the day of the map quiz or in-class essay exam so that we can reschedule. Also, if you are absent on the day an assignment is due, you can send it to me via email on the due date and turn in a hard copy during the next class. Otherwise, all late assignments will lose five points every day that they are late, weekends included. Finally, you should exchange emails
and phone numbers with at least one colleague in order to find out what you miss in case you happen to be absent.

3.) Classroom etiquette and participation. No electronics should be used in this course—unless your use of technology is a documented accommodation. If a computer or smart phone or tablet comes out, you are not doing what you are supposed to be doing in this class—namely, listening and contributing. You must listen to me and to each other and take notes when appropriate to engage in the material.

4.) Turn off cell phones! No texting!

5.) Arrive to class on time!

**Schedule and Assignments**

(How to read this schedule: assignments due are listed first, followed by the day’s topic and the assigned readings. An asterisk signifies D2L readings. Again, please bring the assigned readings to class on the day they are due so we can discuss them.)

**Welcome to Latin America**

8/29 Introduction to the Course

What are Latin American and Latino Studies?

8/31 What is Latin America?

Readings: *“Americas: Introduction”

Film Clip: Latido Latino

9/5 **DUE: MAP QUIZ**

History: America’s First Peoples

Readings: *“The Indian Populations of Lain America”
Film: *The Couple in the Cage* (Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña, 1997)

9/7

History: Conquest and Colonialism

Readings: *“Colonial Latin America”*

Film Clip: *When Worlds Collide* (PBS, 2010)

9/12

History: Afro Latin America

Readings: *“Disguised in Dance” and “Q and A with Professor Henry Louis Gates.”*

Film Clip: *Black in Latin America*—Brazil

9/14

**DUE: TRAVEL JOURNAL 1**

Middle America: Mexico

Readings: “Mexico: On the Verge of Change” in *Global Studies*

Film: *Destination Mexico*

9/19

**DUE: TRAVEL JOURNAL 2**

Middle America: Central America

Readings: “Central America: Lands in Turmoil” in *Global Studies*

Plus one country of your choice from the Central America section

Film: *Central America*

9/21

**DUE: TRAVEL JOURNAL 3**

The Caribbean

Readings: “The Caribbean: Sea of Diversity” and “Cuba” in *Global Studies*

Film: *Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic*
9/26  **DUE: TRAVEL JOURNAL 4**

South America: The Andean Region

Readings: “South America: An Imperfect Prism” “Bolivia,” “Colombia,” “Ecuador,” “Peru” (plus “Venezuela”) in *Global Studies*

Film: Peru

9/28  **DUE: TRAVEL JOURNAL 5**

The Southern Cone

Readings: “Argentina,” “Chile,” and “Paraguay” in *Global Studies*

Film: Argentina

10/3  **DUE: TRAVEL JOURNAL 6**

Brazil

Readings: “Brazil” in *Global Studies*

Film: Destination Brazil

**Latinos in the United States**

10/5  The Legacies of U.S. Imperialism

Readings: *Harvest of Empire*, Chaps. 2 and 3

Film Clip: *Harvest of Empire*

10/10 Fall Break- No Class!

10/12 TBA
10/17  **DUE: PARAGRAPH ON PRESENTATION TOPIC**

Readings: *Harvest of Empire*, Chap. 13

Film: *Wetback* (Arturo Pérez Torres, 2005)

10/19  Discussion: *Wetback*

Readings: *“Latinos: Remaking America: Preface”*

**Mexicans**

10/24  Mexican Immigration: A Long History

Readings: *“Bracero”*

*Enrique’s Journey*, Prologue- Chap. 2

10/26  Mexican Immigration

Readings: *Enrique’s Journey*, Chap. 3 and 4

Film: *Harvest of Loneliness* (Gilbert Gonzalez, 2010)

**Puerto Ricans**

10/31  **DUE: LIST OF PRESENTATION MATERIALS**

Puerto Rican Immigration

Readings: *Harvest of Empire*, Chaps. 4 and 14

Film: *Nuyorican Dream* (Laurie Collyer, 1999)

11/2  Discussion: *Nuyorican Dream*

Readings: *Enrique’s Journey*, Chap. 5 and 6
Cubans

11/7 The “Special” Refugees
Readings: *“Power and Identity: Miami Cubans”*
*Enrique’s Journey*, Chap. 7-Epilogue
Film Clip: *Harvest of Empire*—Cuba

Central Americans

11/9 DUE: BOOK SUMMARY—*ENRIQUE’S JOURNEY*
Discussion: *Enrique’s Journey*

11/14 Central Americans: Recent Immigrants
Readings: *Harvest of Empire*, Chap. 8
Film Clip: *Harvest of Empire*—Nicaragua and El Salvador

Backlash and Action

11/16 DUE: IN-CLASS EXAM ON IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCES

11/21 DUE: BRING IMAGE FROM ADVERTISEMENT OR OTHER MEDIA THAT REINFORCES OR CHALLENGES STEREOTYPES ABOUT LATINOS

Anti-Immigrant Sentiment
Readings: *Harvest of Empire*, Chap 11


11/23 Thanksgiving break—No class!
DUE: ANALYSIS OF OBOLER ARTICLE

Movements for Power: The Young Lords and the Chicano Movement


Film: ¡Viva La Causa! 500 years of Chicano History (Betita Martínez, 1995.) Begin In-class presentations

11/28

11/30

12/5

12/7

LLAS 101

Travel Journal Assignment

Due on 9/14, 9/19, 9/21, 9/26, 9/28, 10/3. (Each journal is worth 3 points for a total of 18 points)

Learning Objective:

The purpose of this assignment is to enable you to identify the dominant characteristics (social, economic, historical, cultural, and geographical) of Latin America. While you will gain an understanding of the diversity of the region, you will also develop a sense of the commonalities shared by its peoples, similarities which allow us to group these different countries into one region.

This assignment is based on the readings from Global Studies. After completing the assigned readings, you will respond to a series of brief questions.

Your responses should be typed, single-spaced, and in 11- or 12-point font. They need not consist of
more than a few lines. In other words, they do not have to be lengthy, but they should answer the questions as directly and thoroughly as possible. Please number your answers and treat each question individually. In other words, do not write one huge essay that covers all of the questions.

For every reading or group of readings you must answer the following 6 questions. (The Central America section has one extra question.) Most of the readings deal with several countries at a time. Your answers should do the same, and pull together the information you’ve learned from the entire set of readings for that particular session.

1.) What racial and ethnic groups are found in this particular country/region?

2.) What geographical features dominate and what impact, if any, have these had?

3.) What historical developments have most impacted the country/region?

4.) What particular challenges does this country/region face?

5.) Examine the statistical overview(s). Are any of the statistics puzzling or striking?

6.) What did you find most interesting about this country/region?

7.) For September 19, Central America session only:

Which extra country did you choose to read about and why? What knowledge or information do you think is essential in order to comprehend that particular country?

**Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct**

Northeastern Illinois University students are expected to exhibit the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic misconduct is any fraud or deception for the purpose of improving a grade. Cheating and plagiarism will result in an automatic “F” in the course and a referral to the Dean of Students for further disciplinary action. I mean this. What is plagiarism? **Plagiarism** is the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and representation of them as one’s original work. This includes (1) paraphrasing another’s ideas or conclusions without acknowledgment; (2) listing of entire sentences, paragraphs, chapters, etc., from another’s work; and (3) submission as one’s work, any work prepared by another person or agency. To find out more about plagiarism go to: [www.neiu.edu/history](http://www.neiu.edu/history) (click on the link on the bottom left for the American Historical Association to learn about plagiarism).
Disabilities Policy

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, NEIU does not discriminate against students or employees on the basis of disability. In addition, the University provides reasonable accommodations for students and employees with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodations in the classroom should contact the Disabilities Center (773-442-5495; TDD 773-442-5499).

Web Link to Emergency Information

It is recognized that a safe university environment is a shared responsibility of faculty, staff, and students, all of whom are expected to familiarize themselves with and cooperate with emergency procedures. Web links to Campus Safety: Emergency Procedures and Safety Information can be found on NEIUport on the MyNEIU tab or as follows:

For the Main campus:  [http://www.neiu.edu/~neiutemp/Emergency_Procedures/MainCampus/](http://www.neiu.edu/~neiutemp/Emergency_Procedures/MainCampus/)