

**Women's Studies 294B**  
U.S. Latina/Latin American Women  
**“Intersectionalities Among Latin American Women  
and U.S. Latinas”**  
Tue Th 9:30-10:45 am

**Instructor: estheR Cuesta**  
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Hampshire House 204

Office hours: Tue 2:30-4:30 pm  
or by appointment

If you have special needs that you would like to discuss in private, please see me as early as possible in the semester, so we can make the necessary arrangements.

**Course Description:**

This interdisciplinary course traces the dynamic historical transformations of women's lives in Latin America and those who identify themselves or may be seen as U.S. Latinas. We will explore Latin American and U.S. Latina women's lives within their specific cultural and social contexts, and how their respective struggles as women have been intimately linked to other social movements that affected their communities as a whole—including the Civil Rights movement, the Chicano movement, the Nuyorican movement, indigenous movements, Las madres de Plaza de Mayo, among other movements.

As the course progresses, we will find intersectionalities and differences among Latin American women, U.S. Latinas, and other women of color in the U.S. By examining works ranging from non-fiction, fiction, poetry, film, and music, we will also challenge society's and the authors' conceptualizations of Latin American women and U.S. Latinas as a way to critique underlying issues of race, class, gender, and other power structures.

You are responsible to read (or watch) the assigned material by the date it appears on the syllabus, and be ready to critically discuss it in class. We will watch some films in class. This will be indicated by “IN-CLASS FILM.” All other films that appear on several dates means that you are responsible to watch them before the day we will discuss them. I advise that you watch the films in groups and talk about them among yourselves before the class.

**Required Texts** (Texts can be purchased at Food for Thought, near CVS in Amherst Center)

- 1) *Course Packet* (available at Collective Copies, near Peter Pan Station in Amherst Center)
- 2) The Latina Feminist Group. *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios*
- 3) Alicia Partnoy. *The Little School*
- 4) Carolina Maria de Jesus. *Child of the Dark*
- 5) Demetria Martínez. *Mother Tongue*

### **A NOTE ON THE READING SCHEDULE**

Texts that have an asterisk (\*) next to them are included in the Course Packet. All others are on E-Reserve.

**E-Reserve:** Readings that are not included in the Course Packet will be available on E-Reserve. I encourage you to print a copy for yourself prior to the discussion. This way you can make notes on the text and have the material with you during class discussion. I realize the printing will cost you something, but it is still cheaper than buying more books and having a larger Course Packet.

**On Plagiarism and Citation Format:** As college students, you should all be acquainted with proper ways of citing sources (whether you are quoting directly, paraphrasing or alluding to an idea or text). If you are unsure of how to cite something, please refer to the MLA Style Handbook (available at the Reference Desk, Main Floor of the Du Bois Library). All papers in this class should follow the MLA Style. Under no circumstances will plagiarism be accepted and no second opportunity will be granted. I will take action, which may result in your failing of the class and a recommendation on my part for you to be placed on scholastic probation, suspended or expelled.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS/GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

Class Participation/Attendance	10%
4 Response Papers:	20% (5 % each)
Oral Presentation:	15%
Midterm	20%
First Draft of Final Paper:	10%
Final Paper:	25%

**Extra Credit:** Personal Testimony/Creative Writing/Response to Cherríe Moraga's lecture and other cultural events related to the class.

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE**

You are required to be actively involved in the learning process, and to take initiative in thinking critically and discussing the ideas presented in class. You are expected to attend all classes and to be prepared to discuss the assigned readings. If you have more than three unexcused absences, your grade may drop half-letter grade.

## **RESPONSE PAPERS**

Response papers will ONLY be accepted on its due dates. No e-mail attachments will be accepted. Each response paper should contain your position in response to the texts we just finished discussing. (readings and/or films). On occasions, these papers may be used to generate class discussion. You may be called upon in class to discuss the ideas presented in your paper. The length of the response papers should be, at least, 1-2 double-spaced pages (roughly 500 words).

## **ORAL PRESENTATION**

At the beginning of the class period, on the day for which the student has signed up, she/he will give an oral presentation on one assigned reading for, *at least*, five minutes. The presentation should move beyond biographical information on the writer/theorist or mere summary of main ideas. Instead, the student should focus on offering interpretations, insights, an analysis, and/or raise questions based on the readings. Presenters are responsible to do some research and bring notes. Presenters should also be prepared to answer questions from their peers as they will be strongly encouraged to ask questions to the presenter.

## **MIDTERM**

The midterm will consist of a set of questions to which you will write, at least, one-page responses. Some questions will require that you do a close reading, while other questions will require that you do some research. No e-mail attachments or late submissions of the midterm will be accepted. Guidelines will be provided in advance for the midterm. Questions will be distributed, at least, one week in advance.

## **FIRST DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER**

The first draft of the final paper is meant to present the general ideas you will be working on your final paper. It is also a way for the instructor and your peers to offer suggestions and provide feedback. This first draft is by no means the final version of the paper. It is a way to help you organize your thoughts and

help you begin working on your final paper well in advance so you can complete and submit it on time. The first draft of the final paper should have a working title and a tentative bibliography. The length of the first draft of the final paper should be, at least, four pages (roughly 1,150 words).

### **FINAL PAPER**

The final paper **MUST** be handed no later than Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at the class meeting. No e-mail attachments or late papers will be accepted under any circumstances. The length of the paper should range between ten to twelve pages. As you read along for the class, keep in mind that for the final paper you will be required to find intersectionalities (similarities and/or differences) in the ways women have reacted, organized, or resisted on a particular issue or the ways that these writers deal with specific concerns (for instance, how they translate their culture to the mainstream society, how they use language, what concerns the writer as being part of a particular group, etc.).

The goal of this assignment is for you to find out on your own other issues, from those that will be discussed in class, that concern Latin American women and Latinas, in relation to other women of color in the U.S. This assignment should also serve to get you acquainted with Latina and Latin American women writers who will not be covered in class. During the class period, we will cover **only** some of issues that concern Latinas and Latin American women, as well as **only** some Latina and Latin American women writers. Therefore, you will be required to go to the library and find information on your own.

**NOTA BENE:** If you are not ready and willing to devote at least 5 hours a week to this class in reading, watching films, or doing research, I advise you not to take this course. Please go over the syllabus carefully; if you decide to take this course, then, you have agreed to abide this syllabus/contract.

I encourage you to contact me if any questions or concerns arise. Do not wait until the end of the semester. Most problems can be resolved if they are addressed as early as possible. Please make use of my office hours to discuss any of the assigned readings or projects and/or any general or personal concerns.

## **READING SCHEDULE**

Jan Thu 27    **INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS**

**Where does Latin America start? Where does it end?**

**Who's Latina? Who's Latin American?**

Feb Tue 1 **TRANSNATIONAL CITIZENSHIPS**

Carlos Vález- Ibáñez and Anna Sampaio. "Introduction: Processes, New Prospects and Approaches." *Transnational Latina/o Communities: Politics, Processes, and Cultures*.

Coco Fusco. "Nationalism and Latinos, North and South: A Dialogue." *English Is Broken Here*.

María Lugones. "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception." *Hypatia*.\*

Feb Thu 3 **LIFE ON THE BORDER**

Cherríe Moraga "Refugees of a World on Fire." *This Bridge Called My Back*. \*

----- "La Güera" *Loving in the War Years: lo que nunca pasó por sus labios*. \*

Gloria Anzaldúa "La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness." *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*.\*

**FIRST RESPONSE PAPER**

Feb Mon 7 **CHERRIE MORAGA** at 4:30 pm, Weinstein Auditorium, Wright Hall, Smith College

Feb Tue 8 **CHICANA FEMINISM AND POLITICAL VISIBILITY**

Alma M. García. "The Development of Chicana Feminist Discourse." \*

Rigoberta Menchú. The Quincentenary Conference and the Earth Summit, 1992 \*

----- . Acceptance and Nobel Lecture. \*

Feb Thu 10 NO-CLASS

**DESAPARECIDOS, EXILE & RE-MEMBERING**

Luisa Valenzuela. "The Censors." *The Censors*.

**FILM: LA HISTORIA OFICIAL/THE OFFICIAL STORY (Dir. Luis Puenzo)**

Feb Tue 15 Alicia Partnoy. *The Little School* pp. 7-56

Feb Thu 17 **Mariela Méndez speaks**

Alicia Partnoy. *The Little School* pp. 57-136

Feb Tu 22 **PUERTORRIQUEÑA/NUYORICAN**

Sandra María Esteves. "Autobiography of A Nuyorican," "Gringolandia." *Bluestown Mockingbird Mambo*.

Judith Ortiz Cofer. "The Myth of the Latin Woman." *Women Writing Resistance: Essays on Latin America and the Caribbean* \*

Naomi Ayala. "What am I?" "Race," "A Man Will Rush From Behind Me," "Reform." *Wild Animals on The Moon and Other Poems*

Aurora Levins Morales. "Forked Tongues: On Not Speaking Spanish." "Puerto Ricans and Jews." *Medicine Stories: History, Culture and the Politics of Integrity*. \*

Feb Thu 24 **LIBRARY RESEARCH SESSION**

We are meeting at the Calipari Room on the Main Floor of the Du Bois Library

**RESISTANCE AND POLITICAL VISIBILITY**

Melissa M. Forbis. "Hacia la Autonomía: Zapatista Women Developing a New World." *Women of Chiapas: Making History in Times of Struggle and Hope*. \*

Mar. Tue 1 **FEMINICIDIO AND POWER**

Alicia Schmidt Camacho. "Body Counts on the Mexico-U.S. Border: Femicidio, Reification, and the Theft of Mexicana Subjectivity."

**IN-CLASS FILM: SEÑORITA EXTRAVIADA (Dir. Lourdes Portillo)**

Mar Thu 3 **LATINA TESTIMONIOS**

*Telling to Live*

Mar Tue 8 *Telling to Live*

**FILM: P'ALANTE, SIEMPRE P'ALANTE (Dir. Iris Morales)**

Mar Thu 10 *Telling to Live*

## SECOND RESPONSE PAPER

IN-CLASS FILM: *LA OPERACIÓN* (Dir. Ana María García)

## TAKE HOME MIDTERM DUE

~~~~~ **S P R I N G            B R E A K** ~~~~~

Mar Tue 22 **TRANSCULTURACION & INTERGENERATIONAL CONFLICTS**

Dolores Prida. *Botánica*. \*

Mar Thu 24 **CLASS & RACE IN BRAZIL**

Carolina Maria de Jesus. *Child of the Dark*.

Mar Tue 29 *Child of the Dark*

## THIRD RESPONSE PAPER

Mar Thu 31 **U.S. IMMIGRATION AND LABOR**

Diana García. "Camp Observations," "When Living Was a Labor Camp,"

"Repatriation," "Operation Wetback, 1953," and "Softball and Tomato  
Fields." *When Living Was a Labor Camp*.

Mirtha Quintanales. "I paid Very Hard for My Immigrant Ignorance." *This Bridge  
Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. \*

April Tue 5 Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo. "Maid in L.A." *Doméstica: Immigrant*

*Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. \*

Sandra Cisneros. "Woman Hollering Creek." *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*

Julia Alvarez. "Family Matters." *Something to Declare*.

**FILM: *EL NORTE***

April Thu 7 **REPRESENTATION, SOCIAL JUSTICE & SOLIDARITY**

Claribel Alegría. "The Writer's Commitment." *Lives on the Line*. \*

-----, "Accounting," "Nocturnal Visits." *Fugues*.

Lynn Stephen. "Chapter 2 – Women's Rights are Human Rights: The Merging of Feminine and Feminist Interests among El Salvador's Mothers of the Disappeared (CO-MADRES)." *Women and Social Movements in Latin America*.

**FILM ECUADOR: INDIAN WOMEN**

April Tue 12 Demetria Martínez. *Mother Tongue*

**IN-CLASS FILM**

April Thu 14 *Mother Tongue*

April Tue 19 *Mother Tongue*

**FOURTH RESPONSE PAPER DUE**

April Thu 21 **NO CLASS** (Monday class schedule)

April Tue 26 **TWENTY-ONE YEARS AFTER THIS BRIDGE CALLED MY BACK**

Gloria Anzaldúa. "preface: (Un)natural bridges, (Un)safe spaces."

Alicia P. Rodríguez and Susana L. Vasquez. "Engaging Contradictions, Creating Home... Three Letters."

Marisela B. Gomez. "Council Meeting."

Migdalia Reyes. "The Latin American and Caribbean Feminist/Lesbian Encuentros: Crossing the Bridge of Our Diverse Identities."

All texts in *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*. \*

April Thu 28 **FIRST DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE/PEER EDITING**

May Tue 3 Daisy Zamora. "Song of Hope," "Radio Sandino," "Report of the Demonstration in Front of the U.S. Embassy protesting the Pino Grande Maneuvers," "50 Love Poems and an Unfulfilled Confession to Ernesto Cardenal," "Urgent Message to My Mother," "To be a Woman." *Clean Slate*. "To a Lady Who Laments the Harshness of my Verses." *The Violent Foam*

**Rosa Oviedo speaks**

May Thu 5    **FILM *YO, LA PEOR DE TODAS* (Dir. María Luisa Bemberg)**  
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. “Introduction,” “Letter to the R. F. M. Antonio Núñez”  
                  “Epigram 95” and “Sonnet 146” *Madres del Verbo/Mothers of the Word*. \*  
Rosario Castellanos. “Three Knots in the Net.” *A Rosario Castellanos Reader*. \*

May Tu 10    **IN-CLASS FILM: *MARIA FULL OF GRACE* (Dir. Joshua Marston)**

May Thu 12    **IN-CLASS FILM: *MARIA FULL OF GRACE***  
                  ***LAST CLASS/CONCLUSIONS***

**FINAL PAPER DUE**