

**Universidad de Puerto Rico
Recinto de Río Piedras
Facultad de Humanidades
Departamento de Inglés**

B. The Immigrant Experience
C. INGL 3259
D. 3 credits / 45 hours

Prof. Pedro Pérez Osorio
Office: Office #12 English Department
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 9:00 -
11:00 by appointment

E. Prerequisites: One of the following: Level 5 on English Department English Placement Test (HEPT), or Advanced Placement 4 or 5 in English.

F. Course Description:

This course examines the experience of immigrants to the United States through a series of specifically selected novels of writers of varying cultural backgrounds. This literature gives us the opportunity to learn about customs, religions, mores, and assimilation strategies of old and new immigrant groups.

G. Course Objectives:

1. Explain the various stages of the immigrant narrative.
2. Identify the historical, social, and political contexts in which immigrant literature is written.
3. Discuss the dynamics of assimilation and resistance as reflected in characters' cultural identity in the immigrant novel.
5. Describe the major trends, types, and themes in literature of immigration.
6. Identify and contrast the United States dominant culture to which immigrants assimilate.
8. Identify representative works of major immigrant writers and the contemporary issues affecting their communities.
9. Demonstrate knowledge of various immigrant literary works and how these distinguish themselves from the dominant American literary canon.
10. Keep a literary response journal in which students record their comprehension of texts discussed in class.

Couse Reading List:

The Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri
The Chosen Shore: Stories of Immigrants by Ellen Alexander Conley
The Funeral Party by Lyudmilla Ulitskaya
House of Sand and Sun by Andre Dubus III

H. Course Policies:

1. Papers must conform to the MLA format. Each paper should reflect your best writing and analytical skills and will be graded accordingly. Written work must be in 12 pt. arial, double spaced. I encourage you to make use of my office hours or via email address to discuss rough drafts with me. All papers have to be submitted on time.
2. Cell phones must be turned off as soon as you walk into the room. Should your cell phone ring or buzz during class time, five points will be subtracted from your next grade.
3. Attendance is mandatory since much of your grade depends on class discussions and active participation. Three unexcused absences will lower your grade by one letter. I consider notes from doctors, lawyers, or bosses valid excuses. If you are absent it is your responsibility to check what you have missed with fellow classmates.
4. You are expected to write one-page responses/summaries which you will bring to class (one copy for the professor and one for yourself), this will start off class discussions, so come prepared. The responses should be typed in 12 point Arial font, double-spaced, and properly formatted. These responses you hand in at the beginning of the class. I read these responses very carefully, for they allow me to gauge your comprehension of the reading material.

I. Course Outline (tentative):

- Week 1-4** 1. Introduction to the course. Concepts and theories related to contemporary issues around immigration. Discussion on the historical, political, socioeconomic and cultural perspectives of the immigrant experience. **The movie** Dirty Pretty Things. The Immigrants from India as portrayed in Jhumpa Lahiri's short story collection *The Interpreter of Maladies*. These stories offer us the opportunity to examine how the immigrant experience of the characters who "must navigate between the cultural values of their homeland and their adopted home." We examine the characters' struggles, anxieties, and biases.
- Weeks 5-7** Stories from *The Chosen Shore: Stories of Immigrants*. Guidelines for student reports.
- Weeks 5-8** The historical, political, socioeconomic, and cultural perspective of Iranian Immigrants to the United States in the 1980s. This unit covers Dubus's novel *House of Sand and Fog*. This novel offers a unique perspective of the immigrant and the marginalized white Americans. immigrant experience through the eyes of young David Schearl.
- Weeks 13-15** The Russian immigrant and its historical, political, and socioeconomic background. *The Funeral Party* by Lyudmilla Ulitskaya emphasizes the contentious relations between memories of the old country (Russia) and the experience of the new world (the United States). Gender issues depicted in the novel will also be

explored. We will study this novel and its relation to the historical moment in which it was written (the end of the Soviet Union).

Weeks 13-15

J. Teaching Strategies

This course will include lectures, group discussions, in-class writing, presentations, and on-line collaborations. Students are expected to do classroom reports. Students will participate in the class wiki where they will collaborate by providing Internet sources according to the literary works being discussed. There is a heavy reading schedule and students are expected to come to class prepared, that is, having read all texts, answered any questions assigned, as well as having notes, responses, and summaries. The class will also include independent reading. The strategies used will be directed towards increasing students' ability to critically engage with literary texts, relate them to one's personal experiences and / or social context, and make literary analysis using established terms and approaches.

When needed, we may cover 11.25 hours of the 45 hour course with alternative methods of instruction.

Cumplimiento con Ley 51*

Los estudiantes que reciban servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con el profesor/a al inicio del semestre para planifica el acomodo razonable y equipo de apoyo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos para las Personas con Impedimentos (OAPI) del Decanato de Estudiantes. También aquellos estudiantes con necesidades espaciales que requieren de algún tipo de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con el /la profesor/a.

K. Evaluation Method

The final grade will consist of the following criteria:

4 exams	400
Class Participation & Attendance	100
Written Literary critical responses	100
One Classroom Report	100

Grading System: A, B, C, D, F.

* Evaluación diferenciada para estudiantes con necesidades especiales.

Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be graded as follows:

0 absences= 100%	5 absences = 75%	10 absences = 50%
1 absence = 95%	6 absences = 70%	11 absences = 45%
2 absences = 90%	7 absences = 65%	12 absences = 40%
3 absences = 85%	8 absences = 60%	13 absences = 35%
4 absences = 80%	9 absences = 55%	

L. Bibliography:

Alvarez Borland, Isabel. *American Literature of Exile: from Person to Persona*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1998.

Calavita, Kitty. "U.S. Immigration and Policy Responses: The Limits of Legislation." *Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective*. Comp. by Cornelius, Wayne, Martin, Philip and Hollifield, James. Stanford University Press: 1995.

Daniels, Roger. *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990.

Espin, Olivia M. *Women Crossing Boundaries: A Psychology of Immigration and Transformations of Sexuality*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Kurien, Prema. *Gendered Ethnicity: Creating a Hindu Ethnic Identity in the United States*. *American Behavioral Scientist* 42 (4): 648-70 Google Scholar.

Luis, William. *Dance Between Two Cultures: Latino Caribbean Literature Written in the United States*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 1997.

Pedraza, Sylvia, and Rumbault, Ruben. *Origins and Destines, Immigration Race and Ethnicity in America*. New York: York: Wadsworth Publishing, 1996.

Perez Rosario, Vanessa. (Ed) *Hispanic Caribbean Literature of Migration: Narratives of Displacement*. New York: Palgrave, 2010.

Pessar, Patricia. *Engendering Migration Studies: The Case of New Immigrants in the United States*. *Ameridcadn Behavioral Scieintist* 42 (4): 577-600 Abstract.

Sandín, Lyn Di Iorio. *Literary Essays on Ambivalent U.S. Latino/a Identity*. New York: Palgrave, 2004.

Suárez-Orozco, Marcelo M. and Mariela M. Páez. (eds) *Latinos: Remembering America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

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