

**University of Puerto Rico  
Rio Piedras Campus  
College of Humanities  
English Department**

**English 3285: Puerto Rican Lit. in English (001)**

Professor: Nemesio Gil, Ph.D.

Credit Hours: 45 hours/3 credits

Time: Mon./Wed. 11:00 a.m.-12:40 p.m.

Email: nemesio.gil@upr.edu

Office Hrs.: By appointment

**Course Description:** Study of the literature by Puerto Rican authors writing in English in the United States with special emphasis on the development of themes, techniques and language.

Course approved for General Education literature requirement

**Course Target:** The main goal of this course is to give students an introductory visualization of literature, film, music, and visual arts (re)presenting, describing, and theorizing the multiple points of view that Puerto Rican texts written in English (and in Spanish when necessary) present as part of the continuous search to ground a strong national and international identity in a postcolonial world. The Puerto Rican experience on the island as a “colony” of the United States and in the continental United States reflects a solid/shifting paradigm grounded on tradition and constant movement. Therefore, issues of race, ethnicity, gender, language, religion, migration, economics, and politics, among others, will be addressed in their textual and visual spaces. The course hence intends to dissect how Puerto Rican (and Nuyorican?) writers, musicians, and visual artists have dealt with these issues through the production of their seminal works of art.

Textbooks:

*Boricuas: Influential Puerto Rican Writings—An Anthology* (Ballantine Books, 1995), Roberto Santiago, ed.

*Breaking Ground: Anthology of Puerto Rican Women Writers in New York 1980-2012* (Editorial Campana, 2012), Myrna Nieves, ed.

*Puerto Rican Writers at Home in the USA: An Anthology* (Open Hand Publ., 1991), Faythe Turner, ed.

Methods of Evaluation Table:

DAILY READINGS AND DISCUSSION	50 pts.
TESTS (4)	40 pts.
ATTENDANCE	10 pts.
Total:	100 PTS.

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

\*\*\*NOTE: For students with disabilities with official OAPI letter, there will be differentiated methods of evaluation (evaluación diferenciada para estudiantes con necesidades especiales con carta oficial OAPI).

Methods of Evaluation Summary

**DAILY READINGS AND DISCUSSION (50 pts.)**

Please be ready to discuss your homework readings and participate in active discussion every day. This is not a lecture hall course. It is imperative students verbalize their research and critical analysis of texts in class.

**TESTS (40 pts.)**

A midterm exam and a final—for a total of 2 exams (20 pts. each)—will be administered to evaluate your progress in the course. Details on content and format in class.

**ATTENDANCE (10 pts.)**

Attendance is required and crucial for the successful completion of the semester. See “Rules of the Game” for specific guidelines.

**\*\*Los estudiantes que reciban servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con el/la profesor/a al inicio del semestre para planificar el acomodo razonable y equipo asistido necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos para las Personas con Impedimento (OAPI) del Decanato de Estudiantes.**

**RULES OF THE GAME**

The syllabus is a contract between professor and students. The following rules are firm and emphatic in order to safeguard fairness to students who show daily responsible and hardworking attitude. All students are therefore to be evaluated on equal terms without exception for the satisfactory development of the course, respect toward professors, classmates, and co-workers.

1. Always do your homework, readings, etc. and be ready to discuss them critically.
2. You are here to learn and develop your critical, writing, and oral skills. Take advantage of this great opportunity to read, do research, and share it in assertive critical analysis in EVERY CLASS. This is not a lecture hall course; it is an active critical analysis and oral discussion course.
3. There might be certain subjects discussed in class regarding race, ethnicity, gender, politics, society, economics, history, age, religion, etc. Please, analyze and discuss them in an active, mature, and respectful manner as part of the academic experience. Never as a platform to offend others. All points of view will be respected.
4. Be on time. THREE TARDIES is 5 pts. off the course’s TOTAL FINAL GRADE. Then, 1 pt. off per tardy thereafter.
5. If you come in late after the set 5 mins. time frame, please tell the professor at the end of that specific course day. Otherwise, you will be marked as ABSENT on the roll call. It is your responsibility.
6. NO electronic devices will be allowed at eyesight during class (i.e. cellars, laptops, etc.) Keep your devices TURNED OFF and in your backpacks (not your pockets) at all times.
7. Please, refrain from using your electronic device, cellular, etc. during the course of the class. On multiple occasions, some students have hidden their cells in their pockets and gone to the “restroom” to make or answer calls, etc. That is 5 pts. off the course’s TOTAL FINAL GRADE per incident.
9. A limit of 2 ABSENCES during the semester with or without written notice from a doctor, special event, etc. Remember this is a very short semester. Afterwards there will be a deduction of 5 pts. off the TOTAL FINAL GRADE PER ABSENCE.
10. NO MAKE-UP EXAMS. Make arrangements to take exams the days assign.
11. Respect your classmates, the professor, and the institution’s property. So will the professor.
12. INTEGRITY will secure you a successful life now and in the future.

## Thematic Course Outline (Subject to change)

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### **Mon. MARCH 12**

Introduction: "Deportation in the USA, P.R. Literature in English issues"

#### **Wed. MARCH 14**

Current P.R. events research: "Politics, Immigration, Nuyoricans vs Puerto Ricans"

#### **Mon. MARCH 19**

Current P.R. events reprise and discussion: "Pros and Cons of current status issues"

#### **Wed. MARCH 21**

Current P.R. events research: "Charter Schools, Puerto Ricans in Europe, First P.R. Exodus"

### II. PRIDE

#### **Mon. MARCH 26**

"Letter in Jíbaro English" by Ernesto Ruiz

Biographical notes

Youtube: "Housewives of Miramar"

#### **Wed. MARCH 28**

"Introduction" from Boricuas by Roberto Santiago (pp. xiii-xxii)

#### **Mon. APRIL 2**

"To the Persecuted" by José de Diego (Boricuas, p. 7)

"A un Perseguido" por José de Diego (PDF file)

Screening: "En la Brecha, José de Diego" (Youtube)

#### **Wed. APRIL 4**

"Boricua" by José Ángel Figueroa (Puerto Rican Writers... pp. 221-224)

Excerpt from "A Mongo Affair" by Miguel Algarín

#### **Mon. APRIL 9**

"Here" by Sandra Maria Esteves (Boricuas, p. 3)

Screening: "J.J. Barea: Puerto Rican Pride (Documentary)" (Youtube)

### III. HISTORY AND POLITICS

#### **Wed. APRIL 11**

MIDTERM

#### **Mon. APRIL 16**

Alternative teaching methods: Individual research

#### **Wed. APRIL 18**

"Puerto Rican Nationalism" by Pedro Albizu Campos (Trans. by R. Santiago, Boricuas, pp. 27-29)

"Island of Lost Causes" by Esmeralda Santiago (Boricuas, pp. 22-24)

Screening: "The Last Colony..." (Youtube)

#### IV. IDENTITY and SELF ESTEEM

**Mon. APRIL 23**

“The World Guerrillas Take the Front Page” by María Arrastía (Breaking Ground... p. 53)  
“Poema a mis Padres” by María Arrastía (Breaking Ground... pp. 48-49)  
Screening: “Lin Manuel Miranda calls on Congress” and “Lin Manuel [in MSNBC]” (Youtube)

**Wed. APRIL 25**

Puerto Rican or Nuyorican: In English, Spanish or Spanglish?  
“Alien Turf” by Piri Thomas (Puerto Rican Writers , pp. 65-76)

**Mon. APRIL 30**

“Nigger-Reecan Blues” by Willie Perdomo (Boricuas , pp. 91-93)  
“Black and Latino” by Roberto Santiago (Boricuas , pp. 93-95)  
Screening: “Being Black in America: Santo Domingo and Brazil” (PBS)

#### V. (IM)MIGRATION and ECONOMICS

**Wed. MAY 2**

TBA

**Mon. MAY 7**

“Chapter 1: Migration/Homeland/Identity” from What Women Lose... by María C. Rodríguez  
Screening: “From Puerto Rico to New York” and “Nuyorican Dream” (Youtube)

**Wed. MAY 9**

At home reading/research homework (subject: race, ethnicity, gender) to hand in.  
---Details in class---

**Mon. MAY 14**

TBA

#### VI. RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER

**Wed. MAY 16**

Discussion: At home research homework (subject: race, ethnicity, gender) to hand in

**Mon. MAY 21**

“From The Roots of Caribbean Identity: Language, Race, and Ecology” by Peter A. Roberts  
Screening: “Being Black in America: The Grandma in the Closet” (PBS)

#### VII. MUSIC

**Wed. MAY 23**

“Side 4,” “Side 12,” “Side 20,” “Side 21,” by Victor Hernández Cruz (Puerto Rican Writers...pp. 102-103)  
“Danza Puertorriqueña” in Lazaro Digital Database

**Mon. MAY 28**

“The Origins of Bomba y Plena” by Mervyn C. Alleyne  
Salsa, Bomba y Plena musical excerpts

**Wed. MAY 30**

FINAL EXAM

**END OF SEMESTER**