

## INGL3285 Literature of the Puerto Rican Diaspora

**Professor:** Maritza Stanchich, Ph.D.

**Time/Place:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 am -12:50 p.m. via sent Google Meet link

**Office hours:** 1:30-4:30 p.m. Tuesday, or by appointment

**Email:** pertinent emails only please to <mstanchich@gmail.com>

You can also copy me at my official UPR address if you wish <maritza.stanchich@upr.edu>

**Course description:** As the second largest group of the booming U.S. LatinX population in the United States, and now far outnumbering Puerto Ricans on the island, Puerto Ricans stateside have since the early twentieth century forged important social, political, cultural and artistic movements. The Nuyorican Poets are just one group that has created a large body of literature, from New York to Hawaii, from the 1900s to today.

How this literature challenges colonial and national paradigms, both in the United States and in Puerto Rico, will be a central question. Among these paradigms are the links between language, race and nation. For example, our study urges us to rethink commonly held assumptions, such as about language (monolingualism, bilingualism and spanglish), national and cultural identity (such as *jibarisimo*) and race (confronting differing concepts of race and racism), as well as about assimilation and belonging, and national literary canons.

Literature will be analyzed with attention to its social-political-historical-cultural contexts, from the turn of the twentieth century to the present. Our study will emphasize literary genres such as memoir, short story, novel, essay, poetry and drama, and themes including, classism, racism, gender, sexuality, cultural hybridity, diaspora/exile, biculturalism.

**Teaching strategies:** Classes will consist of analysis and discussion of readings, and conceptual understanding of related issues. Visual and audio materials will be incorporated.

- Los estudiantes que reciban servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con la profesora al inicio del semestre para planificar el acomodo razonable y equipo asistivo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos para las Personas con Impedimiento (OAPI) del Decanato de Estudiantes. También aquellos estudiantes con necesidades especiales que requieren de algún tip de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con la profesora.
- All our scheduled class dates will meet synchronically via Google-Meet. With advance notice, select classes might be rescheduled or substituted, though it is unlikely. We will also keep active a WhatsApp chat for the course.

**Methods of Evaluation:**

Class attendance and punctuality: 20 percent

Class and online participation (chat, etc.): 15 percent

Quizzes: 15 percent

Freewrites or short essay assignments: 30 percent

Mid-term and Final exams: 20 percent

- Note that four absences can drop your grade by one. Eight absences can drop two grades. Twelve absences or more will not pass the course. It is up to you to manage your excused or unexcused absences. I will not differentiate between excused or unexcused absences.

- **Late assignments:** I will accept freewrites no more than two class dates (or one full week) after the due date. I can't accept assignments that are more than one week late, or accept all assignments at the end of semester. I am open to deadline extensions...just let me know!
- **Grading system** for freewrites will be  $\surd$ ,  $\surd+$  or  $\surd-$ , according to your own level of English and analytical proficiency. Works that receive  $\surd-$  may be resubmitted.
- **Please note again:** For students with disabilities, there will be differentiated methods of evaluation. *Evaluación diferenciada a estudiantes con necesidades especiales.*

**• ¡OJO!: INTERNET PLAGIARISM WILL EARN A FAILING GRADE FOR THE COURSE AND CAN RESULT IN SUSPENSION FROM ENTIRE UPR SYSTEM.**

Please remember that if you copy any writing off the internet, you need to cite it "in quotes" and state which source it came from. Even if you paraphrase (or summarize) or put another writer's ideas into your own words, you need to write, as NAME the AUTHOR states, or I agree/disagree with NAME of AUTHOR, or in parenthesis after the sentence (NAME of AUTHOR or SOURCE) or footnote the author and website.

I grade according to your ability, so no matter what your comfort level is with writing in English, you are better off submitting your own work, even with some errors.

**Plagiarism Statement from English Department website:** Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or experience in your writing without acknowledging the source. Other forms include repeating another's particular apt phrase without appropriate acknowledgement, paraphrasing someone else's argument as your own, introducing another's line of thinking as your own development of an idea, and failing to cite the source for a borrowed thesis or approach (*MLA Style Manual*). Plagiarism may be punished by failure in a course as well as suspension or dismissal from the entire University.

• **Integridad académica:** La Universidad de Puerto Rico promueve los más altos estándares de integridad académica y científica. El Artículo 6.2 del Reglamento General de Estudiantes de la UPR (Certificación Núm. 13, 2009-2010, de la Junta de Síndicos) establece que "la deshonestidad académica incluye, pero no se limita a: acciones fraudulentas, la obtención de notas o grados académicos valiéndose de falsas o fraudulentas simulaciones, copiar total o parcialmente la labor académica de otra persona, plagiar total o parcialmente el trabajo de otra persona, copiar total o parcialmente las respuestas de otra persona a las preguntas de un examen, haciendo o consiguiendo que otro tome en su nombre cualquier prueba o examen oral o escrito, así como la ayuda o facilitación para que otra persona incurra en la referida conducta". Cualquiera de estas acciones estará sujeta a sanciones disciplinarias en conformidad con el procedimiento disciplinario establecido en el Reglamento General de Estudiantes de la UPR vigente.

**Sexual harassment policy:** The University of Puerto Rico prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in any of its forms including that of sexual harassment. According to the Institutional Policy Against Harassment at the University of Puerto Rico, Certification Num. 130, 2014-2015 from the Board of Governors, any student subjected to acts constituting sexual harassment, must turn to the Office of the Student Ombudsperson, the Office of the Dean of Students, and/or the Coordinator of the Office of Compliance with Title IX for an orientation and/or a formal complaint.

**Papers and Quizzes:** 3-4 short essays as “freewrites” will be due throughout the semester, with possible revisions requested for resubmission. Pop quizzes will consist of short identification Q&A. Freewrites might require analyzing and citing literary and critical works we have studied. Select freewrites might be revised into essays that require some outside research. For Humanities majors or those needing an essay for graduate school applications, one of these may be developed into a research paper, for which I can offer feedback.

**Exams:** Take-home midterm and final exams will consist of five short identifications and choice of one essay. Essays will require analyzing and citing works we have studied. I will review exams as they near. Final exam essays will require some outside research. For Humanities majors or those needing an essay for graduate applications, an independent paper may substitute the exam with my advance approval of your topic of focus.

**Required Texts:** (to order online, let me know if this is a problem)

Piri Thomas, *Down These Mean Streets* (1967)

Esmeralda Santiago, *When I Was Puerto Rican* (1993)

- A *Course Reader* is usually available at **PromoImage** just off Avenida Universidad, and includes articles, stories, poems and essays but I also can send them in digital PDF format. Also available will be an abridged version of Bernardo Vega’s *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega* (1955) in translation by Juan Flores (1980), unless you want to order and have the whole book online.

- **Required assignment due Thursday, Jan. 28 (please send to <mstanchich@gmail> with INGL3285 First Freewrite in the subject heading):** Informal 2-3 page paper (double space, 12 point type) expressing your personal, political and/or intellectual interest in the course. Here are some ideas, **choose ONE or focus on your own:**
  - Have you ever lived or do you have family or friends who have lived or live stateside? When? Where? Briefly interview someone you know who has lived stateside about their experience.
  - How do you define the term “Nuyorican” and how have you heard it used? If you have never lived stateside, do you think you have preconceptions about Puerto Ricans in the continental U.S. and are your views open to revision?
  - Has any news caught your attention about Puerto Ricans stateside? This could be in popular culture, including sports, politics, or other developments (for ex, the current exodus from the island to Central Florida and Texas).
  - Do you think Puerto Rican literature from the United States should be considered Puerto Rican literature, U.S. American or U.S. ethnic literature—or neither, both or all three? How do you feel about studying this topic in English or with a non-Puerto Rican professor?

### Course Outline

**Week 1 – Tuesday-Thursday, Jan. 19-21:** Introduction to the course

- First short freewrite assignment is due no later than next Thursday, Jan. 28.

**Week 2 – Tues.-Thurs., Jan. 26-29:** From Reader: Introduction from *Puerto Ricans at the Dawn of the New Millennium*, eds. Edwin Meléndez and Carlos Vargas-Ramos (2014).

- Thursday, the 26<sup>th</sup>, is the last day to turn in 1<sup>st</sup> short writing assignment.

**Week 3 – Tues.-Thurs., Feb. 9-11:** From Course Reader (continues on next page...):

1. “Imparable la migración.” *El Nuevo Día*. 15 de julio de 2013. Front page plus 2-4.
2. “Exodus of Puerto Ricans to mainland about to hit milestone.” *The San Juan Star*, Feb. 11, 2004. Course Reader page 5. (The milestone was hit by November 2004.)
3. “Who Are We? Identities of Stateside and Island Boricuas.” *San Juan City Magazine*, June/July 2005. Pages 6-14 in Reader.
4. “Puerto Rico Files Show FBI Zeal.” *The Orlando Sentinel*. Nov. 6, 2003. A1. (Pgs 15-17)
5. “Migradolares,” by Jorge Duany. *El Nuevo Día*. 17 julio de 2006. (See graphic after too)
6. “Asoma el voto de nacidos en la Isla y viven en EE.UU.” *El Nuevo Día*. 10 febrero 2006.
7. “Por un voto más amplio Gutiérrez.” *El Nuevo Día*. 19 de febrero de 2006. 27.
8. “Few snags for stateside status vote.” *The San Juan Star*. June 17-23, 2007. 5.
9. Cover only of “Illegals under fire.” *Newsweek*. April 10, 2006. See also overview of federal immigration policy: “Patrolling the border.”
10. “The Hispanic Population, Census 2000 Brief.” U.S. Census Bureau. May 2001. 27-34.
11. “The Hispanic Population: 2010, Census Brief.” U.S. Census Bureau. May 2011.

**Week 4 – Tues.-Thurs., Feb. 16-18:** From Reader to READ AND DISCUSS “*Adiós Borinquen querida: The Puerto Rican Diaspora, Its History, and Contributions*,” eds. Edna Acosta-Belén et al., Chapter 1, The Puerto Rican Migratory Experience (About 50 pages.)

**Week 5 – Tues.-Thurs., Feb. 23-25:** *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega* (2<sup>nd</sup> Reader)

**Week 6 – Tues., March 2: Libre día de la ciudadanía**

**Thurs., March 4:** Finish discussing *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega*

- Will send Freewrite for Jesús Colón on racism due Thursday, March 11
- Make sure to get novel *Down These Mean Streets* by Piri Thomas

**Week 7 – Tues.-Thurs., March 9-11:** From Reader, Jesús Colón all selections from *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches* and *The Way it Was and Other Writings*

- Will email short YouTube video on Jesús Colón story “Little Things are Big”
- Begin reading for next week Piri Thomas novel *Down These Mean Streets*
- Turn in Freewrite on Jesús Colón and racism by Thursday, March 11
- Will send via email excerpt from translation of Luisa Capetillo *Mi opinión*
- From Reader poems by Julia de Burgos “Farewell in Welfare Island” and William Carlos Williams “To Elsie” and “The Red Wheelbarrow”—please read introductions to both authors from *The Latino Reader* and the first paragraphs on Williams from *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* followed by poem (will discuss briefly).

**Week 8 – Tues.-Thurs., March 16-18:** Piri Thomas’ *Down These Mean Streets*

- Also from Reader newspaper column by Jorge Duany “Paradojas raciales de los puertorriqueños” and from his book *Nation on the Move* the chapter “Neither White nor Black” and a couple short newspaper articles on racism, African and Taino identity here.

**Week 9 – Tues.-Thurs., March 23-25:** Finish *Down These Mean Streets*

- From Reader, from *The Latino Reader*, excerpt from *Nilda* by Nicholasa Mohr

**Week 10 – Tues., March 30:** From Course Reader, Nuyorican poet Pedro Pietri’s “Puerto Rican Obituary,” and “Mi Viejo San Juan in Spanglish.” (Continues on next page here...)

- Plus will send via email videos of Pedro Pietro from YouTube
- Thursday screen Young Lords film “Palante, Siempre Palante!” (dir. Iris Morales)
- Send links to YouTube (50 mins.): “La operación,” dir. Ana Maria Garcia (1982)  
–online response will be due by midnight.

**Thurs., April 1: Libre para fin de Semana Santa**

**Week 11 – Tues.-Thurs., April 6-8:** From Reader, Miguel Piñero “The Book of Genesis According to Saint Miguelito,” “La Metadona está cabrona,” “No hay nada nuevo en Nueva York,” “This is Not the Place Where I was Born” AND Sandra Maria Esteves “From the Commonwealth” and “A la Mujer Borinqueña”

- OPTIONAL: First act of Miguel Piñero’s play *Short Eyes* in Reader, will send online a scene from film adaptation (1977, dir. Robert M. Young)
- Also will send from YouTube scenes from film “Piñero” (2001, dir. Leon Ichaso)

**Week 12 – Tues. and Thurs., April 13-15:** Tato Laviera’s “against muñoz pamphleteering” (Also in Reader, as a companion piece to this, read the famous poem by Luis Muñoz Marin “Panfleto”) AND Tato Laviera’s “asimilao” and “nuyorican”

- We will analyze in class Tato Laviera’s book cover *AmeRícan* (copied in Reader)
- Freewrite on Spanglish language usage in Nuyorican poets due next Tuesday

**Thursday:** Contemporary Nuyorican poets, at end of Reader, Willie Perdomo, especially “Nuyorican School of Poetry” AND Mariposa’s “Ode to the Diasporican” and “Tears of the Tigers” and Bonafide Rojas

- I will send via email YouTube videos of Willie Perdomo reciting
- Freewrite on language in Nuyorican poets due Tuesday (might include research)

**Week 13 – Tues.-Thurs., April 20-22:** Toward post-Nuyorican developments Abraham Rodriguez Jr. stories “The Boy Without a Flag” and “Babies” AND Rodney Morales story “Ship of Dreams” AND Judith Ortiz Cofer essay “The Story of My Body” AND Aurora Levins Morales’ essay “Forked Tongues: On Not Speaking Spanish” AND selections from Oscar López Rivera’s *Cartas a Karina/Letters to Karina*

- Get Esmeralda Santiago’s *When I Was Puerto Rican*
- Freewrite on gender perspectives in diaspora literature

**Week 14 – Tues., April 27-29: Post-Nuyorican poets and playwrights**

From Reader, poems by Martín Espada AND Rosario Morales and Aurora Levins Morales “Ending Poem” AND Victor Hernández Cruz poems AND Urayoán Noel “Kool Logic/Lógica Kool” AND excerpt from Broadway blockbuster *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, plus articles via email

- Will also post videos of these poets reciting via email.
- **Over weekend:** Read Esmeralda Santiago’s *When I Was Puerto Rican*

**Week 15 – Tues. and Thurs., May 4-6 (last classes):** Esmeralda Santiago’s *When I Was Puerto Rican*. Have book finished by Thursday to finish discussing it.

- Also from Reader, Esmeralda Santiago essay “Island of Lost Causes”

- Will send via email video of Santiago speaking about her work.
- Freewrite on gender perspectives in diaspora literature (see next page please...)

OPTIONAL: Introduction to *Impossible Motherhood* by Irene Vilar

OPTIONAL: excerpt from Sonia Sotomayor memoir *My Beloved World*

**Week 16 –:** Finish discussing Esmeralda Santiago

**Thursday:** Theme: Queer Diaspora

Poems by Luz María Umpierre

- Screen film “Brincando el charco” (1994, dir. Frances Negrón Muntaner).
- OPTIONAL ENTIRE SHORT NOVEL: *We the Animals*, by Justin Torres

**¡EXITO!**