

University of Puerto Rico  
Río Piedras Campus  
College of Humanities  
Department of English

**Course Title:** Seminar in Contemporary U.S. Latino/a Literature

**Code:** English 6049

**Credit Hours:** 45 hours / 3 credits

**Prerequisites:** Admission to the MA Program or permission from the professor.

**Description**

A comprehensive study of contemporary U.S. Latino/a literature within a social/cultural/historical framework that lends itself to theoretical readings and in-depth critical literary analysis. **This course will be taught in online modality.**

**Objectives**

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. analyze innovative literary techniques used by the writers (mixing of genres and languages in a single work, interlingual spaces, temporal/spatial fragmentation, free indirect discourse, etc.).
2. examine the effects of immigration/migration, bilingualism, and biculturalism on their works and how these issues relate to the process of ethnic literary representation.
3. scrutinize the politics of representation by exploring issues of race, class, gender, and hybridity within contemporary theoretical frameworks.
4. broaden the understanding of the dynamics of “border crossings” and how the authors synchronize their hybridity into a holistic concept of self-identity and literary representation.
5. identify and critically reflect upon the rich array of literary voices and concerns of a cultural community with deep roots in a literary tradition often ignored under hegemonic studies of American literature.
6. strengthen oral, research, and writing skills in the development of oral presentations, scholarly essays, and research papers after compiling/consulting bibliographic references.

**Course Outline**

**Weeks 1-2: Introduction – Historical and Cultural Context**

Examination of the process of im/migration and exile (social/political struggles of im/migrant groups or “foreign nationals”); cultural/social identification; influences of oral traditions; formation of a new cultural consciousness.

**Week 3-6: Mexican American Writers**

Tomas Rivera – *And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*

Rudolfo Anaya – *Bless Me, Ultima*  
 Gloria Anzaldúa – *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*  
 Sandra Cisneros – *Caramelo o Puro Cuento*  
 Ana Castillo – *So Far From God*  
 Richard Rodríguez – *Hunger for Memory*  
 Luis Valdez – *Zut Suit*

**Weeks 7-10: Diasporic Puerto Rican Writers**

Bernardo Vega – *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega*  
 Luisa Capetillo – *A Nation of Women*  
 Piri Thomas – *Down These Mean Streets*  
 Esmeralda Santiago – *America's Dream*  
 Judith Ortiz Cofer – *The Cruel Country*  
 Miguel Piñero – *Short Eyes*  
 Lin Manuel Miranda – *In the Heights*

**Weeks 11-12: Cuban American Writers**

Cristina García – *Dreaming In Cuban*  
 Virgil Suárez – *Spared Angolas*

**Weeks 13-14: Dominican American Writers**

Julia Alvarez – *In the Time of the Butterflies*  
 Minou Tavarez Mirabal – *Mañana te escribo otra vez*  
 Junot Díaz – *The Brief Wonderous Life of Oscar Wao*

**Week 15: Final Considerations – The Study of Latino/a Literature in Context**

Summary of the major concerns and issues reflected in the works of Latino/a writers; discussion of “literary canon” formation and the state of Latino/a literature within this context; new frontiers in the direction of contemporary U.S. Latino/a writing.

**Teaching Strategies**

This course may be taught in one of these three modalities per semester:

1. Onsite attendance and participation in designated classroom - UPR-Rio Piedras campus
2. Online modality based on lectures by professor in synchronic class sessions and other synchronic or asynchronous activities on the Moodle Platform (group discussion forums, literary analysis of assigned readings, student presentations, assignments, Q&A, and critical research writing).
3. A combination of classroom and online sessions (Hybrid Modality).

Films and/or documentaries may also be included along with the readings.

**Required Resources**

Either a personal computer, laptop, tablet, and/or smart phone; internet connectivity; electronic library databases (Project Muse, Ebsco Host, JSTOR, Humanities Index, etc.), access to UPR Moodle platform, among others.

**Methods of Evaluation**

The final grade consists of four course requirements:

Short critical essay (5-7 pages)	20%
Student Presentation	20%
Final Research Paper (15-20 pages)	40%

Class Grade\*

20%

\*Important evaluation factors that make up class grade – attendance, punctuality, participation, and responsibility. NO LATE or MAKE UP WORK will be accepted. Repeated absences and tardiness will affect your grade. Please make sure you are ready to log onto synchronic class sessions **15 minutes prior** to the beginning of the session. Complete all assignments in asynchronic sessions by the established due date.

### **Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Special Needs**

Students who receive Vocational Rehabilitation services should contact the professor **at the beginning of the semester** to plan any reasonable accommodations or necessary equipment stipulated by the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs and its *Oficina de Asuntos Para las Personas con Impedimentos (OAPI)*. Students with special needs of any kind that require any type of assistance or accommodations should contact the professor (Law 51).

### **Academic Integrity**

The University of Puerto Rico promotes the highest standards of academic and scientific integrity. Article 6.2 of the UPR Students General Bylaws (Board of Trustees Certification 13, 2009-2010) states that academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: fraudulent actions; obtaining grades or academic degrees by false or fraudulent simulations; copying whole or part of the academic work of another person; plagiarizing totally or partially the work of another person; copying all or part of another person's answers to questions of an oral or written exam by taking or getting someone else to take the exam on his/her behalf; as well as enabling or facilitating another person to perform the aforementioned behavior. All these behaviors will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the disciplinary procedure laid down in the UPR Students General Bylaws.

### **Policy Against Discrimination**

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 Sexual 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 resort to the Office of the Student Ombudsperson (*Procuraduría Estudiantil*) of the Office of Compliance with Title IX (*Hostigamiento Sexual y la Normativa Institucional*) for an orientation and/or a formal complaint.

### **Grading System:** A, B, C, D, or F

*There will be Differentiated Evaluation for students with special needs (OAPI).*

### **Bibliography**

#### **A. Primary Texts**

*Latinos in the US – What Everyone Needs to Know – Ilan Stavans*

*And the Earth Did Not Devour Him – Tomas Rivera*

*\*Bless Me, Ultima – Rudolfo Anaya*

*Borderlands/La Frontera – Gloria Anzaldúa*

*Caramelo or Puro Cuento – Sandra Cisneros*

*So Far From God – Ana Castillo*

*Hunger of Memory* – Richard Rodríguez  
*Zoot Suit* – Luis Valdez  
 \**Puerto Ricans in the US* – Edna Acosta-Belén and Carlos Santiago  
*Puerto Rican Nation on the Move* – Jorge Duany  
 \**Divided Borders* – Juan Flores  
*Memoirs of Bernardo Vega* – B. Vega  
 \**A Nation of Women* – Luisa Capetillo  
*Down These Mean Streets* – Piri Thomas  
*America's Dream* – Esmeralda Santiago  
*The Cruel Country* – Judith Ortiz Cofer  
*Dreaming in Cuban* – Cristina García  
*Spared Angolas* – Virgil Suarez  
*In the Time of the Butterflies* – Julia Alvarez  
*Mañana te escribiré otra vez* – Minou Tavarez Mirabal  
*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* – Junot Díaz

**B. Selected essays and other materials on webpage ([chriviera-upr.com](http://chriviera-upr.com))**

**C. Secondary References**

- Acosta-Belen, Edna and Carlos E. Santiago. *Puerto Ricans in the United States: A Contemporary Portrait*. Lynne Rienner, 2018.
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- Alvarez Borland, Isabel, Ed. *Cuban-American Literature and Art: Negotiating Identities*. SUNY Press, 2010.
- Birkenmaier, Anke, Ed. *Caribbean Migrations: The Legacies of Colonialism*. Rutgers UP, 2020.
- Bixler Marquez, Dennis J and Carlos F. Ortega. *Chicana/o Studies: Survey and Analysis*. Kendall Hunt, 2014.
- Campisi, Elizabeth. *Escape to Miami: An Oral History of the Cuban Rafter Crisis*. Oxford UP, 2016.
- del Río Gabiola, Irune. *Resistant Bodies in the Cultural Production of Transnational Hispanic Caribbean Women: Reimagining Queer Identity*. Lexington Books, 2016.
- Denis, Nelson A. *War Against All Puerto Ricans: Revolution and Terror in America's Colony*. Nation Books, 2016.
- Domínguez, Daylet. “Cuadros De Costumbres En Cuba y Puerto Rico: De La Historia Natural y La Literatura De Viajes a Las Ciencias Sociales.” *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, vol. 69, no. 2, 2016, pp. 133–149.

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 ----- *Puerto Rico: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford UP, 2017.  
 ----- *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States*. U of North Carolina P, 2002.
- Flores, Juan. *The Diaspora Strikes Back: Caribeo Tales of Learning and Turning*. Routledge, 2008.  
 ----- *Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity*. Arte Público P, 1993.
- Frank, Marc. *Cuban Revelations: Behind the Scenes in Havana (Contemporary Cuba)*. UP of Florida, 2013.
- Fuster, Melissa. *Caribeños at the Table: How Migration, Health, and Race Intersect in New York City*. Univ of North Carolina Press, 2021.
- García Bedolla, Lisa and Christian Hosam. *Latino Politics*. Polity, 2021.
- Garcia-Peña, Lorgia. *The Borders of Dominicanidad: Race, Nation, and Archives of Contradiction*. Duke UP, 2016.
- González, Juan. *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*. Penguin Books, 2011.
- Graziano, Frank. *Undocumented Dominican Migration*. U of Texas P, 2014.
- Hooker, Juliet. *Theorizing Race in the Americas: Douglass, Sarmiento, Du Bois, and Vasconcelos*. Oxford UP, 2017.
- Horn, Maja. *Masculinity after Trujillo: The Politics of Gender in Dominican Literature*. UP of Florida, 2017.
- Humphrey, Paul. *Santería, Vodou and Resistance in Caribbean Literature: Daughters of the Spirits*. Legenda, 2019.
- Irizarry, Ylce. *Chicana/o and Latina/o Fiction: The New Memory of Latinidad*. U of Illinois P, 2016.
- Lazo, Rodrigo, and Jesse Aleman, Eds. *The Latino Nineteenth Century: Archival Encounters in American Literary History*. New York: NYU Press, 2016.
- Martinez, Erika, Ed. *Daring to Write: Contemporary Narratives by Dominican Women*. U of Georgia P, 2016.
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- Morales, Iris, Ed. *Latinas: An Anthology of Struggles and Protests in 21<sup>st</sup> Century USA*. Red Sugarcane P, 2018.
- Moran Gonzalez, John, Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Latina/o American Literature*. Cambridge UP, 2016.
- Moya, Paula L. *The Social Imperative: Race, Close Reading, and Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Stanford UP, 2015.
- O de la Galarza, Rodolfo, Louis DeSipio, and F. Chris García, Eds. *Latino Voices: Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban Perspectives on American Politics*. Rutledge, 2019.
- Orchard, William, and Yolanda Padilla, Eds. *Bridges, Borders, and Breaks: History, Narrative, and Nation in Twenty-First-Century Chicana/o Literary Criticism (Latino and Latin American Profiles)*. U of Pittsburgh P, 2016.
- Ortiz-Torres, Blanca, and Mario A. Rodríguez-Cancel. “Una primera mirada a la migración de cubanos del oriente de Cuba a Puerto Rico.” *Caribbean Studies*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2019, pp. 125–142.
- Perez Rosario, Vanessa. *Hispanic Caribbean Literature of Migration: Narratives of Displacement*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
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- Ricourt, Milagros. *The Dominican Racial Imaginary: Surveying the Landscape of Race and Nation in Hispaniola*. Rutgers UP, 2016.
- Rivera, Carmen Haydée. *Border Crossings and Beyond: The Life and Works of Sandra Cisneros*. Praeger/ABC-CLIO P, 2009.
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- Riviere, Melisa. *A Multimedia Ethnography of Hip-Hop between Cuba and Puerto Rico*. U of Minnesota, Ann Arbor, 2010.
- Saldaña-Portillo, Maria Josefina. *Indian Given: Racial Geographies across Mexico and the United States*. Duke UP, 2016.
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- Sanchez-Korrol, Virginia. *Pioneros II: Puerto Ricans in New York City, 1948-1998*.

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Stavans, Ilan, Ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Latino Studies*. Oxford UP, 2020.

Suárez, Lucía. *Tears of Hiapaniola: Haitian and Dominican Diaspora Memory*. UP of Florida, 2006.

Torres-Padilla, Jose and Carmen Haydee Rivera, Eds. *Writing Off the Hyphen: New Critical Perspectives on the Literature of the Puerto Rican Diaspora*. U of Washington P, 2008.

Valdes, Vanessa K. *Racialized Visions: Haiti and the Hispanic Caribbean*. SUNY P, 2020.

Wagenheim, Kal, and Olga Jimenez De Wagenheim, Eds. *The Puerto Ricans: A Documentary History*. Markus Wiener, 2013.

**Electronic Reference:**

**Pew Research Center** – <http://www.pewhispanic.org>

\*Hispanic Trends

\*Hispanic Latino Demographics

\*Facts About Illegal Immigration in the US

\*Key Findings About Puerto Rico

\*Surge in Cuban Immigration to the US continued through 2016

\*Hispanics of Dominican Origin in the US, 2013

\*Deferred Action for Children Arrival Program – «Dreamers » (DACA)

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/what-defines-latino-literature-73399798/>

<http://www.latinoliteratures.org/>

<https://www.humanitiestexas.org/exhibitions/list/by-title/voces-americanas-latino-literature-united-states>

<https://alexanderstreet.com/products/latino-literature-poetry-drama-and-fiction>

<https://remezcla.com/lists/culture/books-by-latinowriters-2018/>

<https://www.questia.com/library/literature/literature-of-specific-groups/women-s-literature-and-women-writers/latina-women-writers>

<https://larrlasa.org/>

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<https://florida.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/latino-americans/#.XsRN3U3sbIU>

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