

**University of Puerto Rico
Río Piedras Campus
College of Humanities
Department of English
Undergraduate Program**

English 3285

The Puerto Rican Experience: Puerto Rican Writers in the US

Credit Hours: 45 hours / 3 Credits

Prerequisites: Level 5 on the English Humanities Placement Test OR English 3103-04, 3011-12 OR College Board Advanced score of 3 or higher. The course is designed to fulfill part of the second year requirement for non-English majors.

Course Description

A study of contemporary literature by Puerto Rican writers in English from the United States with special emphasis on the development of themes, techniques, and language.

Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. critically read and scrutinize the writings of diasporic Puerto Rican authors living in the United States who maintain cultural and familial ties to the island
2. analyze contemporary literary trends used by the writers that set their works apart from traditional literary modes/structures (mixing of genres, interlingual space, temporal/spatial fragmentation, free indirect discourse, among others)
3. examine and interrelate the influences and effects of migration, bilingualism, and biculturalism on the authors' works
4. appreciate the aesthetics and 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
5. develop an inquisitive and reflective attitude regarding the literature of diasporic Puerto Rican writers and their own relation to the thematic concerns presented in the texts
6. write coherent, analytical/theoretical responses to quizzes, exam essay questions and/or produce a research paper based on relevant course topics.

Course Outline

Weeks 1-3	9 hrs.
Introduction and contextual readings; translation exercise and/or readings on Spanglish; historical, cultural, and statistical background of the Puerto Rican diaspora (Course Packet)	
Weeks 4-5	6 hrs.
Examination of Puerto Rican migration to the US; voices and images of the diaspora; literary history of Puerto Rican writers in the US	
Weeks 6-9	12 hrs.

Memoirs and autobiographies; critical analyses of writing techniques and thematic concerns (migration, identity, race, gender, etc.) in the works of Bernardo Vega, Jesus Colón, Piri Thomas, and Esmeralda Santiago.

Weeks 10-12 9 hrs.
Fiction (essays and short stories); critical examination of narrative elements, thematic concerns, and aesthetic/stylistic approaches in the works of Aurora Levins Morales, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Rodney Morales, Abraham Rodriguez, among others.

Weeks 13-14 6 hrs.
Poetry and drama; critical analysis of poetic and dramatic works by Pedro Pietri, Tato Laviera, Sandra Maria Esteves, Mariposa, Victor Hernandez Cruz, and Miguel Piñero, among others.

Week 15 3 hrs.
Conclusive remarks on the literature of the Puerto Rican diaspora; review for final exam and/or review of instructions sheet for writing project.

Total credit hours 45 hrs.

Teaching Strategies

This course will include lectures (20%), group discussion (70%), and writing exercises (20%). It may also include films and/or recorded television documentaries to supplement and contextualize class readings.

Required Resources

Spacious classroom for group activities and English Department Screening Room.

Methods of Evaluation

Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Exam III	20%
Quizzes (add up to 100 points)	20%
Writing Assignment	10%
Class Grade*	10%

*Important evaluation factors that make up class grade – attendance, punctuality, participation, and responsibility – NO MAKE-UP WORK

Differentiated evaluation for students with special needs. *Evaluación diferenciada para estudiantes con necesidades especiales.*

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

Students with access to Vocational Rehabilitation Services should contact the professor at the beginning of the semester in order to plan any special arraignments and necessary equipment in accordance with the recommendations of the Office of Challenged Students' Affairs (OAPI) in the Office of the Dean of Students. In addition, any student with special needs or who require any type of assistance or special arrangements should contact the professor.

Los estudiantes que reciben servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con el/la profesora/a al inicio del semestre para planificar 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 especiales que requieren de algún tipo de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con el/ la profesor/a. (Ley 51)

Selected Bibliography

Required Texts

- Vega, Bernardo. *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega*. New York: Monthly Review P, 1984.
- Colon, Jesus. *The Way It Was and Other Writings*. Houston: Arte Publico P, 1993.
- Thomas, Piri. *Down These Mean Streets*. New York: Vintage Books, 1997.
- Laviera, Tato. *AmeRícan*. Houston: Arte Publico P, 1985.
- Piñero, Miguel. *Short Eyes*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1975.
- Santiago, Esmeralda. *When I Was Puerto Rican*. New York: Vintage, 1993.

- **Course Packet** – Available at Best Copy (Avenida Universidad)

Electronic Websites (used to complement and contextualize class reading and discussion):

- [http:// www.centropr.org](http://www.centropr.org)
- <http://www.puertorriquenoparalahistoria.com>
- http://www.iprac.aspira.org.iprac_literature.htm
- <http://www.puertoricanolife.com>
- <http://www.elboricua.com>
- <http://www.spanisharts.com/books/literature.htm>
- <http://www.lasculturas.com>

Secondary References

- Aranda, Elizabeth M. *Emotional Bridges to Puerto Rico: Migration, Return, Migration, and the Struggles of Incorporation*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.
- Alegría, Fernando and Jorge Ruffinelli, eds. *Paradise Lost or Gained: The Literature of Hispanic Exile*. Houston: Arte Público P, 1991.
- Algarín, Miguel and Lois Griffith, eds. *The Nuyorican Poets Café Theater Festival*. New York: Touchstone, 1997.
- Algarín, Miguel and Bob Holman, eds. *Aloud: Voices From the Nuyorican Poets Café*. New York: Henry Holt, 1994.
- Antush, John, ed. *Recent Puerto Rican Theater*. Hosuton: Arte Público P, 1991.
- Aparicio, Frances. *Latino Voices*. New York: Millbrook P, 1994.
- Augenbraum, Harold and Margarite Fernández Olmos, eds. *US Latino Literature: A Critical Guide for Students and Teachers*. New York: Greenwood P, 2000.
- Colón, Jesús. *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches*. New York: International Publishers, 1982.

- Christie, John S. *Latino Fiction and the Modernist Imagination: Literature of the Borderlands*. New York: Garland Publishers, 1998.
- Cordero-Guzmán, Héctor R., et al. *Migrations, Transnationalizations, and Race in Changing New York*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2001.
- Duany, Jorge. *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2002.
- Flores, Juan. *Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity*. Houston: Arte Público P, 1994.
- González, Juan. *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*. New York: Random House: 2000.
- González, Ray, ed. *Currents From the Dancing River: Contemporary Latino Fiction, Nonfiction, and Poetry*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994.
- Grosfoguel, Ramón. *Colonial Subjects: Puerto Ricans in a Global Context*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2003.
- Hernández Cruz, Victor. *Maraca: New and Selected Poems, 1965-2000*. Minneapolis: Coffee House P, 2001.
- Janer, Silkia. *Puerto Rican Nation-Building Literature*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2005.
- Kanellos, Nicolás. *The Anthology of Hispanic Literature of the US*. New York: Oxford UP, 2002.
- Matos, Félix V. and Pedro Juan Hernández, eds. *Pioneros: Puerto Ricans in New York City, 1896-1948 (Images of America)*. New York: Arcadia, 2001.
- Negrón-Mutaner, Frances. *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture*. New York: New York UP, 2004.
- Palumbo-Liu, David, ed. *The Ethnic Canon: Histories, Institutions, Interventions*. Minneapolis: U of Minneapolis P, 1995.
- Sánchez González, Lisa. *Boricua Literature: A Literary History of the Puerto Rican Diaspora*. New York: New York UP, 2001.
- Sedillo López, Antoinette, ed. *Latina Issues: Fragments of Historia (Herstory)*. New York: Garland, 1995.
- Trimmer, Joseph and Tilly Warnock, eds. *Understanding Others: Cultural and Cross-Cultural Studies and the Teaching of Literature*. Urbana: NCTE, 1992.