

**University of Puerto Rico
Recinto de Rio Piedras**

ENGL3285 – The Puerto Rican Experience in the United States

Professor: Maritza Stanchich

Times/Place: Mondays and Wednesdays 1 to 2:20 p.m. and 2:30-3:50 p.m.LPM307

Office hours: Wednesdays 5:30-6:30 p.m. or by appointment noon-1 p.m. Mondays or Wednesdays at Pedreira # 5, down the hall from English Department, basement Pedreira.

Email: direct pertinent questions only please, to maritzastanchich@yahoo.com

Prerequisites: One of the following: English 3103-3104, or English 3011-3012, or level 5 on English Department Placement test, or advanced placement in English.

Course description

Study of the literature by Puerto Ricans in the United States with emphasis on themes, techniques and language. 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, again in both locations, is the link between language and nation. Concerns to be covered include classism, racism, gender, sexuality, assimilation/acculturation, cultural hybridity, exile, bilingualism, biculturalism, and the formation of national literary canons. Literature will be analyzed with attention to its social-political-historical-cultural contexts, from the turn of the 20th century to the present.

Teaching strategies: Class meetings will consist of analysis and discussion of reading assignments, and conceptual understanding of related issues. Visual and audio materials will be incorporated as needed and available.

- 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 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 tipo de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con el/la profesor/a.

Methods of Evaluation:

- Class attendance and punctuality: 15 percent
- Class participation: 15 percent
- Freewrites and short writing assignments: 10 percent
- Midterm Exam: 25 percent
- Final paper: 25 percent
- Final Exam: 20 percent

- Note that three absences will drop your grade by half. If you have three excused absences, then one more unexcused absence will affect your grade similarly. Six absences will drop two grades. Nine absences or more will not pass the course.
- Please also note: For students with disabilities, there will be differentiated methods of evaluation. *Evaluación diferenciada a estudiantes con necesidades especiales.*

Papers: At least one short response paper (2 page minimum) will be assigned along with informal freewrites. A final research paper of a minimum of 5 pages will be due at the end

of the semester. The final paper will require analyzing and citing from at least one literary work and researching and citing from at least two critical sources. I will pass out written guidelines as the due date approaches.

Exams: A take-home midterm will consist of five short identifications and a choice of one essay. A take-home final exam will consist of ten short identification questions only.

Reading List and Course Outline

Required Texts (available in campus bookstore unless otherwise noted):

Bernardo Vega, *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega* (Spanish in campus bookstore; English in

Photocopied Reader at **Best Copy**)

Jesús Colón, *The Way it Was and Other Writings*

Miguel Piñero, *Short Eyes*

Piri Thomas, *Down These Mean Streets*

Judith Ortiz Cofer, *Silent Dancing*

Esmeralda Santiago, *When I Was Puerto Rican*

- A photocopied *Course Reader* will be available at **Best Copy** just off Avenida Universidad. The Reader includes newspaper articles, stories, poems and critical essays.

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Week 1: Wed., Jan. 19: Review syllabus and books.

- First assignment. Due by next class Mon., Jan. 24.

In a short and informal one- to two-page paper, describe your personal, political and/or intellectual interest in this course subject. Here are some ideas to consider. You can choose from among them, **OR** use your own idea/s.

- Have you ever lived or have family who have lived or are living in the United States?
- What are you most curious about learning about this community? Why?
- How do you define the term “Nuyorican” and how have you heard it used?
- Do you think you have preconceptions about Puerto Ricans in the United States and are your views open to change?
- What newsworthy issues have captured your attention regarding Puerto Ricans in the United States? These could be in arts and entertainment (such as Marc Anthony and JLo), sports (where would U.S. baseball be without Latinos???), politics (such as controversy over whether Puerto Ricans in the United States should be able to vote in status plebiscites here), or other developments (for ex/ more Puerto Ricans now live in the United States than here). Or any other issue that interests you.
- Do you think Puerto Rican literature from the United States should be considered Puerto Rican literature? U.S. American literature? Both? Neither?
- Much of the literature we will read uses at least some bilingual language. Some is written entirely in standard, formal English. Some uses Spanglish of the urban street. How do you think and/or feel about this? How do you feel about studying literature of the Puerto Rican diaspora in an English class?

Week 2: Mon., Jan. 24:

Class introductions in groups. Turn in short papers. Review overarching themes of course.

Wed., Jan. 26:

We will briefly discuss your short informal papers. Read and be ready to discuss from Reader:

1. *San Juan Star* article The Puerto Rican exodus AND
 2. 2000 Census report AND ... (continued)
 3. New York Times article “Falling Back” by Mireya Navarro AND
 4. *El Nuevo Día* article “Jóvenes puertorriqueños en Nueva York: Una Nueva Perspectiva...”
 5. AND *El Nuevo Día* article “Más boricuas en EE.UU. que en la Isla”
- I will also assign terms for class discussion from next week’s readings...

Week 3: Mon., Jan. 31:

from Reader, Edna Acosta-Belén, “*Adiós Borinquen querida:*” *The Puerto Rican Diaspora, Its History, and Contributions*”– Chapter 1, The Puerto Rican Migratory Experience
(Also in the Reader in Spanish: “Adios, Borinquen Querida”: La diáspora puertorriqueña, su historia y sus aportaciones – Capitulo 1, La Experiencia Migratoria... (about 40 pages)

Wed., Feb. 2:

continue and conclude discussion of Chapter 1 of “*Adiós Borinquen querida*”

Week 4: Mon, Feb. 7:

in Reader also from “*Adios, Borinquen Querida*” – Chapter 4, Resonating Voices and Images: Contributions to Literature and the Arts (or Voces e imágenes de la diáspora) (14 pages)
Also from Reader, essay by Aurora Levins Morales “Forked Tongues: On Not Speaking Spanish”
AND Gloria Anzaldúa’s “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” (3 pages)

Wed., Feb. 9:

From Reader, all selections by Luisa Capetillo, from *Amor y anarquía* (about 14 pages)

Week 5: Mon., Feb. 14:

Memoirs of Bernardo Vega (Parts 1 and 3)

Wed., Feb. 16:

Finish *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega* (Part 6)

Week 6: Mon., Feb. 21: Holiday – George Washington Day

Wed., Feb. 23:

Jesús Colón *The Way it Was and Other Writings*, Intro and essays beginning on pages 33, 37, 41, 53, 57, 61, 67, 69, 80, 86, 90, 93, 96, 98, 100 plus chronology on page 103.

- Freewrite on race due in class Monday

Week 7: Mon., Feb. 28: Finish discussing Colón, through Part 2

- Turn in Freewrite

Wed., March 2:

from Reader, poem by William Carlos Williams “The Red Wheelbarrow”
AND poem by Julia de Burgos “Farewell in Welfare Island”

- Begin reading Piri Thomas for next week

Week 8: Mon., March 7:

Lecture on the art and politics of the Nuyorican movement
Piri Thomas’ *Down These Mean Streets* (Chapters 1–12)

Wed., March 9:

Continue discussing Piri Thomas (Chapt. 13-22)

Week 9: Mon., March 14:

Continue discussing *Down These Mean Streets*

- Also in Reader article by Jorge Duany “Paradojas raciales de los puertorriqueños”

Wed., March 16:

Finish discussing *Down These Mean Streets* (Chapt. 23-35, Afterword)

- Hand out and review mid-term exam due after Semana Santa

Week 10: March 21-23: Semana Santa!!!

Week 11: Mon., March 28:

- Midterm exam due (please ask if you need a one-day extension) from Reader, Nuyorican poet Pedro Pietri’s “Puerto Rican Obituary” (See also by Pietri “En Mi Viejo San Juan in Spanglish”)

Wed., March 30:

from Reader, Miguel Piñero poems “The Book of Genesis According to Saint Miguelito” (See also “La Metadona Está Cabrón,” “No Hay Nada Nuevo en Nueva York”)

AND Sandra Maria Esteves “From the Commonwealth” and “A la Mujer Borrinqueña”

- Will hand out Freewrite on opinion on language usage

Week 12: Mon., April 4:

Discuss *Short Eyes*, through Act 1 (page 53)

- Freewrite on language issue due

Wed., April 6:

Finish discussing *Short Eyes* (complete play)

Week 13: Mon., April 11: Toward post-Nuyorican developments

from Reader, Tato Laviera’s “against muñoz pamphleteering,” “asimilao,” “nuyorican,” “AmeRícan”

- Will hand out Citation Freewrite on Laviera **OR** Rodriguez Jr. **OR** Rodney Morales

Wed., April 13:

from Reader, Abraham Rodriguez Jr. stories “The Boy Without a Flag” and “Babies”

Week 14: April 18: Holiday – José de Diego

Wed., April 20:

from Reader, Rodney Morales’ story “Ship of Dreams”

- turn in citation Freewrite

from Reader, Aurora Levins Morales “Ending Poem” AND Victor Hernández Cruz poem

- Will hand out Citation freewrite on Judith Ortiz Cofer

Week 15: Mon., April 25:

Judith Ortiz Cofer’s *Silent Dancing*

Wed., April 27: Finish discussing *Silent Dancing*

- turn in Citation Freewrite on Cofer

Week 16: Mon., May 2:

Begin discussing Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican*, also from Reader, Esmeralda Santiago essay "Island of Lost Causes"

- Hand out and review final paper guidelines

Wed. May 4:

continue *When I Was Puerto Rican*

Week 17: Mon., May 9: Finish discussing *When I Was Puerto Rican*

- Final paper topic due in writing (one paragraph)
- will hand out one final Freewrite

Wed., May 11:

- Final freewrite due
- I will return final paper topics with comments
- I will hand out and review final exam

from Reader, Martin Espada poems "Niggerlips," "The New Bathroom Policy at English High School," "The Florida Citrus Growers Association Responds to a Proposed Law..." AND Willie Perdomo poem "Nigger-Reecan Blues"

Thurs., May 12: Last Day of Class! University classes will be on Monday schedule

Last day of class, wrap up.

from Reader, Rosario Ferré poems "Language Duel" and "Language Current"

Read script of "Pepe" from *Mambo Mouth* by John Leguizamo

Monday, May 16:

Final exam and final paper due by 4 p.m. in my mailbox near English Department office.