

INGL 6029
Special Topics in Literature:
Literature of the Puerto Rican Diaspora

Professor: Maritza Stanchich

Time/Place: Tuesdays 4:30-7:20 p.m. (with a 10 minute half way) Pedreira 107

Office hours: Thursdays 2:30-4 p.m. or by appointment at Office # 5, down the hall from English Department in the basement of Pedreira

Email: work-related messages only please at maritzastanchich@yahoo.com

Credit Hours: 45 hours/3 credits

Prerequisites: Graduate Standing

Course Description: We will study literature by the Puerto Rican diaspora in the United States emphasizing the development of themes, techniques, language in various genres, including essay, short story, theater, novel and poetry, along with criticism. 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, race and nation. Concerns also include classism, racism, gender, sexuality, assimilation/acculturation, cultural hybridity, exile, bilingualism, biculturalism, and the formation and maintenance of national literary canons. Literature from the turn of the 20th Century to the presents will be analyzed in its socio-political-historical contexts. As such, we will gain deeper critical understanding about the Muñoz era, and why one-third of Puerto Rico's population left during that time. Historical periods and literary movements, such as the early diaspora, the Nuyorican school, and contemporary departures from Nuyoricanism will be identified. Broadly construed, this course is also relevant to Caribbean diaspora studies, U.S. ethnic literatures, U.S. Latina/o Studies, American (U.S.) Studies, and sociolinguistics.

Course Requirements:

Presentations: You will be responsible for one oral presentation on a select theme or angle focusing on an assigned text, which you will commit to in advance on a sign-up sheet this week or next. The presentations are open in terms of the angle you wish to explore, but should be both comprehensive and focused regarding that week's assignments. It should be a minimum of 20 minutes and a maximum of 45 minutes. A strong presentation includes: contextualizing the work within that week's critical readings, the course readings and discussions so far, as well as your own knowledge base; most importantly, a focus on a particular angle, theme, concern or section from that week's readings; some close reading of select citation to support your discussion and for further analysis. Any additional outside research or handouts are optional, but not required.

Weekly response papers: One-page, single-spaced (that is a minimum and maximum length) responses to the reading are due in class in every week (any exceptions will be announced), and to be exchanged with all of your classmates over e-mail the night before or in hard copies in class. A good response paper is highly focused and written succinctly. You

may use a citation from the text/s, but keep them short and to a minimum. Pick a very specific concern about the reading and explore it as thoroughly as possible. Avoid generalities, sweeping statements (“Throughout history...”), clichés, over personalizing, and book review modes (summarizing or broad quality assessments). If you have several good ideas, then pick one over the others. I will not accept response papers of more than one page (except by a few lines). If your response is two pages long, edit it down to one. This should help develop clearer, more straightforward writing. Succinct writing requires discipline.

Papers: A final research paper of a minimum of 15 pages and a maximum of 25 pages will be due at the end of the semester on any work from the Puerto Rican diaspora that we have NOT studied together. You may select another title by an author we have studied or pick and read an additional author. The paper will also require at least three sources of outside research, a minimum of two citations from the literary text being analyzed, and two citations from the outside research. I will pass out guidelines as the due date approaches.

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:

- Attendance and punctuality: 15 percent
- Class participation: 15 percent
- Response papers: 20 percent
- Oral presentation: 20 percent
- Final paper: 30 percent

- I apologize for having to state this on a graduate syllabus, but past experience warrants it. Three unexcused absences will result in a C grade. Four unexcused absences will warrant an automatic F. A maximum of three excused absences are allowed. If you have four legitimate, excused absences, then you should drop the class and retake it later. If you have two excused absences, then one more unexcused absence will affect your grade similarly.
- I doubly apologize for stating this on a graduate syllabus, but internet plagiarism has become a rampant problem in my undergraduate classes. **INTERNET PLAGIARISM WILL EARN A FAILING GRADE FOR THE COURSE AND CAN RESULT IN SUSPENSION FROM THE ENTIRE UPR SYSTEM.** Please remember that if you copy anything from the internet, you need to cite it properly.
- Late assignments: I will accept weekly written responses no more than two days after the due date (by 3 p.m. Thursdays). I will not accept late assignments more than one week late, nor will I ever accept all assignments at the end of the semester. I am also open to extending final paper deadlines up to two days if needed...just ask!
- My grading system for weekly responses is to use \checkmark , $\checkmark+$ or $\checkmark-$, according to your

level of English and analytical proficiency. Works that receive a √- may be resubmitted in two days.

- Please note: For students with disabilities, there will be differentiated methods of evaluation. *Evaluación diferenciada a estudiantes con necesidades especiales.*

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

Required Texts:

A photocopied Reader will be available at Best Copy (off Avenida Universidad, with a yellow awning) starting Friday. The following books are available at La Tertulia bookstore in Río Piedras near the Burger King. If you decide to purchase books online, I recommend <Powells.com>.

1. *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega* by Bernardo Vega (in English translation)
(isbn: 0-85345-656-9) Monthly Review Press
2. *A Nation of Women: An Early Feminist Speaks Out* by Luisa Capetillo (English trans.)
(isbn: 1-55885-427-4) Arté Público Press
3. *The Way it Was and Other Writings* by Jesús Colón
(isbn: 1-55885-057-0) Arté Público Press
4. *Down These Mean Streets* by Piri Thomas
(isbn: 0-679-78142-0) Vintage Books
5. *Puerto Rican Obituary/Obituario puertorriqueño* by Pedro Pietri (bilingual edition, traducción Alfredo Matilla Rivas) Isla Negra Editores
6. *Short Eyes* by Miguel Piñero
(isbn: 0-374-521447-6) Hill and Wang, 1975
7. *Rebellion is the Circle of a Lover's Hands* by Martín Espada
(isbn: 0-915306-95-6) Curbstone Press, 1990
8. *The Line of the Sun* by Judith Ortiz Cofer
(isbn: 0820311065) University of Georgia Press
9. *The Boy Without a Flag* by Abraham Rodriguez Jr.
(isbn: 0-915943-74-3) Milkweed Editions
10. *Medicine Stories: History, Culture and the Politics of Integrity* by Aurora Levins Morales
(isbn: 0896085813) South End Press
11. *When I was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago
(isbn: 0-679-75676-0) Vintage Books
12. *Where a Nickel Costs a Dime* by Willie Perdomo
(isbn: 0393313832) W.W. Norton, 1996

Optional:

13. *Hostos Review/Revista Hostosiana: Open Mic/Micrófono Abierto, Nuevas Literaturas Puerto/Neorriqueñas, New Puerto/Nuyorican Literatures*
(isbn: 1547-4577) Issue 2, 2005 Latin American Writers Institute, 2004
14. *“Adiós, Borinquen querida”*: *The Puerto Rican Diaspora, Its History, and Contributions*, ed. Edna Acosta-Belén et al. (assigned chapters will be in Reader)
(isbn: 0-615-11204-8) Bilingual Review Press

INGL 6029: Class Schedule

- Week 1:** Jan. 23 Introduction to course and class introductions
- Week 2:** Jan. 30 Bernardo Vega's *The Memoirs of Bernardo Vega*, plus criticism
- Week 3:** Feb. 6 Jesús Colón's *The Way it Was and Other Writings*, plus criticism
- Week 4:** Feb. 13 Luisa Capetillo's *My Opinion* (excerpts), plus criticism
- Week 5:** Feb. 20 Piri Thomas' *Down These Mean Streets* and in Reader excerpt from Nicholasa Mohr's *Nilda*, plus criticism
- Week 6:** Feb. 27 Pedro Pietri's *Puerto Rican Obituary*, plus criticism
• screen *Every Child is Born a Poet*, and footage of The Young Lords
- Week 7:** March 6 Miguel Piñero's *Short Eyes* and *La Bodega Sold Dreams*, plus criticism, • may screen clips from *Piñero* and/or *Short Eyes*
- Week 8:** March 13 Select poems in Reader by Sandra María Esteves, Tato Laviera, Miguel Algarin and others from *Nuyorican Poetry: Words and Feelings* anthology, plus Laviera interview
- Week 9:** March 20 Select poems by Martín Espada, plus essay on Espada
Select poems by Victor Hernández Cruz, plus interview
- Week 10:** March 27 Willie Perdomo's *Where a Nickel Costs a Dime*, plus select poems by Mariposa and other contemporary poets from *Hostos Review* anthology (plus select poems by Tony Medina, Urayoan Noel, Gloria Vando), plus newspaper articles at end of Reader
• Will hand out final paper guidelines and list of authors and works
- Week 11:** April 3 Semana Santa! (Read ahead, especially Judith Ortiz Cofer's novel)
- Week 12:** April 10 Abraham Rodriguez Jr. select stories from *The Boy Without a Flag*
Rodney Morales' "Ship of Dreams" from *Speed of Darkness*, select story by Edgardo Vega and select poems by William Carlos Williams and Julio de Burgos, plus criticism
• Final paper topics due on independent reading
- Week 13:** April 17 Judith Ortiz Cofer' *In the Line of the Sun*, plus a select poems and essays plus interview and criticism
- Week 14:** April 24 Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican*, plus criticism
• Final paper introductions and bibliographies due
- Week 15:** May 1 Aurora Levins Morales *Medicine Stories*, plus poem and essay
- Week 16:** May 8 Film screening... documentary "La operación" or "Manos a la obra" or "Brincando el charco" or "West Side Story" or "Yo Soy Boricua, Pa'que Tu Lo Sepas" (or some combination)
• Final papers due next Tuesday, May 15, by 4 p.m. in my mailbox