

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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Rowell 110
Time: TTh 9:30-10:45
Office Hours: TTh 11:15-12:45

Anthropology 169: Latinos/as in the United States

Course URL: <http://www.uvm.edu/~lvivanco/latinos.html>

Course Description

Latinos/as represent the fastest-growing “ethnic minority” in the United States, and it is regularly projected in the media that soon they will be the largest. Popular culture, consumer capitalism, and political debates have increasingly trained their attention on Latino/a peoples, indicating that Latinos/as are challenging taken-for-granted realities in this country – including the central American myth of the “melting pot” – and are themselves being transformed by their relationships and experiences here. But is it true, and what does it mean, that we are experiencing a “Hispanicization of the United States, [and] an Angloization of Hispanics,” as scholar Ilan Stavans claims? What cultural traits do Latino/as have in common and difference with other Americans, and how do they relate to non-Latino populations? How do different Latin American nationalities and social classes and their U.S.-born kin relate to each other in the U.S. context? How do Latinos/as relate to the politics of race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism? This course seeks to answer such questions, in the process introducing you to anthropological approaches to socio-cultural identities and hybridities.

In its breadth and scope, this course serves two purposes. First, from a disciplinary perspective, it introduces you to the anthropological study of contemporary multicultural societies and the transnational political-economic and cultural linkages that contribute to their ongoing transformations. It does this through an examination of the character of corporate and individual identity formation, the maintenance of identity under conditions of cultural interaction and hybridity, and the processes by which identity changes. Second, from the perspectives of area and ethnic studies, this course introduces you to the major Latino peoples, their immigration, migration and settlement patterns, concepts of identity, socioeconomic and labor conditions, politics and activism, experiences of discrimination and colonialism, political ecology, religion, gender relations and sexualities, arts, bilingualism, and cross-border realities.

While we will examine particular national, ethnic, and racial communities, *this course is not about these groups as the main “objects of study.”* Rather, we will explore course issues from the perspective that “Latino/a” represent political and cultural categories in *processes of invention, construction, and reconstitution* in the contemporary U.S. nation-state and the Americas more generally. Consequently this course is about encounters, relationships, dislocations, and conflicts between and within communities (national, ethnic and racial) and the hybrid and shifting socio-cultural identities and

political-economic relationships that result. These encounters and relationships are not limited to the geographical territory of the United States: indeed, this course will argue that “Latino/a” as American identities cannot be adequately understood without taking into account broad regional and cross-border political-economies and perspectives.

The following texts are available for purchase at the University Store:

Required Books:

1. Darder and Torres (1998) *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy & Society*. Blackwell
2. Portes and Stepick (1993) *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami*. University of California Press.
3. Vélez-Ibáñez (1996) *Border Visions: Mexican Cultures of the Southwest United States*. University of Arizona Press.
4. Boyle (1995) *The Tortilla Curtain*. Penguin.

Recommended Book (You are not required to purchase this book, but you may wish to read/own this for further background)

1. Suro (1998) *Strangers Among Us: How Latino Immigration is Transforming America*. Vintage.

Course Format and Requirements

This course will include lectures, discussions, guest lectures, small group activities, and films. **Attendance is mandatory at all course activities, and the only excused absences are for family or health emergencies (with proof).** In order to get the most out of this course, it is necessary that you arrive at class prepared - this means having done the assigned readings *before* the class session for which they are assigned.

You will be graded on the following:

EXERCISE	% OF GRADE
Class Attendance and Participation	10
Reading Quizzes	25
Course Journal	25
Debate	10
Final Exam	30

You should keep a **course and film journal** that will be turned in and graded **three times** during the semester (2/13, 3/27, and 4/24), amounting to a total of 25% of your grade. In your logbook you should do the following: *describe your reactions to course materials, readings, lectures, debates and/or discussions; describe and register your reactions to current events in newspapers, television programs,*

magazine articles and advertisements, etc. that relate to Latinos (if possible, clip them out and attach them to your logbook); describe internet resources on Latinos that you have discovered (include web address and date); describe a Latino event you attended during the semester, in Burlington or elsewhere, and how it relates to course materials (possibilities include attending monthly Latino dance parties in Burlington, Spanish mass at St. Michael's College and the social hour afterward, art openings, public lecture, etc.). Furthermore, you should write a minimum of two pages reaction to each of the films we watch during the semester. Except for this minimum requirement on the films, there is no set amount of pages to write for each entry, and I will be looking for the quality and thoughtfulness of your engagement with materials, not necessarily quantity. However, you should plan on writing something **at least twice a week** in your journal. Failure to cover a variety of resources and sources in your journals will result in a lower grade. Journals should be typewritten.

There will be four in-class debates related to NAFTA, immigration, language, and immigrants' rights. I will assign each of you to a debate topic during the first weeks of class. You will work in a small group to come up with a position and then present that position in class.

There will be *brief* reading quizzes at the beginning of class **every Tuesday**, the total of which constitute 25% of your final grade. *You cannot make up any of these quizzes if you miss a class, unless you have arranged it with me ahead of time because of an expected absence.*

There will be a final exam for this course, during our assigned final exam day and time, to be announced. The exam will combine key word definitions, short answers, and essay questions.

A note on writing papers:

In these days of computer-mediated writing, there are no excuses for the two following problems: 1) late papers due to "computer crashes," and 2) poor spelling and grammar. Regarding the former, claiming a "computer crash" is the basically the same as telling me that your dog ate your homework. **This is not a valid excuse** if you are backing up your materials on diskettes. If indeed this has happened, I expect you to provide a note from a computer specialist explaining the problem; otherwise your late paper will be evaluated in terms of my late paper policy. Regarding the latter problem, use your spellcheck option - **I will mark you down for poor spelling and grammar.**

My policy on late papers and journals is that I do not accept them, although I will make an exception if you are willing to receive a lower grade. **Written work is due in class. Anything not turned in during class is late, and for every 24 hour period your paper or journal is late, you drop a full grade from the grade I feel your paper would receive if it were not late.** For example, if your 'A' paper is not turned in at class, you will receive a 'B' if it is turned in within the next 24 hours. The next day, your grade drops to a 'C.' The day after that, it is a 'D.' If you turn in a paper late and expect to receive a non-reduced grade, you must provide evidence of an emergency.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

READINGS WITH AN “(R)” NEXT TO THEM WILL BE ON RESERVE. Reserve articles are available online through Bailey-Howe’s Voyager. A hard copy of every reserve reading will always be available in the Anthropology Department office – 509 Williams Hall, open 8:00am-4:30pm. The reading should be done *before* the class date under which they are listed.

**Part I: Latino/a Cultures and Identities in the Contemporary Americas:
A Conceptual Map**

Course Introduction

Tues. 1/14: Introduction to the course, instructor’s expectations, requirements, etc.

No reading

Thurs. 1/16: Remapping the Americas and the Invention of the “Latino/a”

Reading: 1. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 3-42.

(R) 2. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, A. Excerpt from ‘The Account.’

Tues. 1/21: Putting Culture to the Test: What is Cultural about Latinos?

Reading: 1. Klor de Alva, J.J. “Telling Hispanics Apart: Latino Sociocultural Diversity.”

(R) In *The Hispanic Experience in the United States*. Acosta-Belén and Sjoström, eds., pp. 107-36.

2. Rosaldo, R. “Border Crossings.” In *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of*

(R) *Social Analysis*, pp. 196-217.

Latinos and Ethnic/Racial Labels

Thurs. 1/23: Latinos, Race, and Identity

Film: “Mirrors of the Heart”

Reading: 1. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 143-62.

2. Shorris, E. “Racism and Racismo.” In *Latinos: A Biography of the People*,

(R) pp. 146-71.

Tues. 1/28: Social Relations of Difference Beyond La Raza, Cultural Nationalism and the “Culture of Poverty.”

Reading: 1. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 63-100.

2. Lewis, O. “The Culture of Poverty.” In *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in*

(R) *the Culture of Poverty – San Juan and New York*, pp. xlii-lv.

Thurs. 1/30: Identities in Movement, Exile, and Across Borders: Rethinking Ethnicity and Multiculturalism through Latin American lenses

Reading: 1. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 43-62.

(R) 2. Burciaga, “Return to the Motherland.” In *Drink Cultura*, pp. 45-55.

Part II: Borderlands as Cultural Spaces, Places, Experiences, and Theory

Borderlands and Cultural (Dis)Locations

Tues. 2/4: Borderlands as Spaces of Cultural Production

- Reading: 1. *Border Visions*, Introduction, pp. 3-11.
 2. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 129-42.
 3. Gomez-Peña, G. "Documented/Undocumented." In *Warrior for*
 (R) *Gringostroika*

Thurs. 2/6: Cultural Histories of the Greater Southwest

Film: "Mundo Milagroso"

- Reading: 1. *Border Visions*, Chapters 1-2 (Part One), pp. 13-87.

Tues. 2/11: The Cultural Politics of Survival and Revival

- Reading: 1. *Border Visions*, Chapter 3, pp. 89-136.

Thurs. 2/13: The "Distribution of Sadness"

In-class debate: "Resolved: NAFTA is good for the U.S.-Mexico border"

- Reading: 1. *Border Visions*, Chapters 4-5, pp. 137-206.

Course Journal 1st installment due in class Thurs. 2/13

Latinos, Political Ecology and Environmental(ist) Racism

Tues. 2/18: Latino Cultures, Ecology, and Environmentalism

Film: "Agueda Martinez: Our People, Our Country"

- Reading: 1. Peña, D. "Los Animalitos: Culture, Ecology, and the Politics of Place in the
 (R) Upper Rio Grande." In *Chicano Culture, Ecology, Politics: Subversive Kin*, pp. 25-57.

Thurs. 2/20: Latinos and the Quest for Environmental Justice

Guest: Hector Saez

- Reading: (R) 1. Bullard, R. "The Threat of Environmental Racism" *NR&E* Winter 1993.
 2. EPICA Task Force, "U.S. Industrialization and its Environmental Impact."
 (R) In *Puerto Rico: A People Challenging Colonialism*, pp. 55-8.

Part III: Latino Lives Invisible, Unequal, and "On-the-Hyphen"

American Dreams and Dystopias

Tues. 2/25: Immigration as Lived Experience

- Reading: 1. *The Tortilla Curtain*, Part 1, pp. 3-142.
 2. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 243-56.
 (R) 3. Pietri, P. "Puerto Rican Obituary."

Thurs. 2/27: Circuits of Migration

Film: "Oaxacalifornia"

Reading: 1. Quinones, S. (2001) "Zeus and the Oaxaca Hoops." In *True Tales from*

(R) *Another Mexico*, U. New Mexico Press, pp. 117-35.

2. Grey and Woodrick (2002) "Unofficial Sister Cities: Meatpacking Labor

(R) Migration between Villachuato, Mexico and Marshalltown, Iowa."

Human Organization 61(4): 364-76.

Tues. 3/4: Town Meeting Day Recess (no class)

Thurs. 3/6: Latin American Immigration Politics

In-class debate: "Resolved: Immigration from Latin America should be curbed."

Reading: 1. *The Tortilla Curtain*, Parts 2-3, pp. 145-355.

Latino/a Gender Relations and Sexualities

Tues. 3/11: (Re)Defining Gender Relations and Women's Roles

Film: "Home is Struggle: Historias Paralelas"

Reading: 1. Repack, T. "New Roles in a New Landscape." In *Challenging Fronteras:*

(R) *Structuring Latina and Latino Lives in the U.S.*, pp. 247-57.

2. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 193-205.

Thurs. 3/13: On Manhood and Machismo

Reading: 1. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 211-39.

2. Anaya, R. "'I'm the King:' The Macho Image." In *Muy Macho: Latino Men*

(R) *Confront their Manhood*. pp. 57-73.

Tues. 3/18-Thurs. 3/20: Spring Break (no class)

Latino/a Popular Cultures

Tues. 3/25: Media(ting) Latinos/as

Films: "Latino Hollywood" and "Mambo Mouth"

Reading: 1. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 129-42.

2. Dávila, Arlene (2002) "Talking Back: Spanish Media and U.S. Latinidad." In

(R) *Latino/a Popular Culture*, Habel-Pallan and Romero, eds., pp. 25-37.

Thurs. 3/27: The Invention of "Musica Latina"

Reading: 1. Rivera, Raquel (2002) "Hip Hop and New York Puerto Ricans." In

(R) *Latino/a Popular Culture*, Habel-Pallan and Romero, eds., pp. 127-43.

Course Journal 2nd installment due in class Thurs. 3/27

The Cultural Politics of Language and Bilingualism

Tues. 4/1: Mapping Spanish, Spanglish, and Bilingualism

Reading: 1. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 101-25.

(Recommended) 2. Ramirez, "Spanish in the United States." In *The Hispanic Experience in the United States*. Acosta-Belén and Sjostrom, eds., pp. 187-205.

Thurs. 4/3: Politicizing Language

In-class debate: "Resolved: English should be the official language of the United States."

Reading: 1. Castro, M. "The Politics of Language in Miami" In *Challenging Fronteras*:

(R) *Structuring Latina and Latino Lives in the U.S.*, pp. 280-95.

2. Anzaldúa, G. "How to Tame a Wild Tongue." In *Borderlands/La Frontera*:

(R) *The New Mestiza*, pp. 53-64.

Part IV: The "Latino Metropolis" as National and Transnational Crossroads

Latinos in Urban Contexts

Tues. 4/8: Latinos in Urban Contexts, Part 1

Film: "Retratos/Portraits"

Reading: 1. *City on the Edge*, pp. xi-xiv, 1-37.

2. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 257-70.

Thurs. 4/10: Latinos in Urban Contexts, Part 2

Reading: 1. *City on the Edge*, pp. 38-107.

Tues. 4/15: The Transformation of Southern Florida

Reading: 1. *City on the Edge*, pp. 123-75.

Thurs. 4/17: Latinos and Interracial Conflict

Reading: 1. *City on the Edge*, pp. 176-227.

2. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 180-9.

Conclusion: "America" and the Politics of the Future

Tues. 4/22: Latinos and Anti-Immigrant Legislation

In-class debate: "Resolved: Undocumented aliens should not receive social service benefits."

Reading: 1. Johnson, K. "Immigration, Popular Democracy, and California's Proposition

(R) 187." In *The Latino/a Condition: A Critical Reader*, pp. 110-7.

2. Garcia, R. "The Racial Politics of Proposition 187." *The Latino/a Condition*:

(R) *A Critical Reader*, pp. 118-24.

3. Martinez, R. "Prop. 187: Birth of a Movement?" In In Byrd, ed. *The Late*

(R) *Great Mexican Border: Reports from a Disappearing Line*, pp. 146-55.

Thurs. 4/24: Cultural Citizenship and Pan-Latinidad

Reading: 1. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 271-80.

2. Rosaldo, R. "Cultural Citizenship, Inequality and Multiculturalism." In Flores (R) and Benmayor, *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Reclaiming Identity, Space and Rights*, pp. 27-38.

Course Journal 3rd installment due in class Thurs. 4/24

Tues. 4/29: Conclusion: Revisiting Latino as Ethnic Minority

Reading: 1. *Latino Studies Reader*, pp. 281-93.

2. *Border Visions*, pp. 265-73.

Final Exam – TBA (will take place during day and time assigned by UVM Registrar)