

**SUNY-Institute of Technology
Spring Semester 2003**

Latinos in U.S. History
HIS 308-01 TTh 10:00-11:50am Donovan 1109

Professor: Dr. Kristina A. Boylan

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Office hours: MW 2:00-3:45pm, TTh 9:00-9:45am, and by appointment

Course overview:

This course examines the historical contributions of the diverse peoples of Iberian descent (Spanish, Portuguese, Latin American and Caribbean) who formed a part of the American population well before the foundation of the USA and who have continued to influence local, regional, and national politics and society. Themes examined in this course will include: early settlement of the Americas; colonial regimes; shifting national boundaries and border “control”; domestic and foreign policy impacts (USA and other countries); migration, population growth, and changes in demographics and definitions; race, gender, class, and other differentiations; language and the arts; and contemporary issues and activism.

Assigned Readings:

Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America* (NY: Viking, 2000).

Roberto Suro, *Strangers Among Us: Latino Lives in a Changing America* (NY: Vintage Books, 1999).

Some additional readings may be distributed in class and/or put on reserve in the library.

All readings are available at the campus bookstore. Copies of all the readings are also available on two-hour reserve at the library.

Grading:

Your grade in this course is based on the following (see below for complete descriptions):

1. 10% = Attendance and participation
2. 15% = First short paper (**due Tues. Jan. 28**)
3. 15% = Film review (due either **Thurs., Feb. 13, Thurs. Mar. 6, or Tues. Apr. 1**)
4. 15% = Novel/memoir review (**topic due Tues. Mar 4; paper due Tues. Apr. 8**)
5. 30% = Article collection and review: (**topic due Tues. Feb. 4**)
15% written paper (**due Apr. 22**) and 15% presentation (**Apr. 22 or Apr. 24**)
6. 15% = In-class Final (**week of May 5, date TBA**)

Please see my website for explanations of what my standards are for assignments and how I calculate grades.

Course Requirements and Policies:

Attendance policy and class participation (10%):

Faithful attendance in the class is important. We have a lot to cover! An attendance roster will be circulated at each class meeting, and your signature on it is the official record for having attended each class. ***It is your responsibility to assign the attendance roster at each class meeting.*** Absences for religious observances will be excused as will be those for *genuine* medical reasons or family/ personal emergencies. You must provide written documentation for medical absences, and must describe in writing (e-mail or note) any family/personal emergencies. Absences for university appointments on or off campus will not be excused.

However, we are adults, things happen, and they have their reasons. I will allow one unexcused absence (i.e., I receive no notification or written explanation thereof) per student per term, but then will begin counting, reducing your attendance grade, which starts out at A+, by half a letter grade for each unexcused absence (e.g. if you have 3 unexcused absences, expect a A-; six unexcused absences, a B-, etc.). Lateness and early departures are also a problem, as they prove disruptive for your peers and instructor during discussions and activities and complicate record-keeping. If frequent, significant departure from compliance with class times is observed, a similar penalty will be applied to your grade.

Active participation in class discussions and preparation for them is required of all students. You are expected to come to each class having done the readings and having thought carefully about them. Your goal should not be to talk as much as possible or regurgitate facts easily figured out from the reading. Rather, you should aim to ask critical questions regarding the readings and other materials and to bring your insights to the attention of your peers and your instructor. Remember, though this material may be new to you, you also bring a new background, point of view, and intellect to it – so share your

thoughts!

It will help you to bring your books, copies of the readings for the day, and/or really good notes to class. Additional structured discussions or group activities, film clips, slides, music, and literature may be used from time to time in class, and additional material (articles, websites) may be recommended to you for further reading – it is your responsibility to inquire regarding any missed content, should you miss a class.

A Note on Writing Assignments in General:

Each writing assignment is listed with a due date in the Course Schedule. These due dates are real; firm due dates enable you – and me – to plan. Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the days listed, and any paper handed in after that point will be counted as late. Without a *genuine* excuse (preferably approved ahead of time by me), late assignments will be penalized half a letter grade (e.g. from an A to A-, B- to a C+) for each class session they are overdue. Any assignment handed in more than 12 classes late (when you would receive an F for an otherwise A+ paper) will receive no higher grade than a 64, and may be accorded less points according to its quality.

Good, documented writing is what being a scholar is all about. For all writing assignments prepared outside of class you **MUST** document all information that is not your original thought, interpretation, analysis, or synthesis. This includes both direct quotes (phrases or sentences taken from another source, surrounded by quotation marks: “blah blah blah”) and paraphrases (rewordings and summaries of ideas or analyses that are not yours).

You may choose the system of citation you would like to use (University of Chicago, Modern Language Association, American Psychological Association, etc.) as long as you are **CONSISTENT** and **THOROUGH**. All papers should utilize footnotes, endnotes, or citations within the text, and should include a works cited list (a.k.a. bibliography) at the end. Any paper handed in without some form of citations and works cited list will receive no higher grade than a C, regardless of the quality of the writing.

Plagiarism—passing off someone else's work as your own—is not just a violation of academic integrity or basic ethics—it *is a crime*. The *SUNY-IT Student Handbook*, available in print and online, states clearly that the instructor may assess a reasonable penalty for plagiarism (22 and ff.). Penalties can include failure for the assignment, the permanent placement of a letter describing the incident in your file, or even failure for the course (students may challenge these decisions before the Academic Conduct Board). To be clear, my procedure for dealing with plagiarism is as follows:

1. The first assignment found to contain significant amounts of copied material (more than the occasional missed quotation mark or forgotten footnote) will receive an F grade, equaling 0% in the final tally.
2. Then, I will give the writer an alternate (stricter) assignment that **MUST** be handed in one week from the date of the return of the paper. The highest grade that paper can receive will be a B- (=80), but can be lower according to its quality. If the alternate assignment is not handed in by that date, or if it does not meet adequate standards for the class (missing citations, poor writing), the F=0 grade will remain. No late alternate assignments will be accepted.
3. The next incident of plagiarism by the same student will result in an F=0 grade for the assignment with no alternate assignment option, and a letter describing the incident will be placed in the student's folder.
4. If any other incidence of plagiarism should follow these first two actions, the student will receive an F for the course, and an additional letter of explanation will be placed in the student's file.

But please do not despair—proper documentation is not hard to do, and strengthens your writing! Guides for different systems can be found in the SUNY-IT library at the reference desk, and are also available online at the Learning Center's website: <http://www.sunyit.edu/academics/offices/lc/>. We'll discuss documentation issues in class, too. I encourage you to seek advice from the campus librarians or from the Learning Center (Donovan G155, x7310) as you write your papers. Of course, I also encourage you to contact me—by e-mail or telephone call (I'll try to respond by the next business day at the latest), or come by my office—whenever you have questions about your sources or would like to show me a draft of some writing.

For that matter, the Learning Center offers workshops on plagiarism several times throughout the semester; I will announce the dates in class. I encourage you to attend one if you are not familiar with humanities-style writing or documentation. In fact, I will give **5% extra credit** (an A grade x .05 added to your total grade for the course) if you demonstrate that you have attended one of these workshops.

Should you need additional assistance or support, I also encourage you to utilize the facilities at the campus counseling center (Campus Center 208, x7160, <http://www.sunyit.edu/saf/offices/counseling>). The counselors there can offer advice on dealing with the pressure of long-term and voluminous assignments along with other classes, jobs, and/or family; suspected learning disabilities, how to work with them, and how to notify your instructors about them while maintaining confidentiality; and other issues that might interfere with your studies. Official communications from the director, Mary Brown-DePass, have official weight for faculty, including me.

First Short Paper (15%):

The first few readings may seem like a lot, but they will form the basis for your first paper. Your assignment is to write a short essay comparing what you have read in Gonzalez and Suro so far with what you have learned before (in school or independently) about colonial and 19th century American History. You may select one issue that you find strong or contentious, or several--but however you choose to organize it, address the following questions: how does the information compare? Are there many similarities or many differences? Is this how you expected the course to begin? Why/why not? Bringing in information from outside sources (books, articles, films, web, etc) is strongly encouraged and will be rewarded--and cite all your sources! Length: 600-900 words/2-3 double spaced pages.

Film Review (15%):

We will watch 3 feature films in this class. You must write a scholarly review of one of them. This is more than a summary of the main events of the film (remember, I've seen it already). You should use outside sources, starting with the class readings, to analyze the film. In your review, address the following issues: were facts or events combined or dispensed with to make for a better story? Is the movie strongly partisan? And how much does that matter for the history lesson it is trying to impart? Length: 600-900 words/2-3 double-spaced pages.

The due date for this paper is, in one sense, up to you. The review of each movie will be due one week after we watch the movie in class (**Feb. 13, Mar. 6, or Apr. 1**). I will issue a warning to all members of the class who have not taken the opportunity to complete either of the first two assignments, in order that they prepare to complete the third. I will also accept an additional review for extra credit (**its grade * 10% added to your final grade**), by the third due date; however, one review MUST have been submitted in accordance with a due date in order to receive extra credit for a second.

Novel or Memoir Review (15%):

The study of Latinos living in what is now U.S. territory and areas substantially influenced by U.S. policy is greatly enriched by a wealth of creative work. For this assignment, choose one novel (you may also use a collection of short stories as long as the theme of the stories is fairly cohesive, e.g. Sandra Cisneros, *Woman Hollering Creek*, Junot Diaz, *Drown*) or autobiographical memoir (e.g. Piri Thomas, *Down These Mean Streets*, Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory*) by a Latino author. Write a scholarly review of the book, fitting the book into its broader context, i.e. the period and/or benchmark events in U.S. history occurring at the time of the events of the book, the ethnic population(s) it examines, the status of the group(s) identified in the book (e.g. women/farmers/urban unemployed youth), and so on. Address these questions: how could you use this book to teach Latino history? In what ways do you find it useful (or not)? Use outside sources (book reviews, articles, web sites, etc.) to support your analyses and arguments. Length: 1200-1800 words/4-6 double-spaced pages.

There are a surprising number of novels by Latino authors in the SUNY-IT library; the Utica Public Library has a fairly good collection as well. A few other authors you might like to look at for ideas are: Denise Chavez, Ana Castillo, Americo Paredes (Mexico/Chicana), Julia Alvarez (Dominican Republic), Oscar Hijuelos (Cuba/NY), and Isabel Allende (Chile/California)--but this list is by no means exclusive! I encourage you to choose a novel that focuses on a population or issue that you would like to learn more about--please consult with me if you would like help in deciding on a book. You must submit a one-paragraph summary identifying the book that you want to review, plus what you believe will be the focus of your review (this may change as you read it; I just want to see that you have an idea of where you are going) on **Tuesday, March 4**.

Again, your review should be more than a summary of the main events of the book. Be sure to analyze issues and representations in the book, as described above. I have posted several film and book reviews that I have written on my website; it may help for you to reference these, or others available in journals. The book review is due **Tuesday, April 8**.

Article Collection (30%): Paper (15%) and In-class presentation (15%):

This assignment will provide you with the opportunity to follow one issue regarding Latinos in the contemporary news, and to compare what you have learned from Gonzalez, Suro, and the other class readings and discussions to the most up-to-date information. Spend the first few weeks of the semester identifying a topic that interests you and that seems to pop up in the media a lot. You must submit a written (about 1 paragraph) topic proposal by **Feb. 4**; I will approve it and make recommendations to you by the next class.

From the 4th week of the semester through the 12th (Feb. 11-Apr. 17), you are expected to COLLECT AT LEAST TWO (2) ARTICLES PER WEEK ON YOUR TOPIC from reputable print or online periodicals. I recommend taking advantage of the free subscriptions to the *New York Times* (www.nytimes.com), the *Washington Post* (www.washingtonpost.com), and the *Los Angeles Times* (www.latimes.com); other papers you could use include the *Christian Science Monitor* (www.csmonitor.com) and the *Miami Herald* (www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/). Some full-length articles, e.g. National Public Radio reporter Claudio Sanchez's 6-part series on bilingual education, are also available online

(www.npr.org). Contemporary articles are also available through Infotrac and other online databases available through the SUNY-IT library homepage.

As you collect the articles, PRINT OR MAKE COPIES OF THEM, WRITE BRIEF (1 paragraph) SUMMARIES OF THEM AS YOU GO, and COLLECT THEM IN A BINDER OR SCRAPBOOK. If you really can't find anything on your topic written that week, do a little historical research, and submit a copy of the article (or the abstract if it is very long) and a written summary. Whatever you find, you should have at least 16 articles in your scrapbook by the end of the 12th week.

Finally, you will WRITE AN ESSAY (length: 1200-1800 words/4-6 double-spaced pages) analyzing the topic you have researched and drawing your own conclusions, comparing the present-day events to what you have learned from Gonzalez, Suro, other class readings, and any other sources you choose to include. This essay is due on **Tuesday, April 22**.

You will also give a 10-15 MINUTE, IN-CLASS PRESENTATION, based on your research and essay, on either **April 22** or **April 24**. I will circulate a sign-up sheet a week before the presentations (**Apr. 17**) so that you know when yours will be. If you would like to use any audio-visual equipment, please let me know when you sign up (I need at least 2 business days to order equipment, e.g. a VHS player, a laptop and LCD projector, a CD player, etc., for the room).

Final Exam (15%):

The final will be an in-class exam, with a map quiz, short identifications or definitions (1-3 sentences) and short essays on issues raised in the readings. I will distribute a study guide one week prior to the exam so that you can prepare your ideas. No item that was not given on the study guide will be given as a test question.

Course Schedule:

Week 1:

Tues. Jan 21 – Introductions and syllabus review

Thurs. Jan. 23 – Reading: Suro, 302-310 (1st part of conclusion)
Gonzalez, ix-xx (introduction) and 1-26 (ch. 1)

Week 2:

Tues. Jan. 28 – Reading: Gonzalez, 27-78 [or at least ch. 2, 27-57, discussed today]

FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE: Write a short essay comparing what you have read in Gonzalez and Suro so far with what you have learned before (in school or independently) about colonial and 19th century American History. Address the following questions: how does the information compare? Are there many similarities or many differences? Is this how you expected the course to begin? Why/why not? Length: 600-900 words/2-3 double spaced pages.

Thurs. Jan. 30 – Reading: Begin discussing Gonzalez, ch. 3, 58-78

*** Fri. Jan. 31 is the last day to add or drop a course without Academic Record—W grade begins Mon. Feb. 3**

Week 3:

Thurs Feb. 4 – No reading: Finish discussing Gonzalez, ch. 3

TOPIC FOR ARTICLE COLLECTION DUE

Thurs. Feb. 6 – Reading: Gonzalez 96-107 (ch. 5)
FILM #1: *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* or *American Me*

Week 4:

Tues. Feb. 11 – Reading: Gonzalez, 167-189 (ch. 10)
Suro, 77-88 (ch. 5)

Thurs. Feb. 13 – Reading: Suro, 1-26 (ch. 1), 59-76 (ch. 4), and 236-242 (ch. 14)
FILM REVIEW #1 DUE

Week 5:

Tues. Feb. 18 – Reading: Suro, 119-137 (chs. 8 and 9)

Thurs. Feb. 20 – Reading: Gonzalez, 81-95 (ch. 4)

Week 6:

Tues. Feb. 25 – Reading: Gonzalez, 246-267 (ch. 14)

Thurs. Feb. 27 – Reading: Suro, 138-158 (ch. 10)

FILM #2: *I Like it Like That* or *Girlfight*

Week 7:

Tues. Mar. 4 – Reading: Gonzalez, 117-128 (ch. 7)

NOVEL/MEMOIR REVIEW TOPIC DUE

Thurs. Mar. 6 – Reading: Suro, 179-203 (ch. 12)

FILM REVIEW #2 DUE

Week 8—SPRING BREAK!—No class Mon. Mar. 10 or Wed. Mar. 12—Relax!

Week 9:

Tues. Mar. 18 – Reading: Gonzalez, 108-116 (ch. 6)

Thurs. Mar. 20 – Reading: Suro, 159-178 (ch. 11) and 27-30 (ch. 2)

Week 10:

Tues. Mar. 25 – Reading: Gonzalez, 129-148 (ch. 8)

FILM #3: *El Norte*

Thurs. Mar. 27—INDEPENDENT RESEARCH DAY

Professor attending a conference—use this day to catch up on reading and writing

Week 11:

Tues. Apr. 1 – Reading: Suro, 31-55 (ch. 3)

FILM REVIEW #3 DUE

Thurs. Apr. 3 – Reading: Gonzalez, 149-163 (ch. 9)

*** Fri. Apr. 4 is the last day one can officially withdraw from courses ***

Week 12:

Tues. Apr. 8 – Reading: Suro, 89-116 (chs. 6 and 7)

Thurs. Apr. 10 – Reading: Gonzalez, 190-205 (ch. 11)

Suro, 265-284 (ch. 16)

Week 13:

Tues. Apr. 15 – Reading: Gonzalez, 228-245 (ch. 13)

Suro, 285-301 (ch. 17)

Thurs. Apr. 17 – Reading: Suro, 204-231 (ch. 13) and 243-264 (ch. 15)

Week 14:

Tues. Apr. 22 – No reading

ARTICLE COLLECTION PAPERS DUE

PRESENTATIONS

Thurs. Apr. 24 – Reading: Gonzalez, 206-224 (ch. 12)

FINISH PRESENTATIONS (if necessary)

Week 15:

Tues. Apr. 29 – Reading: Gonzalez, 269-273 (epilogue)

Suro, 302-332 (rereading 302-310; ch. 18 and Afterword)

Study guide for final distributed

**Thurs. May 1 – No reading: final discussion
Final review**

Week of May 5—FINAL—Exact date, time, and place TBA

Will most likely be Tues. May 6, at 10:15am, in this room, but let's check again closer to the date!