

135 Winter  
. '02

CHICANO/LATINO STUDIES 135

### LATINAS IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY U.S.

Focusing on the lives on Latinas (women of Latin American birth or heritage) in the United States from 1900 to the present, this course offers a glimpse into the diversity of their cultures, regional histories, sexualities, generations, and classes. From Chicanas to Puertorriqueñas to Cubanas to Salvadoreñas (to name just a few), Latinas have contributed economically, politically, and culturally to their respective communities and to the nation as a whole. Their stories, however, have often remained in the shadows. Combining exciting, interdisciplinary scholarship in history, social science, and film studies with personal narratives and primary sources, this seminar-style class emphasizes the importance of documenting and interpreting women's experiences in addition to exploring competing methodologies and contemporary debates.

#### REQUIRED READINGS

Frances Esquibel Tywoniak and Mario T. García, *Migrant Daughter: Coming of Age as a Mexican American Woman*

Carmen Teresa Whelan, *From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia: Puerto Rican Workers and Postwar Economies*

Clara Rodriguez, eds. *Latin Looks: Images of Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. Media*

Alma García, *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*

Ana Veciana-Suarez, *Birthday Parties in Heaven: Thoughts on Love, Life, Grief, and Other Matters of the Heart*

Vicki L. Ruiz, ed., *Las obreras: Chicana Politics of Work and Family*

Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*

Cecelia Menjivar, *Fragmented Ties: Salvadoran Immigrant Networks in America*

## COURSE OUTLINE

- Week 1  
1/8 Introduction to Latina History  
Instructions for "Roots" Essay  
Film: *Adelante Mujeres*
- Week 2  
1/15 Telling Stories, Making History  
Instructions for Oral History Project  
Reading assignment: *Migrant Daughter*
- Week 3  
1/22 Migration and Women's Work  
Film: *Living in America: A Hundred Years of Ybor City*  
Reading assignment: *From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia*
- Week 4  
1/29 Star Struck: Legend and Lies  
Film: *Bananas is My Business* or *Corpus: A Home Movie for Selena*  
Reading assignment: *Latin Looks*  
Bring Media Image for Discussion
- Week 5  
2/5 The Personal is Community  
Reading assignment: *Chicana Feminist Thought*
- Week 6  
2/12 Memoir and Memory  
Roots Essay Due  
Reading assignment: *Birthday Parties in Heaven*
- Week 7  
2/19 Days of Obligation and Celebration  
Reading assignment: *Las obereras*
- Week 8  
2/26 By the Day or Week: Immigration and Labor  
Reading assignment: *Doméstica*  
Film: *La Mujer Extraviada*
- Week 9  
3/5 Culture, Family, and Transnational Bonds  
Reading assignment: *Fragmented Ties*

Week 10  
3/12

Gender and *Latinidad*  
Oral History Projects Due  
Potluck at Casa Ruiz Becerra

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

### THE READINGS

Each student will be expected to give an in-class presentation of *one* monograph in which she or he discusses the author's thesis, narrative line, evidence, and interpretation. The presentation should not be a rehash of the book, but a thoughtful review of its contributions to our understanding of women's experiences, particularly in light of the recommended reading. For *every* required monograph, students will prepare a one-page synopsis or précis summarizing the author's major points. It is very important for everyone to complete the readings before class because participation in weekly discussion, including the written précis, comprises twenty percent of the final grade.

### "ROOTS" ESSAY

Engaging students as individuals rather than as representatives of this or that group (be it political, ethnic, feminist, religious) can open up a dialogue for critical thinking and common ground. A "Roots" Essay (of six to eight pages in-length) has three purposes: 1) I get a chance to become acquainted with you as a person; 2) I have the opportunity to assist you with your writing; and, as importantly, 3) the essay shows the connections of individuals to larger historical processes. In the words of playwright George C. Wolfe, author and director of the award-winning Broadway play *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk*: "When you fully claim your history, you can soar." Instructions will be given on the first day of class, January 8th. Essay is due February 12<sup>th</sup>.

### ORAL HISTORY ALBUM

Oral history provides a window to another person's experiences and emotions not only in terms of family history but also in relation to community and international events. Studs Terkel won a Pulitzer Prize for his book *The Good War: An Oral History of World War Two*, an honor that represented a coming of age for tape-recorded interviews as legitimate historical sources. Conserving and listening to members of another generation enrich our understanding of history and helps us separate realities from stereotypes. For this course, the student will be required to conduct a one hour life history interview with a Latina over the age of forty and turn in the tape (or video), edited transcript in the form of a scrapbook, consent form, contextual essay. The narrator may have been born in the United States or Latin America. The only criterion is that she has lived in the United States for over five years. Two students may interview a narrator as a team. Guides on interview techniques, strategies, and ethics will be distributed on January 15th. Given the

importance of this project, this class meeting is mandatory. The assignment will be graded on the quality of the interview and the contextual essay. The essay (six to eight pages) should produce a portrait of the interviewee—age, nativity, religion, education, family life, and work experiences. More importantly, it should relate the person's life to events and themes in 20th Latina history. Students who interview as a team may collaborate on the transcript and album, but turn in separate, individual essays. The combined length of the transcript/scrapbook and essay range from 20 to 25 pages. An analytical research paper of similar length may be substituted for this assignment in consultation with the instructor. This assignment will be due on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

### ATTENDANCE /INCOMPLETE POLICES

Regular attendance is mandatory and will be reflected in the grade for participation. All cell phones and beepers must be turned off during class. I will sign an incomplete form under extenuating circumstances and with advance notice. A written contract will spell out student responsibilities and a due date for missing work.

### GRADING

- 20% Monograph Presentation
- 20% Class Participation
- 20% Roots Essay
- 40% Oral History Project

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### Latinas in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century U.S.

- Edna Acosta Belen, ed., *The Puerto Rican Woman*.
- Julia Alvarez, *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*
- Teresa Amott, *Race, Gender, and Work*
- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Making Face, Making Soul*
- Frances Aparicio, *Listening to Salsa: Gender, Latin Popular Music and Puerto Rican Cultures*
- Irene Browne, ed., *Latinas and African American Women at Work*
- Fran Leeper Buss, *Forged Under the Sun: The Life of Maria Elena Lucas*
- Adela de la Torre and Beatriz Pesquera, *Building With Our Hands: New Directions in Chicana Studies*
- Adelaida Del Castillo, *Between Borders: Essays on Mexicana/Chicana History*
- Terry Doran, et.al., *A Road Well-Traveled: Three Generations of Cuban American Women*
- Elisa Facio, *Understanding Older Chicanas*
- William Flores and Rina Benmayor, ed., *Latino Cultural Citizenship*
- Leticia Galindo and Marla Gonzales, eds. *Speaking Chicana*
- Cristina García, *Dreaming in Cuban*
- María Cristina García, *Havana U.S.A.*
- Matt García, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor and Citrus in the Making of Great Los Angeles*
- Richard García, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class*
- Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction.*
- Beatrice Griffith, *American Me*
- Robert Henkes, *Latin American Women Artists of the United States*

Nancy Hewitt, *Southern Discomfort: Women's Activism in Tampa, Florida, 1880s-1920s*  
Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experience of Immigration*  
Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage, *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West*  
Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding The Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mining Strike of 1983*  
Karen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi-Mexican Americans*  
Felix Matos-Rodríguez and Linda Delgado, *Puerto Rican Women's History*  
Magdalena Mora and Adelaida Del Castillo, eds., *Mexican Women in the United States: Struggles Past and Present*  
Vicki Muñoz, *Resisting Gentrification and Displacement: Voices of Puerto Rican Women of the Barrio*  
Altagracia Ortiz, ed., *Puerto Rican Women and Work: Bridges in Transnational Labor.*  
Mary Pardo, *Mexican American Women Activists*  
Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History.*  
Mary Helen Ponce, *Hoyt Street*  
Juanita Ramos, *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians*  
Clara Rodríguez, *Puerto Ricans: Born in the U.S.A.*  
Gregorita Rodríguez, *Singing for my Echo: Memories of a Native Healer of Santa Fe*  
Mary Romero and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Challenging Fronteras: Structuring Latina and Latino Lives in the U.S.*  
Vicki L. Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women*  
Vicki L. Ruiz and Ellen C. DuBois, eds. *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History.* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.  
Vicki L. Ruiz and Susan Tiano, eds., *Women on the U.S. Mexico Border*  
Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*  
Virginia Sánchez-Korrol, *From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York City*  
Chris Strachwitz, *Lydia Mendoza*  
Carla Trujillo, ed. *Living Chicana Theory.*  
Patricia Zavella, *Women's Work and the Chicano Families*