Master’s Seminar: Topics in Latina/o Literature

Afro-Latinidad: Text, Performance and Archive

Instructor: Dr. Laura Lomas
Meeting: Hill 215, Wednesdays 5:45-8:25 pm

Description: In this Master’s seminar, we will focus on Latina/o literary texts, performances and archives that represent Afro-Latinidad, or texts by Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican and Latin and African-American-descended authors in the United States, in Spanish or in English. Reading a range of literary genres, including poetry, crónicas, novels, performance (including music) and essays, we will examine how race, sex, class, immigration status and linguistic difference intersect with “Afro-latinidad.” In overcoming the myth of race-lessness, how have Afro-Latina/o authors represented processes of racialization in the Caribbean or Latin America as compared to the United States? Why and how does the archive become an historic aim and legacy of Afro-Latina/o scholars and critics? What poetic forms emerge to articulate Afro-Latina/o subjectivity, sound and cultural history? How does Afro-latinidad illuminate and interrupt the traditions of Black and Latino cultural studies? How is Afro-Latina/o literature related to and in dialogue with U.S., Amerindian, Africa-American and Latin American literatures? How do texts—by white Latino/a writers—figure Africanity in the Caribbean and in Latina/o cultural forms? Authors include, but are not limited to José Martí, Arturo Schomburg, Francisco Gonzalo “Pachín” Marín, Julia de Burgos, Jesus Colón, Tato Laviera, Junot Díaz, Maria Moreno Vega, María Teresa "Mariposa" Fernández

Required texts:


**Course Requirements:**

2. Two Library Research Assignments: Submit a 3-5 page report on an 3 archival documents and an annotated bibliography of 5 secondary sources of relevance to your final project.
3. Discussion Questions: Post 2 questions (or comments) on the week's readings to Blackboard by 9 pm Tuesday. As you will not complete seminar papers during the semester, it is vital that you take this requirement very seriously.
4. Presentations: Lead one class, guiding discussion and providing some overview and background. At least one week in advance, select and distribute 1 additional primary or secondary readings. You should also submit at the class meeting a short (approx 3-5 pgs double-spaced) written version of your presentation to me.
5. Performance Encounter: At some point during the semester, you are required to participate in some aspect of living Afro-Latin@ culture. This may mean attending a presentation at la Casa Azul bookstore, attending a rumba or toque de santos, visiting a botánica or consulting a babalawo, finding and reporting on a live or recorded performance. I will ask you to share briefly with the class about these experiences as you have completed this assignment. In addition, you write about this experience of performance as it relates to the readings and seminar discussion in one of your discussion question/interventions.

**Grading:** Attendance and Participation (20%), Discussion Questions (10%), Presentation (10%), Library Research (10%), Final Paper (10% Propsectus, 40% Essay)

**reading and writing schedule:**

**Wednesday Jan 22: Introduction**

**Wednesday Jan 29: Afro-Latin@ Culture: Before 1900**
- Peter Wood
- Jack D. Forbes
- Virginia Meacham Gould
- Susan D. Greenbaum
- Adrián Castro (1-62 of *Afro-Latin@ Reader, hereafter ALR*)
- Schomburg, “Juan Latino” (handout)
- Figueroa, Sotero, “Cuba and Puerto Rico,” from *Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* (handout)

**Wednesday Feb 5: Arturo Alfonso Schomburg vs. the myth of the race-less nation**
• Arturo A. Schomburg from “Racial Integrity: A Plea for the Establishment of a Chair of Negro History in Our Schools and Colleges,” “The Negro Digs up His Past” “An Epoch in Cuba’s Struggle for Liberty” (BB)
• José Martí, “My Race” “The Truth about the United States,” “Coney Island” and “Our America” (BB)
• Francisco Gonzalo “Pachín” Marín, “New York from Within,” (BB) from Herencia (BB) and “El Trapo/ The Rag” (handout)
• Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, “The World of Arturo Alfonso Schomurg” (ALR)
• Kevin Meehan, ch. 2 of People Get Ready (BB)
• Adelaine Holton, “Decolonizing History: Arturo Schomburg’s Afrodiasporic Archive” Journal of African American History
• Milagros Denis-Rosario, “Following their Footsteps.” Journal of Pan-African History 5.4 (June 2012)
• Josiana Arroyo, “Transculturalions of Race, Gender and Ethnicity in Schomburg’s Masonic Writings” Centro 17.1 (2005)
• Meehan and Miller, “Martí, Schombur y la cuestión racial en las Américas.” Afro-Hispanic Review 25.2 (Fall 2006)

NB: Pura Belpré Celebration at La Casa Azul Bookstore, Feb. 6-8, 2014
Day 1: Educator Development Workshop, Thursday February 6, 3:00pm-5:00pm
• We will learn about Pura Belpre's life and work, and about the Pura Belpre award. The Pura Belpre Award, established in 1996, is presented annually to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth.
• A discussion on the current trends in bilingual literacy and how to further our implementation in school programming will be lead by bookstore staff.

Day 2: Movie screening - Pura Belpre Documentary, Friday February 7, 6:00pm - 8:00pm
• Filled with interviews, this documentary gives us a window into the puppeteer, storyteller and author whose legacy endures to this day.
• Q&A; light refreshments will be served

Day 3: Pura Belpre Family Day!
• Saturday, February 8, 11:00am - 1:00pm
• Come join us as we celebrate Pura Belpre through what she was known best for: storytelling!
• Join us as we share in storytime as well as children’s activities such as puppet-making and book-making. Through these activities we will pay homage to Pura Belpre’s legacy and pass the torch to the next generation.

Wednesday Feb 12: Early Twentieth Century Afro-Latinidades
• Evelio Grillo “Black Cuban, Black American” (ALR)
• Jesús Colón, “A Puerto Rican in New York” (ALR)
• Nancy Raquel Mirabal, “Melba Alvarado,” (ALR)
• Adrian Burgos, Jr., “An Uneven Playing Field,” (ALR)
• Gabriel Haslip-Viera, “Changing Identities,” (ALR)
• Graciela, “Eso era tremendo!” (ALR)
- Antonio López, on Introduction, Ch. 1 on O’Farrill and Conclusion from *Unbecoming Blackness*
- Pura Belpré, selected stories
- **Presenter: Giselle Thomas**

Recommended: Lisa Sánchez González, Pura Belpré’s Significance to American (Americas) Literary History

**NB: February 16, Afro-Latino Governor of Newark, NJ to speak at Rutgers Newark Center for Law and Justice as part of CODA and Institute for Latino Affairs Annual meeting.**

**NB: Tuesday Feb 18: Richard Blanco at Rutgers Newark**

**Wednesday Feb 19: Afro-Latinx Popular Music**
- Ruth Glasser, “From “Indianola” to “Ño Colá” (*ALR*)
- Louis Reyes Rivera, from *cu/bob* (*ALR*)
- Jairo Moreno, “Bauzá—Gillespie—Latin/Jazz: Difference, Modernity and the Black Caribbean” (*ALR*)
- David F. García “Contesting that Damned Mambo: Arsenio Rodríguez and the People of El Barrio and the Bronx in the 1950s (*ALR*)
- Juan Flores, “Boogaloo and Latin Soul,” (*ALR*)
- Tato Laviera, from “the salsa of bethesda fountain” (*ALR*)
- Antonio López, Ch. 2, on Eusebia Cosme
- Donald Maggin, from biography of Dizzy Gillespie
- **Presenter: Jason Mitchell**

**Wednesday February 26: Piri Thomas: Defining Latino Blackness**
- Thomas, Piri, *Down These Mean Streets*
- Antonio López, Ch. 3 on Rómulo Lachatañeré and Thomas
- Viewing of scenes from *Every Child is Born a Poet.*
- Secondary: *Centro Special Issue on Piri Thomas*

**Presenter: Rhiannon Basile**

**Wednesday March 5: Marta Moreno Vega and Antonio López**

**NB: Tuesday March 11, Natasha Tretheway, U.S. Poet Laureate to speak at Rutgers Newark.**

**Wednesday March 12: Experiential Learning Reports are due**
Wednesday March Visit to Schomburg Collection, 515 Malcolm X Boulevard @135th street and to Library for Performing Arts, Dorothy And Lewis B. Cullman Center, 40 Lincoln Plaza, NY, NY 10023

SPRING BREAK: March 15-23

Wednesday, March 26: Black Latin@ Sixties

- Carlos Cooks, “Hair Conking, Buy Black” (*ALR*)
- Pedro R. Rivera, “Carlos A Cooks: Dominican Garveyite in Harlem” (*ALR*)
- Victor Hernández Cruz, “African Things” (*ALR*)
- Sandra María Esteves, “Black Notes and ‘You Do Something to me’” (*ALR*)
- Pablo “Yoruba” Guzmán, “Before People Called me a Spic, They Called me a Nigger,”
- Felipe Luciano, from “Jíbaro, My Pretty Nigger”
- Sherezada “Chiqui” Vicioso, “Discovering Myself” (*ALR*)
- Josefina Báez, Excerpt from *Dominicanish* (*ALR*)

**Library Research Project Due**

Presenter: Bernadette Scott

Wednesday April 2: Afro-Latinas

- Julia de Burgos, *Song of the Simple Truth*
- Mariposa (María Teresa Fernández), from “Poem for My Grifa-Rican Sistah, or Broken Ends with Promises” (*ALR*) and “Diasporican” (Video to be screened)
- Secondary, Vanessa Perez y Rosario, forthcoming interview with Mariposa

Wednesday April 9: Afro-Latin@s in the Hip Hop Zone

- Raquel Rivera “Ghettocentricity, Blackness and Pan-Latinidad” (*ALR*)
- Pancho McFarland, “Chicano Rap Roots” (*ALR*)
- Wayne Marshall, “The Rise and Fall of Reggaeton” (*ALR*)
- Sofía Quintero, “Divas Don’t Yield” (*ALR*)

View scenes from “Out Latin Thing/ Nuestra Cosa Latina”

***Abstract for final essay/research prospectus due**

Presenter: Kevin Manuel-Bentley

Wednesday April 16: The Legacy of Tato Laviera

Laviera, *Américan*

Presenter: Bekka Trapp

**Performance/Experiential Learning Assignment Due (submit 500-1000 word reports on Blackboard)**
Thursday, April 17: Public Lecture by Antonio López on *Unbecoming Blackness*.

**Wednesday April 23: The Wao-Factor: Afro-Latinidad at Rutgers, Northern New Jersey and Beyond**

Díaz, Junot. *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*  
**recommended:** Juanita Heredia, Fremio Sepulveda, Jason Cortés  
**Presenter: Iris Ortiz**

**Wednesday April 30 Afro-Latinidades**

- Yvette Modestín, “An Afro-Latina’s Quest for Inclusion” (*ALR*)  
- Ryan Mann-Hamilton, “Retracing Migration” (*ALR*)  
- Vielka Cecilia Hoy, “Negotiating Among Invisibilities” (*ALR*)  
- Aida Lambert, “We are Black Too: Experiences of a Honduran Garifuna” (*ALR*)  
- María Rosario Jackson, “Profile of an Afro-Latina: Black, Mexican, Both” (*ALR*)  
- Antonio López, Enrique Patterson: Black Cuban Intellectual in Cuban Miami (*ALR*)
- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, “Reflections about Race by a Negrito Acomplejao” (*ALR*)  
- Silvio Torres-Saillant, “Divisible Blackness: Reflections on Heterogeneity and Racial Identity,” (*ALR*)
- Willie Perdomo, “Nigger-Reecan Blues” (*ALR*)  
**Presenter: Megan López**

**Final Essay Due: May 14, 11:45 -1:45**

**Elaborations on Requirements:**

**Seminar Objectives:**
--Students will learn to develop a literary critical essay that makes an original argument about a text from our syllabus and draws on research into archival materials or a critical bibliography  
--Students will hone skills in critical interpretation and learn to evaluate information critically through critical readings of literature, performance and criticism  
--Students will perform research in an archive on an Afro-Latin@ performer or writer  
--Students will gain mastery of key theoretical concepts that relate to the emerging field of Afro-latinidad  
--Students will learn to interpret cultural phenomena, literary text, performances, as they change over time

**Drop and withdrawal deadlines:**  
The last date for students to drop a course with no penalty: 1/28/14  
The last date to withdraw from a course with a "W" grade: 3/31/14

**Attendance:** If you have to miss a class for a compelling reason (illness, personal or family emergency, religious holiday observance), let me know (in advance when possible). After two absences your grade will go down by 10 pts for each absence.
Three late arrivals or early departures (of more than ten minutes) together will constitute an unexcused absence.

**Conferences:** Students are encouraged to meet with me. We can use these meetings to discuss an idea for an essay, comments on past essays, or questions and reflections about the reading. Should you arrange to meet with me, bring anything you have written that I have returned to you, and a draft of the project you are at work on.

**Academic Integrity:** I expect you to hand in original work only. Plagiarism in any form is one of the most serious offenses that a student can commit at Rutgers, and WILL result in a failing grade and/or dismissal from the University. If you have further questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me or consult the University web page [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/)

**Resources:**
1. Disability Accommodations. If you have any special needs I encourage you to speak with me as soon as possible to let me know how I can help. To request specific test or classroom accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services for Students (disabilityservices-uw.rutgers.edu) or e-mail Ms. Sumski at famoso@andromeda.rutgers.edu.
2. Support. The Rutgers Newark Counseling Center provides free and confidential support. For more information call 973-353-5805 or visit www.rutgersnewarkcounselingcenter.com