Course Description

What does the term Latinx mean? What does it mean to be Latinx in the United States? How is Latinx identity and culture constructed in and through language? What is the role and significance of the border in constructions of Latinx identity and culture? This course is designed to help students examine how discourse creates, circulates, and constitutes contemporary understandings of “Latinx” identity in the United States. Students will learn and apply a critical rhetorical lens to investigate how Latinx representations, identities, communities, and politics have come to be meaningful in the contemporary United States.

We begin by exploring some of the histories that inform the Latinx experience, discuss what it means to take a rhetorical approach to Latinx identity and culture, and review the construction and circulation of critical terms that are used to frame Latinxs in the United States. Then, we turn our attention toward more specific constructions and representations of Latinx culture in the United States. Our specific areas of investigation will include: (1) the constructions, representations, and (competing) interests of Latinx identity construction and expression; (2) how vernacular and civic discourses circulate to construct current understandings of Latinx culture (for members within and outside of the community); and (3) how a variety of discourse practices work together (and compete) to shape the material conditions that circumscribe the lived realities of Latinx individuals.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  Spring 2019

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Course Outcomes

To identify and illustrate Latinx identity and culture through a critical-cultural and rhetorical lens. Conversations and popular representations about Latinx identity, immigration, Latinx cultural influences, and the U.S.-Mexico border, shape the landscape our contemporary culture. In this class we will construct a toolbox of resources from which you will be able to draw when interacting with contemporary discourses of Latinx identity that will provide you with the resources to become a critical consumer of such rhetorical constructions.

To recall and summarize the historical and contemporary influences that shape Latinx identity and culture in the United States. The United States and countries south of its border have a long and complicated history, rooted in colonization, nationalism, and political, and cultural collaboration. In order to fully interrogate and explore how Latinx identity and culture has come to be meaningful in the United States, a careful diachronic exploration of these historical influences is paramount—as is a synchronic investigation into the meanings of Latinx identity and culture that emerge and develop today.

To differentiate the influences that intersectionality has in constructions of Latinx identity and culture. Latinx identity and experience in the United States has been shaped by a variety of intersections (ranging from transnational and/or mixed-race family arrangements; cultural crossover of traditions; and additional sexual, religious, social class, and gendered subjectivities that intersect with Latinx identity and culture. As such, we will unpack the complicated ways that these intersections uniquely inform and characterize the construction of Latinidad in the contemporary United States.

To demonstrate knowledge about the construction and circulation and implications of border rhetorics for Latinx identity and culture. Within the United States the border functions as an essential discursive and material construction that organizes national relationships and understandings of citizenship. To unpack the ways that borders and “bordering” function we will examine the rhetoricity of borders and the implications of this for Latinxs and U.S. identity construction.

Course Readings and Materials

Jose Olivarez
ISBN 9781608469543
Publisher: Haymarket
Date: 9/4/2018

Ito Romo
ISBN 9780826353344
Publisher: University of New Mexico Press
Date: 8/01/2013

There are only 2 required books for this class (a collection of short stories called The Border is Burning by Ito Romo and a collection of poetry called Citizen Illegal by Jose Olivarez). Apart from these two books, we will rely on academic articles and other reading selections to provide the theoretical and analytic content that will drive this class.

As there is no textbook, it is especially important that you regularly access (and print if necessary) the materials for this class from Blackboard. The readings for this course vary in length, difficulty, and origination. Some of the essays are complex and will challenge you—they are not included to frustrate you—they have been chosen because they are good examples of the positions and ideas we are discussing. Our discussions and activities take place on the assumption that you have read and thought about the material. With this in mind, you should plan to give yourself plenty of time to read carefully, take notes appropriately, and be prepared to ask questions when necessary. Students are expected to complete and process, to the best of your ability, any assigned readings before coming to class and if necessary to bring print-outs of the readings to class with you. Do not give up on a reading just because you’re feeling challenged by it. Read the entire assignment and come to class with questions. Quizzes will be used as necessary to ensure that students are reading all assignments thoughtfully.
Final Grade Breakdown

Culture Report and Discussion Post, 15%
Due – TBS (to be scheduled)

Rhetorical Critiques, 20%
Due – Feb. 13th & Apr. 3rd

Midterm Outcome, 15%
Due – Mar. 20th

Rhetorical Intervention Project, 40%
Due – May 8th

In-class Activities (and/or Homework), 10%

Weekly Topics for Discussion

Week 1 – Introductions/Foundations
Week 2 – Latinx Representation
Week 3 – The Rhetorical Approach
Week 4 – The Importance of Language
Week 5 – Historical Legacies
Week 6 – Immigration (Part I)
Week 7 – Immigration (Part II)
Week 8 – Midterm Outcome Review
Week 9 – Spring Break
Week 10 – Borders and Borderlands (Part I)
Week 11 – Borders and Borderlands (Part II)
Week 12 – Latinx and Race in the U.S. (Part I)
Week 13 – Latinx and Race in the U.S. (Part II)
Week 14 – Latinx Voices/Vernaculars (Part I)
Week 15 – Latinx Voices/Vernaculars (Part II)
Week 16 – Rhetorical Intervention Project Workshopping & Portfolio maintenance for WS

Major Assignment Descriptions

Culture Report and Discussion Post
This assignment is broken into two parts: (1) A group-led class facilitation, and (2), a 500-word corresponding op-ed piece. For the presentation portion, you will identify a current event that aligns with the topical material for the week (these themes will be broadly outlined on a sign-up sheet for presentation dates that I will circulate in the coming weeks. For the presentation, plan to summarize the current event and explain its specific relevance to the course material we are discussing that week. For the corresponding portion of the assignment you will write and blog post (no more than 500 words) about the topic you selected for your group presentation. More details provided in Blackboard.

Rhetorical Critiques
Over the course of the semester you will be asked to complete two rhetorical critiques of an artifact. Each critique should be 4-5 pages and will focus on a different example of Latinx rhetoric. While the text/artifact that you analyze in each paper will be different, the nature of your critique will be similar in that you will demonstrate how a thoughtful rhetorical analysis informs and/or reveals something unique about the historicity/social constructedness/cultural influence of the text/artifact in question. Each critique will be evaluated for the depth of its contribution, its usage of rhetorical theory/methodology, and its overall persuasiveness. More details provided in Blackboard.
Rhetorical Intervention Project
This final project is your opportunity to explore and issue raised by the materials from this course in a more in-depth manner. Further, this project will require you to draw on what we have learned about rhetoric (and its relationship to Latinx identity/cultures) to not only construct your own rhetorical intervention, but also to critically reflect on popularly circulating discourses and your own rhetorical choices. Specifically, this final project will have two components: 1) a thoughtfully crafted rhetorical message that you create and that intervenes in currently circulating discourse of popular Latinx identity/cultures, and 2) a critical analysis/evaluation of how you imagine your rhetorical message functioning that will be grounded in theory/conversations we have had in class. More details provided in Blackboard.

Midterm Outcome
At midterm, I will require you to demonstrate two of our four course outcomes. You will be required to draw upon and apply content knowledge from the class to demonstrate your familiarity of course concepts. More details provided in Blackboard.

In-Class Activities (and/or Homework)
This portion of your grade reflects participation, preparation, and engagement. Daily work includes in-class engagement and/or small assignments (usually the various activities designed to support the readings or major projects), such as discussions, posts, response to readings, response to drafts, responding to student writing, etc., and, on occasion, quizzes. In-class activities are assignments performed in class and cannot be made up if you miss class. Note: if you miss class or are late for class and miss the in-class activities, you do not receive credit for those particular assignments missed. Engagement in a course is measured a scale of 100 for any given week; the following points are possible for any given day out of a week:

- No credit – 0 pts: you weren’t in class, and we missed you.
- Credit – 100 pts: you attended and demonstrated you were prepared based on qualified pro-active engagement.
- Other in-class activities, such as quizzes or other tasks, are graded on a scale of 100 for that activity.

Late Work and Extensions
If there is a crisis that prevents you from meeting a deadline or attending class, you can request an extension to turn the work in late. The approval of an extension is entirely at the discretion of the instructor and will depend on reasons for your absence, your record of completion of work, and attendance. All extensions must be confirmed by email. Please note, major assignments (not daily work) submitted late without any authorized extension receive a one letter grade deduction (10%).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a grade of zero/no credit.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

Definition: In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation academic expectation, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
• Using resource materials without correct documentation,
• Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
• Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/, and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

DROPPING A CLASS

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 5, 2019 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term. April 30, 2019 is the last day to withdraw completely from the university.

WRITING CENTER

Writing Centers are resource locations for writing (and sometimes reading) that are popping up in high schools as well as colleges and universities. They practice the kind of conferring pedagogy that we'll be practicing, so not only can they help you write, they can help you understand the value and methods of conferring with your students.

Where Is It?
The CASA Writing Center at TAMUCC, located in Room 112 of the Glasscock Student Success Center, provides free help for students at any stage of their writing process. Writing Consultants are trained to support writers in planning, outlining, drafting, organizing, and/or revising their writing and are also knowledgeable in citing sources in various documentation styles used in academic writing. It offers both face-to-face and online appointments for both undergraduate and graduate students. The Writing Center works closely with faculty across the TAMUCC campus to understand writing in different disciplines and to help students meet these expectations. The Writing Center encourages students to make a 30-minute appointment; however, if Writing Consultants are available, they do accept walk-in appointments. Appointments are available online as well! Visit casa.tamucc.edu/wc.php to create an account using your @islander.tamucc.edu email address. Once you have an account, you can log-on to make an appointment.

STATEMENT OF CIVILITY

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high-quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree
Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

DISABILITY SERVICES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

GRADE APPEALS PROCESS

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamu.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC CONTINUITY

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

QUESTIONS?
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this syllabus, please speak with me as soon as possible. You are responsible for understanding and adhering to the policies of this course and the University.

For a detailed reading calendar, please go to Blackboard.