AML4685 Section 05H0 Fall 2012
Syllabus
Race and Gender in Contemporary U.S. Latino/Chicana Literature and Culture

Professor: Tace Hedrick
Room: TUR 2305
Class Periods: T 1:55-2:45; Th 1:55-3:50
Office: 302 Ustler Hall
Office Hours: Tues 11:30-1:30
And by appointment
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NOTE: This syllabus may change if circumstances require.

Course Description:
From the late 1960s through the 1970s, a Chicana/o and U.S. Latino/a renaissance of the arts flowered, especially in the West, Southwest and on the East Coast, but the writings were relatively unknown outside of college ethnic literature courses. Then along came the so-called Latino explosion of the '90s, and the market value of certain U.S. Latina and Chicana authors and artists began to increase. A select few Chicano and Latina writers have been drawn into the mainstream of United States publishing: writers like Sandra Cisneros, Cristina García, and Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez are, if not household names, at least better-known than their predecessors.

In this course, we will be reading contemporary U.S. Latina and Chicana authors (1998-2010), both bestsellers as well as less well-known writers; we will also investigate the phenomenon known as "chica lit" as well as other popular genres such as Latina detective and "street" novels. With all these novels, we will also be doing some reading in critical and theoretical Latino/a and Chicana/o Studies; in doing so, we will examine the ways assumptions—esthetic, social, political, and market-driven—about U.S. Latina/o groups and their ethnicity, race, sexuality and gender have changed (and in some ways remained the same) over the last decade or so.

Requirements:
This course will require three short papers, regular reading quizzes, and study questions.

Required Texts:
Cristina García, The Agüero Sisters
Lisa Wixon, Dirty Blonde and Half Cuban
Achy Obejas, Days of Awe
Marta Acosta, Happy Hour at Casa Dracula
Manuel Muñoz, Zigzagger
Alisa Valdes-Rodríguez, Dirty Girls Social Club
Junot Díaz, The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao
Marcos M. Villatoro, A Venom Beneath the Skin: A Romilia Chacon Mystery
Course Reserve Materials (or online):
Nagel, Joane. “Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture.”  
*Social Problems*, 41.1, Special Issue on Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America  
McIntosh, Peggy. “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.”  

Materials Available Online:
[http://etn.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/8/1/42](http://etn.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/8/1/42)
[http://www.bridgew.edu/SoAS/jiws/Jun05/Pope.pdf](http://www.bridgew.edu/SoAS/jiws/Jun05/Pope.pdf)
Lisa Wixon, “Cuba for Dummies.” *WashingtonPost.com*  
Sunday, August 6, 2006; Page B07  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/04/AR2006080401373.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/04/AR2006080401373.html)
Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000. ([ebook](http://www.unbeknownst.org/oppress.htm) online)

August
Th  23 Class Orientation and Goals

T  28 Frye, “Oppression” ([Course Reserves](http://www.unbeknownst.org/oppress.htm)) Study Questions
Th  30 McIntosh, “White Privilege” ([Course Reserves](http://www.unbeknownst.org/oppress.htm))
    Deutsch, “The Male Privilege Checklist” ([Course Reserves](http://www.unbeknownst.org/oppress.htm))
    Connell, R.W. “Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Femininity.” ([Course Reserves](http://www.unbeknownst.org/oppress.htm)) Study Questions
September
T  3 Labor Day
Th  5 Nagel, Joane “Constructing Ethnicity” (Course Reserves)
    Lichtenberg, “Racism” (Course Reserves) Study Questions

T  10 Olson, Steve. “The Genetic Archeology of Race” (Course Reserves) Study Questions
    Paper #1 Topics
Th 12 The Agüero Sisters, “Prologue” through “A Matter of Gifts”
    Extra Readings: “Orisha.” Wikipedia.com
    “Santería.” Wikipedia.com*

T  17 The Agüero Sisters Finish
Th 19 Pope, Cynthia ”The Political Economy of Desire” (Online)
    Lisa Wixon, “Cuba for Dummies” (Online)
    Cheris Brewer Current, “Normalizing Cuban Refugees” 42-44, 49-64. (Online)

T  24 Dirty Blonde Chapter 1 through 34
    Paper #1 DUE
Th 26 Dirty Blonde Finish

October
T  1 Days of Awe, Prologue through Chapter XXI
Th  3 Days of Awe Finish

T  8 Discussion
    Paper #2 Topics
Th 10 Zigzagger

T  15 Zigzagger

T  22 Brief and Wondrous Life
    Paper #2 DUE
Th 24 Brief and Wondrous Life

T  29 Extra Readings: “Salvadoran Civil War”*
Th 31 A Venom Beneath the Skin pp 1-118

November
T  5 A Venom Finish
    Paper #3 Topics
Th  7 Discussion

T 12 Veterans Day
Th 14 Philips, Deborah “Shopping for Men” (online)
ASSIGNMENTS

Study Questions: You have, in your syllabus packet, some study questions to help you with your first few readings. While these are not graded, each one you do not hand in will subtract one point from your end-of-semester score.

Reading Quizzes: I will be giving a quick reading quiz (five questions) for each book. More than one wrong answer (out of five) will take .25 from your final score.

Papers #1-3: These papers will be short (minimum full five pages) and focused on particular topic questions which I will provide. Each paper must:

- go to the bottom of page number five at least, (or you will lose two points)
- be done correctly in Modern Language Association (MLA) Style. If you are uncertain about what this means, go to “MLA Style” on https://owl.english.purdue.edu
- have a Works Cited page,
- have a title page with a catchy title,
- be numbered on every page except page number one,
- be double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman,
- no extra spaces between paragraphs,
- have 1-inch margins on all sides.

Much of the above is a matter of formatting on the computer. If you don’t know how to do this, ask in class. We will discuss various required aspects of MLA style throughout the course, but here are the main requirements. You must know how to properly:

- cite references and page numbers in parenthetical style
- use quotation marks and punctuation properly
- cite references in the Works Cited page.
CLASS POLICIES

Students with disabilities: Please consult with me as soon as possible so that I can make appropriate accommodation for you.

Electronics in the Classroom: Please turn off all computers, Bluetooth and handheld devices, and cell phones. I do not allow the use of computers in the classroom unless the student has a medical reason to take notes via computer.

Class Deportment: You are now adults and must be expected to behave as such. If you are more than 15 minutes late, do not come to class. In addition, if you are too tired to pay attention in class, or too sick, please do not come to class. Do not read other material in class, and if you cannot come prepared for class discussion, do not come.

Late Policy: For every 3 times that you are late 10 minutes or more to class, I will deduct two points from your total score at the end of the semester.

Absences: I allow two unexcused absences. Each unexcused absence after the first two will result in the loss of two points from your total end-of-semester score.

Late Papers: Late papers will not be accepted unless you have a legitimate (for example, doctor’s) excuse.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism means using someone else's work as your own, and not acknowledging that it is your own; it’s a form of stealing. This means that when writing a paper, your quotes and paraphrases from other sources which are not your own must be referenced, that is, you must say what your source is and tell the reader how to find it; if not, you have plagiarized. A plagiarized paper will get an automatic F.

Grading:
Grading is done on a point scale. Each assignment will be worth a possible 11 points (an A). Always make sure that you check the grading scale below; a 7 or 8, for example, does NOT mean a failing grade.

A = excellent; unusually outstanding; good writing (one or less writing errors per page) and original thinking: that is, thinking critically beyond what you have read and discussed in class. You use reading and class discussion, as well as other sources if needed, to back up your ideas so that you are not just giving an opinion but an informed argument. You think of yourself as a writer interested in her ideas and interested in sharing them.

B = above average; only a few (on average, two or so per page) writing errors, a standard (not original) argument for the subject, though you should work harder on contributing your own ideas about the subject.

C = average based on general class performance; several writing errors (on average, 3-4 per page); you understand the subject but you tend to repeat and/or merely summarize what has already been said in the readings or in class discussion.

D = below average; you don’t understand the subject and/or you have enough writing errors that your argument cannot be followed.
F= incomplete or failing to meet the requirements of the assignment

**Grading:**
11 = A  33-31
10 = A-  30-28
9  = B+  27-25
8  = B   24-22
7  = B-  21-19
6  = C+  18-16
5  = C   15-13
4  = C-  12-10
3  = D   9- 5
2  = F   4-0

3 5-page papers:  33 points @ 11 points each
33 points maximum end-of-semester score
STUDY QUESTIONS

Judith Lichtenberg “Racism in the Head, Racism in the World”

1. Say in your own words what you think the difference is between Lichtenberg’s categories of racism “in the head” and “in the world.”

2. Think of your own example for one of the various ways Lichtenberg talks about racism “in the world.”


This is a long article with a lot of information. Although it’s interesting and useful information to know, we’ll be talking less about the politics of genetic research and more about the information about genetics and “race” which Olson gives us.

1. Olson discusses the ways in which the creation of the idea of “races” of people—aided by Linnaeus about 250 years ago (1758), and going all the way up through the eugenics ideas of the Nazis to the ideas about race of the present—has deeply embedded the notion in our thinking and our culture that “human groups have innate and fundamental biological differences”—especially in terms of intelligence and behavioral attributes (Course Pack 58). Describe in your own words how genetic research has undermined this idea.

2. If as Olson says “people are too closely related” genetically to support the idea of innate mental or behavioral differences, are there still in fact genetic differences among groups of people? What do those genetic differences mean, then?

3. Where do many geneticists speculate that anatomically modern humans came from?

4. If all people are essentially more genetically alike than they are different, where do superficial (literally, on the surface) differences of the body like skin color (which, after hundreds of thousands of years, can become a dominant genetic trait) come from?

Marilyn Frye, “Oppression”

1. Say in your own words what you think Frye means when she talks about “double binds” being part of an oppressive structure. Give an example you think fits with this idea.

2. Frye gives as an example of structural oppression the image of the birdcage. Explain her example in your own words, including her discussion of the microscopic vs. the macroscopic viewpoint. Why call this idea of oppression “structural”?


1. What do you think Connell means when he says that hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity are “skeletal”?
2. Define in your own words what you think the term “hegemony” means (you may find some useful definitions online, also).

3. How does an idea of masculinity become *hegemonic*? Can you give me an example, from the media?

4. What does “emphasized femininity” mean? Can you give me an example of this from representations of women in the media?