

## **Literature: Chicano and Latino Cultures in the U.S., Beginner Level**

**3 credits (45 contact hours)**

**\*This course is taught in English.** It is offered during the regular semester only and not as an intensive course.

**Professor:** María Antonia Oliver  
[Mantonia.oliver@upf.edu](mailto:Mantonia.oliver@upf.edu)  
Office: 20-281

### **Description:**

This course provides an introduction to the social and cultural reality of Latinos in the United States with a particular emphasis on the largest demographic group: the population of Mexican descent. The concept of the borderlands will be an analytical prism throughout the course that will allow us to look at Latino/a cultural identities within the United States as the product of complex negotiations both inside and outside the country's geographical borders. Although we will mainly focus on the cultural production by Latinos and Latinas in 20th century and the beginnings of the 21st, the course will also examine some of the early responses in American letters to the cultural encounters between Spaniards and Native Americans, and between Spanish-speaking peoples and Anglos. Course materials will mainly consist of literary texts, autobiographies, and chronicles by major and minor authors, but music and visual arts will also be used as documents testifying to the diverse backgrounds and experiences of Latinos in the United States.

### **Methodology:**

The course will be taught in English and will consist of lectures, discussions, student presentations, and film and documentary screenings. The readings and films will be in English, although some of the texts may be bilingual or incorporate code switching.

### **Grading:**

The final grade will be broken down into the following components; student participation worth 20%, a term paper to be presented in class worth 30% and a final exam worth 50%.

### **Course contents:**

#### 1. Early encounters.

The Spanish colonial borderlands: Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca.

Racial conflict and early images of Mexicans in American literature: corridos, Richard Henry Dana, James Fenimore Cooper, Harvey Ferguson.

2. Spain in the Southwest: stereotype, fantasy and heritage.  
 “Spanish” California and New Mexico: Bret Harte, Nina Otero-Warren, Cleofas Jaramillo, and Fabiola Cabeza de Vaca.
3. Cuban and Puerto Rican borderlands.  
 Memoirs of Bernardo Vega, José Martí’s “Our America.”
4. The border as metaphor: fear, desire, and transformation.  
 Film: Orson Welles’s Touch of Evil. Gloria Anzaldúa’s Borderlands.
5. Crossing into America: the experience of immigration.  
 Tomás Rivera, Piri Thomas, Sandra Cisneros. Film: Born in East L.A. or Border Incident.
6. Race, gender, ethnicity, and memory.  
 Richard Rodríguez, Rudolfo Anaya, Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, and Cristina García. Film: Lone Star.
7. Linguistic borderlands.  
 Spanglish and bilingual education. Works and extracts by Tato Laviera, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Sandra Cisneros. Chicano rap.
8. Global borderlands.  
 Mobile geopolitical borders: Helena Viramontes, The New World Border (documentary), and Rubén Martínez.  
 The critique of corporate multiculturalism: Guillermo Gómez-Peña.

**Required readings:**

- Fabiola Cabeza de Vaca. *We Fed Them Cactus* (1954)
- Richard Rodríguez, *Hunger of Memory* (1981)
- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987)
- Course reader

**Bibliography:**

- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: La Frontera*. S. Francisco: Spinsters/aunt lute, 1987.
- Bannon, John Francis. *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier 1513-1821*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973.
- Cooper Alarcón, Daniel. *The Aztec Palimpsest: Mexico in the Modern Imagination*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1997.
- Baron, Dennis. *The English-Only Question: An Official Language for Americans*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1990.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Calderón, Héctor, and José David Saldívar, eds. *Criticism in the Borderlands: Studies on*

- Chicano Literature, Culture, and Ideology. Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1991.
- Cisneros, Sandra. *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*. New York: Vintage, 1991.
- Cantú, Norma Elia. *Canícula: Snapshots of a girlhood en la Frontera*. Albuquerque: University of Mexico Press, 1995.
- Elliott, Emory, Louis Freitas Caton, and Jeffrey Rhyne, eds. *Aesthetics in a Multicultural Age*. Oxford; New York: Oxford UP, 2002.
- Flores, Juan ed. *Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity*. Houston: Arte Público Pres, 1992.
- García, Cristina. *Dreaming in Cuban*. New York: Ballantine, 1992.
- García Canclini, Néstor. *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Cultural Conflict*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1995.
- Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. "The Multicultural Paradigm: An Open Letter to the National Arts Community." In *Negotiating Performance: Gender, Sexuality and Theatricality in Latin/o America*, edited by Diana Taylor and Juan Villegas, 17-29. Durham: Duke UP, 1994.
- Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. *The New World Border*. San Francisco: City Lights, 1996.
- Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. *Dangerous Border Crossers: The Artist Talks Back*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- González, Juan. *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*. London: Penguin, 2000.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda. *The Bronze Screen: Chicano and Chicana Film Culture*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda. *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities in the Borderlands*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2003.
- Hall, Stuart. "Ethnicity, Identity and Difference." *Radical America* 23, no. 4 (1995): 9-20.
- Hall, Stuart, and Paul du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, 1996.
- Cabeza de Baca, Fabiola. *We Fed them Cactus (1954)*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994.
- Kaplan, Amy, and Donald E. Pease, eds. *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Kolodny, Annette. "Letting Go Our Grand Obsessions: Notes Toward a New Literary History of the American Frontiers." *American Literature* 64, no. March 1992 (1992): 1-18.
- Laviera, Tato. *American*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1984.
- Martínez, Rubén. *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001.
- Moraga, Cherríe. *The Last Generation*. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992.
- Moraga, Cherríe. *Loving in the War Years: Lo que nunca pasó por sus labios*. First ed. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1983.
- Moraga, Cherríe and Gloria Anzaldúa, ed. *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Watertown, Massachusetts: Persephone Press, 1983.
- Oboler, Suzanne. *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of (Re)Presentation in the United States*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,

1995.

- Paredes, Américo. "With His Pistol in His Hand:" A Border Ballad and Its Hero. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1958.
- Robinson, Cecil. With the Ears of Strangers: The Mexican in American Literature. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1963.
- Said, Edward W. Culture and Imperialism. London: Chatto & Windus, 1993.
- Saldívar, José David. Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies. Berkeley: California UP, 1997.
- Saldívar-Hull, Sonia. Feminism on the Border: Chicana Gender Politics and Literature. Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ London: University of California Press, 2000.
- Schlesinger, Arthur. The Disuniting of America. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992.
- Sollors, Werner. Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture. New York: Oxford UP, 1986.
- Stavans, Ilan. Spanglish: The Making of a New American Language. New York: RAYO, 2003.
- Suro, Roberto. Strangers Among Us: Latino Lives in a Changing America. New York: Vintage, 1998.
- Thomas, Piri. Down These Mean Streets. New York: Vintage Books, 1975.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. The Conquest of America. New York: Harper and Row, 1985.
- Viramontes, Helena. The Moths and Other Stories. Second ed. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1985.