

## **Policing *Latinidad*: From Border Wars to Mass Incarceration**



Parents of missing Mexican students protest U.S. police violence  
Photo: *Democracy Now!*

### **Professor**

Marisol LeBrón

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### **Time and Location**

MWF 10:00am – 11:00am

BIO 301

### **Office Hours**

M 11:30am – 12:30pm & Th 11am – 2pm

GWB 2.328

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

How does the criminal justice system make itself felt in the everyday lives of Latinas/os? From border enforcement, to stop and frisk, to the phenomenon of mass incarceration, many Latinas/os find themselves and their communities enmeshed within a dense web of surveillance, punishment, and detention. This interdisciplinary course will examine the historical, political, economic, and social factors that have, in many ways, criminalized *Latinidad* and/or rendered *Latinidad* illegal. We will examine how race, class, education, gender, sexuality, and citizenship shape the American legal system and impact how Latinas/os navigate that system. This course will pay special attention to the troubled and unequal relationship between Latinas/os and the criminal justice apparatus in the United States and how it has resulted in the formation of resistant political identities and activist practices.

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

Timothy Black, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid: The Lives of Three Puerto Rican Brothers On and Off the Streets* (New York: Vintage, 2009)

Patrisia Macias-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison: The Politics of Immigration Enforcement in Post Civil Rights America* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

Monica Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

Eduardo Obregón Pagán, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon: Zoot Suits, Race, and Riot in Wartime L.A.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004)

Victor Rios, *Human Targets: Schools, Police, and the Criminalization of Latino Youth* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2017).

All other readings for this course will be available online [marked \*]. You are expected to bring these readings to class. If you are having issues purchasing the books for class, please come speak to me.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

During our time together, you will engage in discussion-based intellectual exchange with your fellow classmates and rigorous, original analysis of the weekly readings. Our class sessions will help you to develop critical thinking capacities that will prove indispensable both in the classroom and beyond.

We are collectively responsible for the quality of our time together. In other words, you will get out of this class what you invest in terms of preparedness and effort. Therefore, you are expected to arrive to each session on time, having read the assigned material, having determined relevant questions and points for discussion, and ready to engage each other respectfully in the classroom.

## **A NOTE ON DIFFERENCE, DISCOMFORT, & RESPECT IN THE CLASSROOM**

Respect for difference, in all its forms, is essential to building a classroom environment where everyone feels able to learn and contribute to class discussions. The material covered in this course will engage with questions of how difference produces distinct forms of knowledge and diverse experiences. The experiences and ways of knowing discussed in the course materials may be similar or different from your own experiences, both of which can result in questions and possibly even feelings of discomfort. When these moments arise, I encourage you to view them as valuable and important components of learning.

Thus, this course will ask you to think critically and thoughtfully about social differences and societal inequalities in ways that may expand or challenge previously held ideas. That said, the goal of this class is not to “force” certain ways of thinking onto anyone, but, rather, to expose everyone to ways of thinking and being in the world that may or may not be different from their own. I expect and encourage students to disagree with the course material, fellow classmates, and me; however, I expect that everyone will remain respectful and willing to listen at all times. Although you are under no obligation to agree with the course materials, the instructor, or the other students, you are still responsible for displaying a comprehension of the texts assigned and the conversations taking place.

If you have concerns about course content or the expectations regarding the classroom environment, please consult with me during the first week to determine whether this class is a good fit for you. If you are uncomfortable with or uninterested in discussions of race, gender, sexuality, class, histories of colonization, exploitation, capitalism, and violence, this class may not be for you as these will be central themes covered throughout the semester.

## **COMMUNICATION**

*Email:* You are welcome to email me with any questions or concerns. I expect, however, that you be timely and considerate with your emails. Requests or questions related to scheduled assignments that are received less than 12 hours before the assignment is due may not receive a response. Please be professional in your email communications with all your professors, including me.

*Office Hours:* Do not hesitate to come see me if you have any questions regarding the course materials or your written work. If you are unable to attend my scheduled office hours, contact me to set up another time by appointment.

## ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

You are expected to attend every class and be fully present in our collective space. ***Students will be allowed only two absences without penalty.*** All other absences will lower your participation grade for the course. ***Students with 5 or more absences will automatically receive a failing participation grade for the course.***

Students are expected to arrive to class on time; students arriving to class more than 10 minutes after the class has started will be marked absent for the day.

Please remember to bring the readings with you to class in order to appropriately reference and engage them during our discussions.

## LATE PAPER POLICY

***No Late Papers Will Be Accepted Without Penalty.*** A FULL letter grade will be deducted for every day that a paper is late (i.e., B+ to C+). Late papers also may not receive written comments. Papers cannot be rewritten. If you are having difficulty with an assignment, please come see me during my office hours.

## PAPER FORMAT

All papers must use 12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spacing, and 1" margins on all sides. All students must use the following header:

Your name  
 The class title  
 The assignment (i.e. midterm essay)  
 The date you handed in the paper (not the due date)

Students should use either Chicago or MLA style citations in a consistent manner throughout their written assignments. For more see the Library's Guide to Citing Sources: <https://guides.lib.utexas.edu/citesources>

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any breach of academic integrity will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary review. I expect all students to familiarize themselves with and adhere to UT's policies regarding academic misconduct, which can be accessed here: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>

## WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism is the appropriation of someone else's work or ideas – whether they are written or not – without acknowledgement, proper identification of the source, or citation. It is irrelevant whether this was done intentionally or not. Further, a lack of knowledge about U.S. standards of academic citation is not an excuse or explanation. While the most egregious forms of plagiarism use entire phrases, sentences, or paragraphs verbatim without quotation marks or citation, paraphrasing someone else's work without attribution *and* altering a few words to pass someone else's ideas off as your own also constitute equally

serious forms of plagiarism. The inclusion of non-textual images (i.e. drawings, maps, graphs, charts, and photos) in a paper is also considered plagiarism if the images are not properly cited.

It is *YOUR* responsibility to consult with your instructor, a librarian, or writing tutor if you are unsure or unclear about how to properly use citations.

For more information about plagiarism, please consult the Purdue Online Writing Lab's webpage dedicated to avoiding plagiarism: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

## **NEED HELP WITH WRITING ASSIGNMENTS?**

As I am unable to read paper drafts, I strongly recommend visiting the University Writing Center. At the Writing Center, you can work one-on-one with a trained writing tutor. Please avail yourselves of this wonderful resource – you will not regret it. For more information and to make an appointment: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

## **ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMODATIONS**

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Services with Students with Disability at 512-471-6259 or [ssd@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ssd@austin.utexas.edu) as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. For more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>

## **NAMES & PRONOUNS**

If you prefer to be called by a different name or referred to by a different gender pronoun than the one under which you are officially enrolled, please inform me. Students are expected to respectfully refer to each other by appropriate names and pronouns during class discussions.

## **ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING**

*Class Participation: 20%*

On-time completion of the reading assignments, active listening during lectures and in-class discussion, and adding to discussions by making comments and asking questions are all required of you in this course.

*Presentation and Discussion Facilitation: 30%*

In pairs, students will be responsible for facilitating **two** class discussions over the course of the semester. I will, of course, assist, direct, and add to the conversation as necessary, but you will be responsible for the structure and progression of class discussion. Although the format is flexible, and you are encouraged to be creative, you must be sure to address the following:

- the central argument/thesis of the text(s)
- how the author(s) develops their argument (i.e. the organization of the text)
- the author's/authors' methodology
- the evidence or examples the author/authors use to support their claims

- things you would have like the author to address/address
- what connections, if any, the day’s text(s) have with other readings from the course

Although you will be going over central claims and examples, please note that this is NOT simply a presentation summarizing the text. Rather, you are being asked to pose questions to your classmates and facilitate an engaging discussion of the text. As a group, you should plan ahead and work together to get creative with this assignment. For instance, you might consider incorporating debate, small group discussions, primary source analysis, multimedia, and/or other materials and exercises. Additionally, feel free to discuss how readings about particular historical moments might connect to contemporary issues. Again, please DO NOT just plan to summarize the readings and lecture the class – that will be highly unpleasant for everyone. **You should prepare a PowerPoint presentation to accompany your discussion.** You will be graded based on the thoughtfulness of your presentation/discussion plan, the clarity of your analysis, your grip on the text and the relevant context, and your effectiveness in engaging your classmates.

*Midterm Essay: 25%*

This exam will consist of a selection of short essay questions based on the first half of the course. Students will choose **one** question and write a 4-5 page paper responding to the question. Papers must seriously engage the readings and address the questions posed, demonstrating an understanding of key concepts and arguments from the course. This is a take home exam. **DUE BY EMAIL OCTOBER 26 at NOON.**

*Final Essay: 25%*

This exam will consist of a selection of short essay questions based on the second half of the course. Students will choose **one** question and write a 4-5 page paper responding to the question. Papers must seriously engage the readings and address the questions posed, demonstrating an understanding of key concepts and arguments from the course. This is a take home exam. **Due DECEMBER 17 at NOON.** No late essays will be accepted – finals handed in after the deadline will receive an automatic ZERO on the assignment.

**Week One The Violence of Border Formation**

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**Wednesday, August 29**

- Introduction to the course

**Friday, August 31**

- Joseph Nevins, “The Creation of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary and the Remaking of the United States and Mexico in the Border Region” \*

**Week Two: Extrajudicial Violence and Lynching on the Border I**

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Monday, September 3

- No class – Labor Day

Wednesday, September 5

- Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, Introduction

Friday, September 7

- Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, Chapter 1

### **Week Three: Extrajudicial Violence and Lynching on the Border II**

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Monday, September 10

- Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, Chapter 2

Wednesday, September 12

- Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, Chapter 3

Friday, September 14

- Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, Chapter 4

### **Week Four: Extrajudicial Violence and Lynching on the Border III**

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Monday, September 17

- Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, Chapter 5

Wednesday, September 19

- Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, Chapter 6

Friday, September 21

- Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, Epilogue

### **Week Five: The Zoot Suit Riots I**

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Monday, September 24

- Obregón Pagán, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon*, prologue and introduction

Wednesday, September 26

- Obregón Pagán, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon*, Chapters 2 and 3

Friday, September 28

- Obregón Pagán, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon*, Chapter 4

### **Week Six: The Zoot Suit Riots II**

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Monday, October 1

- Obregón Pagán, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon*, Chapter 7

Wednesday, October 3

- Obregón Pagán, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon*, Chapter 8

Friday, October 5

- Obregón Pagán, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon*, Chapter 9 and epilogue

### **Week Seven: Dispatches from the War on Drugs I**

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Monday, October 8

- Black, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Wednesday, October 10

- Black, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid*, Chapter 2 and 3

Friday, October 12

- Black, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid*, Chapter 4

### **Week Eight: Dispatches from the War on Drugs II**

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Monday, October 15

- Black, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid*, Chapter 5

Wednesday, October 17

- Black, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid*, Chapter 6
  - Recommended optional reading: Chapter 7

Friday, October 19

- Black, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid*, Chapter 8
  - Recommended optional reading: Chapter 9

### **Week Nine: Dispatches from the War on Drugs III**

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**Monday, October 22**

- Black, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid*, Chapter 10

**Wednesday, October 25**

- Black, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid*, Chapter 11 and Conclusion

**Friday, October 26**

- No class – Professor LeBrón will be at the Puerto Rican Studies Association Conference
- **MIDTERM EXAM DUE BY EMAIL @ NOON** – late papers will be penalized.

### **Week Ten: Coming of Age Under Mass Incarceration I**

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**Monday, October 29**

- Rios, *Human Targets*, Introduction and Chapter 1

**Wednesday, October 31**

- Rios, *Human Targets*, Chapter 2

**Friday, November 2**

- Rios, *Human Targets*, Chapter 3 and 4

**Week Eleven: Coming of Age Under Mass Incarceration II**

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**Monday, November 5**

- Rios, *Human Targets*, Chapter 5

**Wednesday, November 7**

- No class – Professor LeBrón will be at the American Studies Association Conference

**Friday, November 9**

- No class – Professor LeBrón will be at the American Studies Association Conference

**Week Twelve: Criminalizing (Im)migrants and (Im)migration I**

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**Monday, November 12**

- Rios, *Human Targets*, Chapter 6

**Wednesday, November 14**

- Macías-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison*, Introduction and Chapter 1

**Friday, November 16**

- Macías-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison*, Chapter 2

**Week Thirteen: Criminalizing (Im)migrants and (Im)migration II**

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**Monday, November 19**

- Macías-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison*, Chapter 3

**Wednesday, November 21**

- No Class – Thanksgiving Break

**Friday, November 23**

- No Class – Thanksgiving Break

**Week Fourteen: Criminalizing (Im)migrants and (Im)migration III**

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**Monday, November 26**

- Macías-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison*, Chapter 4

**Wednesday, November 28**

- Macías-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison*, Chapter 5

**Thursday, November 30**

- Macías-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison*, Chapter 6



**Week Fifteen: Abolitionist Futures**

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**Monday, December 3**

- John Washington, “What is Prison Abolition,” <https://www.thenation.com/article/what-is-prison-abolition/>
- Dan Berger, Mariame Kaba, and David Stein, “What Abolitionists Do,” <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/08/prison-abolition-reform-mass-incarceration>

**Wednesday, December 5**

- Alex S. Vitale, “Police and the Liberal Fantasy,” <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/10/police-reform-prisons-racism-vitale>
- Mychal Denzel Smith, “Abolish the Police. Instead, Let’s Have Full Social, Economic, and Political Equality,” <https://www.thenation.com/article/abolish-police-instead-lets-have-full-social-economic-and-political-equality/>

**Friday, December 7**

- Sean McElwee, “It’s Time to Abolish ICE,” <https://www.thenation.com/article/its-time-to-abolish-ice/>
- Domenic Powell, “How to Abolish ICE,” <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/06/abolish-ice-immigration-cbp-deportation>

**FINAL EXAM DUE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17 @ NOON.  
NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED – NO EXCEPTIONS!**