

**FALL 2018**  
**Transnational Latinx Popular Culture**  
MAS 374 (40954) AFR 372E (30677) LAS 328 (39772) WGS 340 (46069)

**PROFESSOR: LAURA G. GUTIÉRREZ**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course uses a set of interdisciplinary methods (mainly ethnic studies, Latina/o studies, cultural studies, and performance studies) to help us understand the kind of 'work' culture is doing in a larger framework, historical, economical, and societal. The class uses these theoretical and methodological lenses to examine transnational Latina/o popular culture from the 20th and 21st centuries in order to consider the ways in which it has been an important aspect of nation-building strategies on different scales, from nation-states to Latina/o communities in the US. We pay particular attention to expressive culture from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, focusing on social dance forms like samba, tango, and danzón. Additionally, sports spectacles are analyzed to understand the performance of masculinity, the interconnected between politics and 'entertainment' (soccer) and the theatricality of the spectacle (*lucha libre*—Mexican masked wrestling). The course material moves through the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and across geo-political divides to continue to put forward the idea that Latina/o popular culture is transnational (at the same time as translocal); cultural works that will be examined in order to grasp a full understanding of this notion run the gamut from the formation of salsa to the reggaetón phenomenon and *telenovela* (Latin American soap operas) industry to music television. In a more general way, the ultimate goal of the class is to get the student to think about the ways in which popular cultural forms are part of a 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century sensibility that is both part of "the practice of everyday life" and nation-building projects. But the student will be asked to think about how different publics consume popular culture (at times transforming it and/or changing its meaning) and, likewise, it is important to consider what happens when Latin American popular culture (thanks to the (transnational) cultural industries) travels, often across geo-political and linguistic borders (all within the hemisphere of the Americas). The operating question throughout the semester is then, what is transnational about Latina/o popular culture and why does this matter?

**REQUIRED READINGS: ALL WILL BE AVAILABLE THROUGH CANVAS**

**THE MAJORITY OF THE READINGS ARE SELECTED FROM THE FOLLOWING BOOKS:**

- \**Imagination Beyond Nation: Latin American Popular Culture*, edited by Eva P. Bueno and Terry Caesar
- \**Latino/a Popular Culture*, edited by Michelle Habell-Pallán and Mary Romero
- \**Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America*, edited by William Rowe and Vivian Schelling
- \**Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico since 1940*, edited by Gilbert Joseph, Anne Rubenstein, and Eric Zolov

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- \**From Bananas to Buttocks: The Latina Body in Popular Film and Culture*, edited by Myra Mendible
- \**Global Soundtracks: Worlds of Film Music* edited by Mark Slobin
- \**Keywords for Latina/o Studies* edited by Deborah R. Vargas, Nancy Raquel Mirabal, and Lawrence LaFountain-Stokes
- \**Música Norteña: Mexican Migrants Creating a Nation between Nations* by Cathy Ragland
- \**Oye Como Va! Hybridity and Identity in Latino Popular Music* by Deborah Pacini Hernández

In addition to the readings available through Canvas, you will have to watch a number of films/documentaries (some of which will be made available through links on Canvas or we will watch in class).

**FILMS/VIDEOS: ON RESERVES OR ONLINE**

*Latin Music USA* (produced by PBS)

*Telenovelas: Love, TV, Power* (produced by Films for the Humanities)

**FILMS/VIDEOS: SCREENED IN CLASS**

*Angelitos Negros* by Joselito Rodríguez

*Bananas is my Business* (on Carmen Miranda) by Helena Solberg

*Lucha Libre* by the National Geographic (on line)

*The Three Caballeros* (produced by Disney) (selections)

Additional material from films, documentaries, and music videos

**ADDITIONAL AUDIO/VISUAL MATERIAL**

Music and music videos will be played and/or shown during lecture class and, at the discretion of the professor. At times, students may propose music/music video to play/watch during class or during a presentation.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- **Attendance** and **Active** class participation → 20%
- One short class presentation → 20%
- Three short papers (3 pages; 10% each) → 30%
- Final Research Paper → 30%

**DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS:**

**ATTENDANCE AND ACTIVE CLASS PARTICIPATION (20%):**

Attendance is absolutely crucial (5%). **You are allowed a total of TWO excused absences.** After two absences, your final grade will be lowered by 5% points for each unexcused absence beyond the allowed limit of one. Tardiness will not be tolerated; please arrive to class on time.

The students are entirely responsible for class material that is covered during class lectures and discussions. The professor will not hold additional hours to cover material missed because of an absence. Office hours are exclusively for the review of material or if the student needs additional guidance (understanding concepts, historical contexts, etc).

There is an **active** participation component to your grade so you must come prepared to participate actively in the discussion of the assigned texts/materials. If class discussions become too professor-centered, the professor will upload questions that the student must then bring to class, with answers, in order to earn participation grade. The professor will ask each student to bring in a text to class to share and discuss. Additionally, you must be willing to listen to your fellow classmates and respond intelligently and respectfully.

This is **15%** of your grade, split this way: regular active participation (**10%**) and one rapid presentation that asks the student to bring in a text and a question to discuss with class for 5 minutes (**5%**)

**SHORT PAPERS (30%):**

You will have three 3-page papers (each worth 10%) based on course readings. These papers are designed to gauge your ability to synthesize the readings and to take a rigorously argued and logical position vis-à-vis that material. They are intended for the student to be able to expand the ideas that have been generated by the reading and/or viewings of films and in lecture and discussion sections. I will upload 4 questions (at the most, but perhaps 3) onto canvas and you will be asked to base your short essay on one of those questions. The papers are due during class and **NO LATER!**

**SHORT IN-CLASS PRESENTATION (20%)**

I am committed to a collective learning process and, to this end, towards the end of the semester, I would like each student to present on their ongoing research project that has used as its base some of the theoretical ideas and concepts in class in order to examine a popular cultural text. The presentation will be dynamic and could and should use visual material to exemplify. The idea is that we will learn together from each presentation.

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPER (30%)**

The final research paper asks you to engage a cultural text that falls into the category of Latinx popular culture and do a critical analysis, using some of the concepts that were discussed in class and/or discussed in the readings. The student is expected to also bring in other sources (limit the number of non-academic sources, make sure that some are also academic sources). The final research paper should be at least 7 pages in length, but no more than 10 pages.

**Grading Scale:**

92-100	A
80-91	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
below 60	E

**Notice regarding Academic Integrity**

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at Austin. More specifically, you and other students are expected to maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work undertaken at the University. This is a very basic expectation that is further reinforced by the University's Honor Code. At a minimum, you

should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them;
- follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

For additional information, particularly what constitutes Academic Dishonesty and about possible consequences, see:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>

### **Religious Holidays**

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **Documented Disability Statement**

The University of Texas provides on request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. At the beginning of the semester, students who need special accommodations should notify the instructor by presenting a letter prepared by the Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. Disabilities range from visual, hearing, and movement impairments to Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, psychological disorders (bipolar disorder, depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, etc.), and chronic health conditions (diabetes, multiple sclerosis, cancer, etc.). These also include from temporary disabilities such as broken bones, recovery from surgery, etc. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at (512) 471-6259 [voice], (512) 410-6644 [videophone], via e-mail at [ssd@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ssd@austin.utexas.edu), or visit: <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>.

### **Title IX**

All professors are mandatory reporters at UT, and the professor is required by law to report any misconduct that fall under Title IX law. For more information, please see: <https://titleix.utexas.edu>

### **IMPORTANT DEADLINES:**

First essay due: September 20

Second essay due: October 19

Third essay due: November 15

Final Presentations: last week of the semester

Final Essay: December 17 at 11am

### **CLASS SCHEDULE:**

**Week 1 (August 29-31) Introduction to the course; Modernity and Nation: Latin American Popular Culture**

**Thursday**

Discussion of syllabus and course requirements/expectations  
Discussion of concepts of folk culture, popular culture, mass culture

**Week 2 (September 3-7) Modernity and Nation: Latin American Popular Culture**

**Tuesday**

Continue discussion of concepts of folk culture, popular culture, mass culture  
Reading: "Popular Culture in Latin America" by Vivian Schelling and "Transnationalism" by Ginetta Candelario

**Thursday**

Reading: "Introduction: The Politics of the Popular in Latin American Popular Culture" by Caesar and Bueno

**Week 3 (September 10-14) The Role of Music in Nation-Building Projects (the case of Samba) AND Gender as Performance (the case of Samba and Carmen Miranda)**

**Tuesday**

Reading: "From Slavery to Samba" by William Rowe and Vivian Schelling and "Baianas, Malandros, and Samba: Listening to Brazil through Donald Duck's Ears" by Eric A. Galm  
Viewing: *The Three Caballeros* (selections)

**Thursday**

Reading: "Helena Solberg Unmasks a Brazilian Idol" by Nena Terrel  
Viewing: *Bananas is my Business* by Helena Solberg

**Week 4 (September 17-21) The Role of Music in Nation-Building Projects AND Gender as Performance (the case of Samba and Carmen Miranda)**

**Tuesday**

Reading: "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat" by Shari Roberts

**Thursday**

Continue discussing *Bananas is My Business* and Carmen Miranda in general

**Due: First Short Paper**

**Week 5 (September 24-28) Popular Literature: Literatura de Cordel, *historietas* (Comic Books), and *tiras cómicas* (Comic Strips)**

**Tuesday**

Reading: "Oral Poetry and the Art of Storytelling" by William Rowe and Vivian Schelling

**Thursday**

Reading: "Introduction" and "The Creation of Mexican Comic Books, 1934-1952" by Anne Rubenstein

**Week 6 (October 1-5) Argentine Soccer and Masculinity: From the Politics of a Style to Dictatorial Tactics**

**Tuesday**

Reading: "Playing Styles and Masculine Virtues in Argentine Football" by Eduardo Archetti

**Thursday**

Reading: "Los Desaparecidos y la Copa Mundial" by Grant Farred

**Week 7 (October 8-12) Urban Melodramas: Post-Revolutionary Mexico, Film, the Iconicity of Pedro Infante, Blackness, and Racial Anxieties**

**Tuesday**

Reading: "Bodies, Death and Cinema: Pedro Infante's Death as Political Spectacle" by Anne Rubenstein

**Thursday**

Reading: "'The Soul Has No Color, But the Skin Does': *Angelitos Negros* and the Uses of Blackface on the Mexican Silver Screen, ca. 1950" by Marilyn Miller and "Cri-Cri El Grillito Cantor is Beloved by Mexican Children, But It Has an Unexamined Problematic Past" by Eduardo Cepeda (on Remezcla)

Viewing: *Angelitos Negros* by Joselito Rodríguez

**Week 8 (October 15-19) The Spectacle of Good vs Evil (Live and Mediated): Masculinity and Lucha Libre in Mexico**

**Tuesday**

Reading: "El Santo's Strange Career" by Anne Rubenstein

Viewing: *Lucha Libre* (from the *National Geographic*) (during class)

**Thursday**

"Masked Media: The Adventures of Lucha Libre on the Small Screen" by Heather Levi

Viewing: selection of clips from a number of films featuring *El Santo* (during class)

**Due: Second Short Paper**

**Week 9 (October 22-26) 'The Tears of the Nation,' Melodrama on the Small Screen: The Case of *telenovelas***

**Tuesday**

Reading: "The Telenovela: From Melodrama to Farce" by William Rowe and Vivian Schelling AND "Memory and Form in the Latin American Soap Opera" by Jesús Martín-Barbero

**Thursday**

Reading: "Big Snakes on the Streets and Never Ending Stories" by Nelson Hippolyte Ortega

Viewing: *Telenovelas: Love, TV, Power*

**Week 10 (October 29-November 2) Spanish- and English-language Media in the US: Transnationalization of the Telenovela (Industry)**

**Tuesday**

"Televisual Melodrama in an Era of Transnational Migration" by Catherine L. Benamou

**Thursday**

Reading: "'Ugly' America Dreams the American Dream" by Isabel Molina-Guzmán

Viewing: *Ugly Betty* (clips will be shown in class)

**Week 11 (November 5-9) Music's Elusive Geographies: Salsa's Transnationality and Celia's Shoes**

**Tuesday**

Reading: "Situating Salsa: Latin Music at the Crossroads" by Lise Waxer

Viewing: *Latin Music USA*—program #1—(and other clips, shown during class)

**Thursday**

Reading: "Celia's Shoes" by Frances Negrón-Muntaner

Viewing: Celia Cruz music videos (clips, shown during class)

**Week 12 (November 12-16) Music's Elusive Geographies: Latino American Pop (and the Gen X icons)**

**Tuesday**

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Reading: "Shakira as the Idealized, Transnational Citizen: A case study of *Colombianidad* in Transition" by María Elena Cepeda

**Thursday**

Viewing: Viewing: *Latin Music USA*—program #4

Viewing: Shakira music videos (clips, will be shown in class)

**Due: Third Short Paper**

**Week 13 (November 19-23) Music's Elusive Geographies: Norteñas, Corridos, Mexicanidad, Migration, and the "Two Mexicos"**

**Tuesday**

Reading: "Mexicanidad and Música Norteña in the "Two Mexicos" and "Los Tigres del Norte and the Transnationalization of Música Norteña in the Working Class Mexican Diaspora" by Cathy Ragland

**Thursday: Thanksgiving -- No class**

**Week 14 (November 26-30) Music's Elusive Geographies: Reggaeton's Antecedents and its Circuitry**

**Tuesday**

Reading: "Turning the Tables: Musical Mixings, Border Crossings, and New Sonic Circuitries" by Deborah Pacini Hernández

Viewing: music videos (clips, will be shown in class)

**Thursday**

"Introduction: Reggaeton's Socio-Sonic Circuitry" by Wayne Marshal, Raquel Z. Rivera, and Deborah Pacini Hernández

"A Beginners Guide to the History and Hybridity of Reggaeton" by Caitlin Donohue

Viewing: music videos (clips, will be shown in class)

**Week 15 (December 3-7) Presentations**

**Tuesday: Presentations**

**Thursday: Presentations**

**FINAL PAPER DUE:  
DECEMBER 17  
TIME: 11AM (IN PROFESSOR'S OFFICE)**