African and African Diaspora Studies 374E
HIS363K, MAS374
Puerto Rico in Crisis
Fall 2017

Instructor: Dr. Mónica A. Jiménez
Meeting time and place: Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-3:30 BEN 1.122
Office: GWB 3.110
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00 – 11:00 am and by appointment
Email: Please use Canvas to send emails

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will provide a history of the island’s relationship with the United States focusing in particular on questions of law and capitalism. The course will center around two questions: What is Puerto Rico to the United States? And how did we get to the present moment of crisis? In answering these questions we will focus in particular in the ways that law has racialized islanders and conceived of them as unprepared and undeserving of rights and full citizenship. This conception has thus shaped the way that capitalism has worked as a force in shaping the islands possibilities throughout the 120 years of its relationship with the US. Ultimately, we will examine how the early 20th century imperial moment, which created the US-Puerto Rico relationship, continues to define that relationship today. We will focus in particular on topics of law, economic policy, politics and migration to understand Puerto Rico’s “American Century.”

This course carries the Cultural Diversity in the United States and Global Cultures flags.

Learning Goals
Students will encounter the broad arc of 20th century Puerto Rican history while engaging specific moments that have helped shape the island’s present. Students will gain a sense of historical processes of change over time, and a broad methodology for assessing how events and experiences influence the choices people make, what they believe is possible, and how these inform human activity today. Through this engagement students will strengthen analytical and critical thinking skills, while also developing and deepening their reading comprehension and writing skills.

Expectations and Assignments:

ATTENDANCE AND ACTIVE CLASS PARTICIPATION (20%): The success of this course requires your consistent presence in class as well as your contribution to class discussion.

Each student is expected to attend class, participate in discussions, and complete all reading and writing assignments by the deadlines indicated in this syllabus or any written addenda. Class discussions are an important component and students will be graded on their participation, contributions to discussions and engagement with their peers. It is the student’s responsibility to come to class prepared to discuss the reading
for this course; therefore, each student must arrive with two discussion questions based upon the weekly readings.

Lateness will not be tolerated. Late arriving students disrupt class. At the beginning of every session, I will take attendance. If you are not present within 10 minutes of the beginning of class time, you will be considered absent. The first two absences do not affect your grade. The fourth unexcused absence and every one thereafter will deduct 2 points (out of the 20 possible) from the attendance grade in the class. **You are responsible for keeping track of your absences.**

Absences can only be excused for university-recognized religious holidays and verifiable medical emergencies to you or your immediate family. If you plan to miss class due to observance of a religious holiday, please let me know at least two weeks in advance. If you have to miss a class and believe it should be excused, please contact me within a week of the absence so we can discuss it.

**Cell phone use will not be tolerated in class.** Please keep your cellphone silenced and in your pocket or bag. If you are texting in class, I will ask you to leave and you will be counted absent for that day.

**NEWS SUMMARIES (20%)**
Given that the history of Puerto Rico in crises is quite literally being written daily, an essential part of this course will be to keep track of the events on the island as they relate to the topics of our course. Students will explore the ways in which media sources report on and interpret contemporary issues and events in Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican community in the United States. Each week you will read a minimum of two articles about Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans and craft a brief (1 page) written summary in your own words.

- One of the articles must explore the relationship between the island and the United States (e.g. through politics, economics, migration); the other article can report any aspect of current life in PR or for mainland based Puerto Ricans. Please note the title, date and source of your newspaper articles and include a web address.
- Sources should be legitimate media/news sources and not simply entertainment or opinion blogs or websites. Acceptable examples include NY Times, Washington Post, Huffington Post, BBC, Guardian, etc. Sources in Spanish are acceptable.
- Please come to class prepared to discuss the current events on the island and how they relate to the topics discussed in class. These discussions will feature prominently in our course.
- Summaries will be due each Thursday before class and will be turned in via the course Canvas site.

**SHORT PAPER (20%)**
One 5-page paper due on **October 19**.
NB: If you know that you struggle with writing, or do not have a lot of experience with academic and historical writing, I encourage you to make an appointment with the Undergraduate Writing Center as soon as possible. ([http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/](http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/))

IN-CLASS EXAMINATION (20%)
Held on **November 21st**.

FINAL PAPER (20%)
Final 5-7 page paper due on **December 14th**.

EXTRA CREDIT (10%)
Attend a cultural or artistic program related to Puerto Rican culture, politics, and history and write a one to two page review of the event. This can include an event in and around Austin or on campus such as poetry readings, dance performances, concerts, films, and art exhibits. **These can be turned in anytime during the semester.**

Grade Breakdown

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Active Class Partic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>News Summaries</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Guidelines for all assignments, including the papers exam, will be distributed during the semester.

**Accommodations:**
The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities: phone: 512-471-6259; Videophone: 512-410-6644; email ssd@utaustin.utexas.edu.

**Required Books:** (On reserve at Perry-Castañeda Library)
All other readings will be available on Canvas.

**Course Schedule**

The professor reserves the right to deviate or modify parts of this schedule. All changes will include written notice and any modified syllabi will be posted on Canvas.

NB – Please prepare all readings for Tuesday’s class.

**Week One**

**August 31**, Introduction and Course Overview

**Week Two**

**September 5 and 7**, Puerto Rico: From one colonial master to another


**Week Three**

**September 12 and 14**, 20th Century


**Week Four**

**September 19 and 21**, The Insular Cases, 1901
Neuman and Brown-Nagin, *Reconsidering the Insular Cases*, Preface, xiii-37, 61-76
Excerpts from *Downes v. Bidwell*.


- Presentation by Eduardo Lalo and panel discussion at 4:00 pm followed by a reception at 5:00 pm.

**Week Five**

**September 26 and 28**, The Unincorporated Territory: To be “Foreign in a domestic Sense”
Neuman and Brown-Nagin, *Reconsidering the Insular Cases*, 103-212

**Week Six**

**October 3 and 5**, Puerto Ricans in the “American” Gaze
Poblete, *Islanders in the Empire*, 1-94
October 5– Hand out paper assignment

Week Seven

October 10 and 12, Americanization, Like it or Not.
Poblete, Islanders in the Empire, 139-172

Week Eight

October 17 and 19, Puerto Rican Politics in flux

October 19th– Short Paper Due

Week Nine

October 24 and 26, The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
José Trias Monge, Puerto Rico: Trails of the Oldest Colony in the World, (New Have, Yale UP, 1997), 88-140.

Week Ten

October 31 and November 2, Ni de aquí, ni de allá: Race and US Migration
Alamos-Pastrana, Seams of Empire, 1-85
• Piri Thomas, Down These Mean Streets (excerpt)

Week Eleven

November 7 and 9, Race and the Question of Puerto Rican Identity
Alamos-Pastrana, Seams of Empire, 86-154

- Pablo “Yoruba” Guzmán, “Before People Called Me a Spic, They Called Me a Nigger.”
- Willie Perdomo, “Nigger-Reecan Blues.”

**Week Twelve**


Selections from *None of the Above: Puerto Ricans in the Global Era* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007)

- Carlos Pabón, “The Political Status of Puerto Rico: A Nonsense Dilemma,“
- Christina Duffy Burnett, “’None of the Above’ Means more of the Same: Why Solving Puerto Rico’s Status Problem Matters”
- Juan Duchesne Winter “Vieques: Protests as a Consensual Spectacle”

**Week Thirteen**

**November 21, In Class Exam**

**Week Fourteen**

**November 28 and 30**, Crisis in the Making

Juan Gonzalez’ Speech on Puerto Rico’s Debt Crisis available at [http://www.democracynow.org/2015/10/21/coming_up_juan_gonzalez_speech_puerto](http://www.democracynow.org/2015/10/21/coming_up_juan_gonzalez_speech_puerto)


**Week Fifteen**

**December 5 and 7**, Colonialism, 3.0: What’s in a PROMESA


Excepts from *Puerto Rico v. Franklin California Tax Free Trust* and *Puerto Rico v. Sanchez-Valle*

**December 14th--- Final Papers Due**

**Grading Policy:**

Please note that this class, will utilize plus and minus options for final grades. Your grade will be determined based of this scale. For example, if you receive a “B” on the short paper, the corresponding numerical score would be 85. As 20\% of your grade, this will translate into (85 x .20=) 17. Adding all your grades will give you a final that
corresponds to a letter grade (83 translates into a B-). An “F” grade ranges in value between 35-0; the failure to submit an assignment will result in “0” points.

Final Grade Distribution:

A 94-100 A- 90-93 B+ 87-89 B 83-86 B- 80-82 C+ 77-79 C 73-76 C- 70-72

Late Work:
Late work will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Generally, except in the case of an excused absence, work submitted after an assigned deadline will not be eligible for full credit. Please communicate with me if you are having problems keeping to the schedule. It is better to talk through problems than ignore them.

Classroom Policies:
Laptops are not permitted for any reason in this course, unless there are legitimate, documented reasons why one would need a laptop to take notes. Cell phones are not permitted. If you are found using a cell phone for any reason, you will be asked to leave the class.

Academic Integrity:
Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the University of Texas’ policies on academic integrity, and the penalty for plagiarism and other forms of cheating. Please note, any instance of plagiarism in this course will result in an automatic “F” for the assignment; the final disposition of a penalty will follow the University’s guidelines. For more information regarding academic integrity please visit http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php

University of Texas Honor Code:
The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.