

# Engl 362A: Latinx Literary Genres

University of Washington, Spring 2025  
 Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:30-1:20pm  
 Location: ART 317

Professor Alexandria Ramos (she/her/ella)

Office: Padelford Hall, B427

Office Hours: In person Thursdays 2-4pm

Zoom Link for Remote Office Hours (by request): <https://washington.zoom.us/j/96869473391>

Reserve office hours appointment: <https://calendar.app.google/BRge5YvTpGtpYKkp8>

Email: [anramos@uw.edu](mailto:anramos@uw.edu) (responses within 48 hours, Mon-Fri)

## Course Description

This course builds foundations for studying Latinx literature by surveying the field's key concepts and distinctive genres. We begin by encountering writings connected to ethnic nationalist social movements in the 1960s-1970s, from which Ethnic Studies emerged as a disciplinary formation. As literatures in an activist tradition, the texts we study engage with an array of political concerns, such as: borders, migration, and diasporas; colonialisms; gender and sexual politics; race; labor; knowledge production; language politics. While this syllabus centers US writers, these thinkers evoke transnational affiliations and identifications, and their concerns are largely hemispheric. Moving forward and backward in time, our schedule of readings aims to familiarize us with a range of genres linked to Latinx literary traditions, like the *testimonio* or the ethnic bildungsroman. As we read, we will consider the relationship between a text's literary form and its content. We will also ask, how do these writers challenge us to imagine community, solidarity, and social justice? The thinking we do in the course will culminate in a project that asks us to design a syllabus unit for a Latinx literature course; this project allows us to build on what we have learned in the course to study the texts and ask the questions that are important to us.

## Learning Objectives:

1. Explore a range of key concepts and themes that emerge in Latinx literature, such as: borders, migration, and diasporas; Latinidad(es); the intersections of gender, race, and sexuality; community and citizenship; settler colonialisms and Indigeneity; language politics.
2. Analyze an array of literary genres, forms, and movements (e.g. novels, plays, essays, manifestoes)—especially those that are particular to Latinx cultural production, such as: the *crónica*, magic realism, Nuyorican poetry, etc.

3. Utilize forum posts and in-class discussion to hone close reading skills, specifically by attending to both a text's content and its literary form.
4. Think critically about how pieces of literature function alone and in conversation with other texts, both within and across periods and places.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of how syllabi, anthologies, and other collections intervene in (ideological, aesthetic, cultural, and otherwise) scholarly and public debates.
6. Produce tightly-argued writing based on careful analysis of evidence in the midterm and final assignments.

**Required readings:** all readings will be posted to Canvas. You should bring the readings to class every day, whether in printed or electronic format. The schedule on the syllabus tells us which readings we will discuss on each class date.

### **Assignments and Grading:**

We will be working with a labor-based contract grading model for this course. You will determine your own grade based on the amount of work you do for this course. You will be evaluated on and responsible for the following:

1. Participation and engagement
2. Regular forum discussion posts and Google form submissions
3. A mid-semester essay
4. The final syllabus project
5. Additional assignments based on which grade you contract for.

Please see the "Grade Contracts" document for more details.

**Extensions and Late Work:** You are allowed one "free" 48-hour extension for a weekly forum writing assignment—no questions asked and no notice needed. This "free" extension can also be used for the required midterm essays, but not for the final syllabus project. I will grant additional extensions for extenuating circumstances, but you should email me to communicate before the deadline. If you are concerned about your ability to submit an assignment on time, please reach out to me about it as soon as possible. Repeated late submission of assignments may negatively impact your grade.

**Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism or academic dishonesty of any kind cannot be tolerated. Plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense: it will result in failure of the course and will be reported to your dean. You should familiarize yourself with the UW page on Community Standards and Student Conduct titled "Academic Misconduct." <https://www.washington.edu/cssc/for-students/academic-misconduct/> The UW

Libraries site also has a helpful guide on how to avoid plagiarism:

<https://guides.lib.uw.edu/hsl/writer/plagiarism>

**AI Policy:** The assignments in this class help us hone not only our writing skills, but also our critical thinking skills. Since written assignments are essentially critical thinking assignments, it is cheating to have AI do the thinking for you. You may not ask AI to compose a discussion forum post or a paper for you (in whole or in part). That said, I know some of us like to use AI to improve our grammar or help put the finishing polish on our writing. I am open to our using AI in this way, but I ask that if you use it for a writing assignment (whether a forum post or a paper), you add a note at the end. The note should say 1) what you used the AI for, and 2) the specific prompt(s) you gave it. I am hoping that this brief reflection can help us think critically about how to use technology as a supportive tool for learning (as opposed to just a shortcut). In class, I also may also have check-ins about how we tend to use AI, and will be open to adjusting this policy to meet our needs.

**Attendance:** The University of Washington has listed this as an in-person course, and there is no provision for remote attendance. The UW is a non-attendance-taking institution; you will not be graded on attendance. This being said, completing writing assignments successfully requires active engagement in the class. Please see “Grade Contract” document for more details.

### **What does “good participation” in class look like?**

You attend class regularly and arrive on time. You have completed the readings in advance and have them accessible so that you can easily refer to them in class. You put thought and effort into any forum posts or Google forms, and submit them on time. On a daily basis, you actively participate in each class session by listening to your colleagues and sharing your thoughts. Because you have prepared appropriately for class, your comments are relevant and on topic. Though you might disagree with classmates, you communicate your ideas in a respectful and considerate manner, adhering to the class norms. You wait until the instructor has dismissed the class before packing up your materials and leaving.

That said, I realize not everyone feels comfortable speaking in class and that everyone learns differently. There are multiple ways to demonstrate your participation and engagement in the course, including: speaking in class; listening and taking notes in class; forum posts; Google forms; visiting office hours, etc. However, I encourage you all to take intellectual chances by expressing your ideas and by asking questions in class. Our goal is to learn together how to read and write in an academic setting and everyone’s ideas are an important part of that endeavor.

\*If you have any concerns, or if there is anything specific that I can do to improve your experience in the class and to help you reach your goals, please do not hesitate to tell me.

**Community and Respect for Diversity:** Our goal is to create a community of readers, writers, and thinkers who learn from and respect one another. Accordingly, we must seek to create the conditions under which every student feels comfortable participating in class by establishing a safer, more inclusive learning environment. Respect for diversity of all kinds—in terms of race, ethnicity, age, sex and gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, political and cultural beliefs—is essential for creating a classroom community where we can all explore new and different ways of thinking. This is important to consider, because we will be discussing sensitive and complex topics related to social, cultural, and political issues throughout the semester. As a group, we will generate some norms that will guide our discussions and interactions with one another; my hope is that we will kindly respect the different thoughts of each member of this class.

## Additional Information and Resources

**Religious Observance:** As a nonsectarian, inclusive institution, UW policy permits members of any religious group to absent themselves from classes without penalty when required for compliance with their religious obligations. The policy and principles to be followed by students and faculty may be found here:

<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>

**Disability Resource Services:** Academic accommodations and support are available to any student with a disability. Students with disabilities should register with the Disability Resource Services, which can arrange for things like extra time for exams. The instructor must also be notified at the beginning of semester for special accommodations regarding assessment and assignments. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), contact DRS directly to set up an Access Plan. Contact DRS at [disability.uw.edu](http://disability.uw.edu).

**Title IX Office:** The title IX coordinator (Valery Richardson) is a resource for questions and concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other forms of sexual misconduct, and is available to discuss your rights and judicial options. More information at: <https://www.washington.edu/titleix/>

**Bias Reporting Tool:** You may report any incidents of bias or suspected bias using the UW's bias reporting tool, which was created in partnership with the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity, the Office of Student Life and the president's Race & Equity Initiative. <https://www.washington.edu/bias/>

**The Writing Center:** offers tutoring and support on writing projects. This is a drop-in service, with in-person or online options. More information at: <https://academicsupport.uw.edu/clue/subjects/writing-center/>

**CLUE Tutoring:** CLUE tutoring is a resource you can access when you're struggling in a class; it's a welcoming, inclusive space for students to connect, ask questions about various subjects, prepare for exams, and have support on homework. This is a drop-in service with in-person and online options. More information at: <https://academicsupport.uw.edu/clue/>

**Student Wellness:** The UW Counseling Center is a mental health resource where currently enrolled students can receive assistance with adjustment issues, depression, anxiety, relationship concerns, and a variety of other challenges. If you are in crisis and

need to talk to someone, the Husky HelpLine (206-616-7777) gives students access to same-day, confidential mental health and crisis intervention support, 24/7 and in multiple languages. Find more information about mental health resources at UW: <https://wellbeing.uw.edu/topic/mental-health/>

**Food Security Resources:** Any Hungry Husky provides food assistance to members of the UW community. Through this program, you can apply for a \$100 food security grant on your Husky Card to be used at UW dining services locations. The UW Food Pantry provides UW students, staff and faculty with shelf-stable groceries and seasonal fresh produce for no cost. Visitors may come to the UW Pantry once per week at any time during business hours and select their own items. More info at: <https://www.washington.edu/anyhungryhusky/>

**The Q Center:** serves LGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff, and fosters an affirming and inclusive community where everyone's gender and sexual identities are celebrated. Their programs, resources, and support empower students and staff to thrive—personally, socially, and academically. Guided by values of justice, respect, and liberation, the Q Center is a space where all individuals can find connection, healing, and the freedom to be their authentic selves. <https://sites.uw.edu/qcenter/>

**The Samuel E Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center:** serves and empowers historically marginalized and underrepresented students by providing educational and cultural opportunities for holistic development. The ECC has a wealth of resources and opportunities available to students including student advising, organizational development, personal growth, and referrals to different departments and programs. <https://depts.washington.edu/ecc/>

## Schedule of Readings

\*Readings are subject to change. I may make tweaks to improve the quality of our course.

### Introduction and Foundations

#### Tu, April 1

- Amanda Smith and Ricardo Franco, "Introduction: The Politics of Latinx Literature Today" (2018). **ONLY READ** the section titled "What is Latinx Literature?" pp 9-12.
- Javier Zamora, "Nó, Actually, Soy Salvadoreño" (2020)
- Lorna Dee Cervantes, "Refugee Ship" (1981)
- Excerpt from Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987)

#### Th, April 3

- Tomás Almaguer, "Race, Racialization, and Latino Populations in the United States" (2016) pp 210-223.
- Alan Pelaez Lopez, "The X in Latinx Is A Wound, Not A Trend" (2018).
- Vielka Cecilia Hoy, "Negotiating among Invisibilities: Tales of Afro-Latinidades in the United States." from *The Afro-Latin@ Reader* (2010). Pp 426-430.
- Aida Lambert, "We Are Black Too: Experiences of a Honduran Garifuna." From *The Afro-Latin@ Reader*. pp 431-433.

Further (optional) reading:

- ["Latinidad is Cancelled': Confronting an Anti-Black Construct"](#) by Tatiana Florez (2021).
- Frances R. Aparicio, "Latinidad/es" in *Keywords for Latina/o Studies* (2017), pp 113-117.

### Latinx Youth Activism and Cultural Nationalisms of the 1960s-1970s

#### Tu, April 8

- El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán (1969) pp 27-30
- Excerpts from El Plan de Santa Barbara (1969)
- Rodolfo "Corky" González, "I am Joaquin" (1967)

Further study: [\*Chicano! History of The Mexican American Civil Rights Movement\*](#) (1996) directed by Hector Galán [It is a fabulous four-part PBS documentary available freely online].

### Th, April 10

- **Field trip:** UW Special Collections (in basement of Allen Library, South). Exact classroom location TBA.

### Tu, April 15

- Selections from *The Young Lords: A Reader*:
  - “Young Lords Party 13-Point Program and Platform (Revised 1970)” (pp 11-13); “Rules of Discipline of the Young Lords Organization” (pp 13-15); “Introduction” and “Definition of Terms” from the pamphlet *Ideology of the Young Lords Party* (pp16-18); “Colonized Mentality and Non-Conscious Ideology” (pp 22-25); “Interview with Cha-Cha Jimenez” (pp 27-29); “YLP Editorial: Separation from the YLO” (pp 47-9) “Community Education” (125-6); “Women’s Oppression: Cortejas” (pp163-4); “Sterilized Puerto Ricans” (pp 165-6); “Young Lords Block Street with Garbage” (pp 185-186); “El Barrio and YLO Say No More Garbage in Our Community” (pp 186-7); “Ten Point Health Program” (pp 188-9); “TB Truck Liberated” (196-7)
- Piri Thomas, “Down These Mean Streets” (excerpted from the 1967 novel) in *The Afro-Latin@ Reader* pp 219-231.

Further (optional) reading: *Through The Eyes of Rebel Women: The Young Lords 1969-1976*, edited by Iris Morales

## Nuyorican Poetics

### Th, April 17

- From *Nuyorican Poets: An Anthology of Words and Feelings* (edited by Miguel Algarín and Miguel Piñero, 1975)
  - Miguel Algarín, “Introduction” and “Outlaw Poetry” (pp1-27).
  - Miguel Piñero, “The Book of Genesis According to Saint Miguelito” (pp 62-4)
- Pedro Pietri, “Puerto Rican Obituary” (1971)

Further (optional) reading:

- Sandra María Esteves, “Black Notes and ‘You Do Something To Me’” in *The Afro-Latin@ Reader*. pp 233-234.
- Victor Hernández Cruz, “African Things” from *The Afro-Latin@ Reader*. p 232

## Feminisms

### Tu, April 22

- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) – Excerpts:
  - “The Homeland Aztlán / El otro México” (pp 1-14)
  - “Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan” (pp 15-24)
  - “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” (pp53-64)
  - “La Consciencia de La Mestiza: Towards a New Mestiza Consciousness” (pp 77-101)
  - “El Retorno” (pp 192-203)

### Th, April 24

- Selections from *This Bridge Called My Back* (edited by Anzaldúa and Moraga, from the 2002 edition):
  - Prefaces and Introductions from Toni Cade Bambara, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Cherríe Moraga (pp xl-lvi)
  - Kate Rushin, “Bridge Poem” (lvii-lviii)
  - Section headings: “Children Passing in The Streets” (pp3-4), “Entering into The Lives of Others” (pp 22), “And When You Leave, Take Your Pictures With You” (pp 63-65), “Between The Lines” (pp 113-115), “Speaking in Tongues” (pp 181-2), “El Mundo Zurdo” (pp 217-218)
  - Cherríe Moraga, “La Guerra” (pp 24-33)

### Tu, April 29

- Sandra Cisneros, from *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (1991):  
“Woman Hollering Creek” (pp 43-57) and “Never Marry a Mexican” (pp 68-83)

### Th, May 1

- *When Language Broke Open: An Anthology of Queer and Trans Black Writers of Latin American Descent* (2023), edited by Alan Pelaez Lopez. Selections

### Further (optional) reading:

- Luisa Capetillo, “To My Daughter Manuela Ledesma Capetillo” (ca. 1913) in *A Nation of Women: An Early Feminist Speaks Out* (pp 58-78)
- *Daughters of Latin America: An International Anthology of Writing by Latine Women* (2023), edited by Sandra Guzman

## Ethnic Bildungsroman

### Tu, May 6

- Julia Alvarez, *How The Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* (1991). Read the first half (stop at page 149—the end of “Daughter of Invention”)

### Th, May 8

- Julia Alvarez, *How The Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* (continued). Second half of the book.

### Friday, May 9

\*\*\*Paper Due\*\*\*

\*\*\* Mid-Quarter Self-Assessment Paragraph Due. \*\*\*

## Latinx Drama

### Tu, May 13

- Luis Valdez, *Zoot Suit* (1979)

## Magic Realism and Speculative Fiction

### Th, May 15

- **\*\*New clusters assigned\*\***
- Carmen Maria Machado, from *Her Body and Other Parties* (2017): “The Husband Stitch” and “Inventory” (pp 3-43)

Further (optional) reading: Junot Diaz, “Monstro” (2012)

### Tu, May 20

- Ana Castillo, *So Far From God* (1993) – Read first half of novel (Chapters 1-8).  
\*\*Trigger Warning: sexual assault

### Th, May 22

- Ana Castillo, *So Far From God* – Read second half of novel (Chapter 9-16).

## ***Crónica* and The Sketch**

### **Tu, May 27**

- José Martí, from *Selected Writings*: “Our America” (pp 288-296)
- Jesús Colón, *A Puerto Rican in New York, and Other Sketches* (1961) . Read the following:
  - “Preface” (9-10)
  - “1. A Voice Through The Window” (11-13)
  - “4. The Way To Learn” (17-21)
  - “5. Stowaway” (22-24)
  - “6. Easy Job, Good Wages” (25-27)
  - “7. Two Men With But One Pair of Pants” (28-29)
  - “20. Trujillo’s Fair of Blood” (73-75)
  - “28. Carmencita” (102-110)
  - “30. Little Things Are Big” (115-117)
  - “31. The Mother, The Young Daughter, Myself, and All of Us” (118)
  - “43. Reading in the Bathtub” (162-165)
  - “55. A Puerto Rican in New York” (197-202)

## **Life Writing and *Testimonio***

### **Th, May 29**

- Evelio Grillo, *Black Cuban, Black American* (2000) – Read until the end of chapter 11: “Dunbar High” (page 71)

### **Tu, June 3**

- [Trigger warning: sexual abuse] The Latina Feminist Group, *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios* (2001). Read: “You Speak Spanish Because You Are Jewish?” by Rita Benmayor (55-59), “A *Escondidas*: A Chicana Feminist Teacher Who Writes/A Chicana Feminist Writer Who Teaches” by Norma E. Cantú (123-131), “I Can Fly: Of Dreams and Other Nonfictions” by Eliana Rivero (156-166), “Missing Body” by Caridad Souza (266-269), “Telling To Live: *Devoro La Mentira, Resucitando Mi Ser*” by Inés Hernandez Avila (298-301), “Shameless Desire” by Aurora Levins Morales (305-6)

### **Th, June 5**

- Final Project Presentations

### **No Final Exam**

- **Final projects are due Wednesday, June 11 at 6:20pm.**