

Comparative Studies 677.02: Latin American Folklore

Comparative Studies in the Politics of Culture

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Description:

In this course we will examine the theory and practice of folklore studies in Latin America by scholars from Latin America and the United States. We will attempt a broad overview of the contemporary cultural influences on the region, examining issues of ethnic identity, neoliberalism, new social movements, nationalism and transnationalism. At the same time we will explore some of the best recent case studies on the politics of culture—festival in Venezuela, salsa as a global phenomenon, the marketing of indigenous crafts in Mexico. Students will be expected to complete two research papers, the first on a common topic for the class and the second in an area of their own choosing. I will make every effort to assist interested students in creating projects for class credit that may also have a life in the larger academic sphere.

Objectives:

- Discover the contours of Latin American cultural theory
- Gain a broad overview of folk and popular forms in Latin America
- Practice the Politics of Culture approach to folklore analysis
- Conduct coordinated research with colleagues that might result in a panel presentation at an academic conference
- Conduct independent research in an area of specific interest to you

Required Readings:

1. Course Packet. Available at Library Reserve and Comp Studies Office
2. Web Articles. Available through CARMEN
3. Books: Available at SBX
 - a. Waxer, Lise. 2002. *Situating Salsa: Global Markets and Local Meaning in Latin Popular Music*. New York: Routledge. ISBN: 0815340206
 - b. García Canclini, Néstor. 1993. *Transforming Modernity: Popular Culture in Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press. ISBN: 0292727593

- c. Guss, David. 2000. *The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity and Nationalism as Cultural Performance*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press. ISBN: 0520202899

Grading:

Attendance and Participation
Research Tolls Assignment
Leading Discussion Assign
Oral Presentation, Class Project

10%

10%

10%

10%

Essay, Class Project

[UG 5-8 pp; Grad 8 - 10 pp]

Oral Presentation, IR

[UG 8 - 10 pp; Grad 15 - 20 pp]

20%

10%

30%

University Policies:

Special Needs

I will make every effort to accommodate special needs, as long as these needs are clearly communicated to me at the beginning of the quarter.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, or using the ideas or words of others without appropriate citation, is an academic crime. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be taken to the Committee on Academic Misconduct, who will decide on the penalty, which may range from failure of the course to suspension from the University.

Class Schedule [Subject to Revision]

Week One: Introduction to the Politics of Culture in Latin America

Jan. 3 : What is Folklore? What is Latin America? Political and Cultural Interfaces.

Maps, Groups, Categories, Approaches.

Reading Assignment:

1. Williams, Raymond. 1977. Dominant, Residual and Emergent. In his *Marxism and Literature*, pp. 121-127. New York: Oxford University Press. [handout]
2. Martín-Barbero, Jesús. [1991] 2001. The Processes: From Nationalisms to Transnationalisms. In *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*, pp. 351-383. Eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
3. [handout]
4. *Optional:* Rivas Rojas, Raquel. On *Chavismo*: Interview with Yolanda Salas (Caracas, 7 September 2004). 2005. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 14 (3), pp. 325-333. [CARMEN]

Jan. 5 The Variety of the Popular in Latin America Mexican Muralists, Cantinflas, Gauchos, Samba, and Genocide in Guatemala.

Reading Assignment:

1. Rowe, William and Vivian Schelling. 1991. Introduction. *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America*. New York: Verso. [RESERVE]
2. Pérez, Domino Renee. 2002. Caminando con La Llorona: Traditional and Contemporary Narratives. In *Chicana Traditions: Continuity and Change*, 100-113. Eds. Norma E. Cantú and Olga Nájera-Ramírez. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. [RESERVE]
3. de Andrade, Oswaldo. Cannibal Manifesto. (Web site) [CARMEN]
4. Retamar, Caliban. 1997 [1971] Caliban: A Question. In *The Oxford Book of Latin American Essays*, pp. 375-378. Ed. Ilan Stavans. New York: Oxford. [RESERVE]

Research Assignment:

Investigate one of the internet sites or databases dedicated to Latin American and/or folklore studies.

Write a one page response describing: 1. What the site or database contains. 2. How this material might be used. Due Jan. 12th.

Sites: LANIC (google), AFS (google), HRAF (in Oscar/gateway/anthropology), LASA (google), OSU-CFS, Hemispheric Institute (www.hemi.nyu.edu), Worldcat (Oscar).

Week Two: Nationalist Mythologies and Postcolonial Metaphors

Jan. 10 Caliban, La Malinche, La Llorona, and Cannibalism

Reading Assignment:

1. Chance, John K. and William B. Taylor. 1985. Cofradías and Cargos: An Historical Perspective on the Mesoamerican Civil-Religious Hierarchy. *American Ethnologist* 12 (1), 1-26. [CARMEN]

- Herrera-Sobek, María. 1991. *Corridos and Canciones of Mica, Migra, and Coyotes: Commentary on Undocumented Immigration*. In *Creative Ethnicity: Symbols and Strategies of Contemporary Ethnic Life*, 87-104. Eds., Stephen Stern and John Allan Cicala. Logan: Utah State University Press. [available through Netlibrary-OSCAR]

Jan. 12: Dominant, Residual and Emergent Structures for Cultural Production Cofradías and Corridos, old and new.

Research Tools Assignment Due

Reading Assignment:

- Fagen, Richard R. 1969. Toward a New Political Culture. In his *The Transformation of Political Culture in Cuba* pp. 1-32. Stanford Univ. Press. [RESERVE]
- Dagnino, Evelina. Culture, Citizenship and Democracy: Changing Discourses and Practices of the Latin American Left. In *Politics of Cultures, Cultures of Politics: Revisioning Latin American Social Movements*, pp. 33-63. Eds. Sonai E. Álvarez, Evelina Dagnino and Arturo Escobar. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. [RESERVE]
- Optional* Retamar, Roberto Fernández. 1996. The Enormity of Cuba. *boundary 2* (23) 165-190. [CARMEN]

Research Assignment:

Identify one or more areas of interest for your individual research project.

Week Three: Cultures of Politics, Politics of Cultures

Jan. 17 From Anti-imperial Revolution to New Social Movements

Reading Assignment:

- de Valle, Susana. 1989. Discourses of Ethnicity: The Faces and the Masks. In *Ethnicity and Nation-building in the Pacific*, pp. 50-73. Edited by Michael C. Howard. Tokyo: The United Nations University. [RESERVE]
- Linnekin, Jocelyn. 1992. On the Theory and Politics of Cultural Construction in the Pacific. *Oceania* 62: 249-263. [RESERVE]
- Cara-Walker, Ana. 1987. Cocoliche: The Art of Assimilation and Dissimulation among Italians and Argentines. *Latin American Research Review* 22 (3): 37-67. [CARMEN]
- Optional* Fanon, Franz. 1961. On National Culture. In his *The Wretched of the Earth*. [RESERVE]

Jan. 19 Ethnic Identity and Progressive Politics. What is Ethnicity? What is Tradition? What is Popular and what is Folk?

In-class discussion of individual student research interests

Reading Assignments:

1. Gloria Anzaldúa, Towards a New Consciousness. 1987. In her *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, pp. 99-120. [RESERVE]
2. Kapchan, Deborah A. and Pauline Turner Strong. 1999. *Journal of American Folklore* 112 (445): 239-253. [CARMEN]
3. Les Field. 1998. Post-Sandinista Ethnic Identities in Western Nicaragua. *American Anthropologist* 100 (2): 431-443. [CARMEN]
4. *Optional* Charles Hale. 1999. Travel Warning: Elite Appropriations of Hybridity, Mesizaje, Antiracism, Equality and Other Progressive-Sounding Discourses in Highland Guatemala. *Journal of American Folklore* 112 (445), 297-315. [CARMEN]

Week Four: Identity

Jan. 24: Hybridity and Mestizaje: Theoretical Promises and Cautions

Reading Assignment:

1. Waxer, ed. *Situating Salsa*, Chapters 1, 2, and 3, pp. 3-74
2. *Optional* bell hooks. [1992] 2001. Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance. In *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*, pp. 424-438. Eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Jan. 26: Film: Salsa: Latin Pop Music in the Cities

Reading Assignment:

1. Waxer, ed. *Situating Salsa*: Choose two chapters from Part II.

Research Assignment:

Research a Latin music scene through internet, movies, popular and academic press.

Week Five: Transnational Folklore: Popular Music and Dance

Jan. 31 Film: Roots of Rhythm: Episode #2

Reading Assignment:

1. Waxer, ed. *Situating Salsa*, Chapters 10, 12, and 13

Feb. 2 Student Presentations on a Latin Dance Scene

Research Assignment:

1. Write up your analysis of a Latin Dance Scene.
2. Bring a craft from home to discuss in class.

Week Six: State Projects: Indigenous Craft

Feb. 7: Lecture/Discussion: Craft production, circuits, meaning and value.

First Paper Due—Researching a Latin Dance Scene

Reading Assignment:

1. García Canclini, *Transforming Modernity*, Chapters 1 and 2.

Feb 9: National Projects and the Circulation of Goods

Reading Assignment:

1. García Canclini, *Transforming Modernity*, Chapters 3,4, 5.
2. *Optional* Brandes, Stanley. 1998. The Day of the Dead, Halloween, and the Quest for Mexican National Identity. *Journal of American Folklore* 111 (442): 359-380. [CARMEN]

Week Seven: State Projects: Festival

Feb. 14: Re-imagining Indigenous Craftsmanship

Reading Assignment:

1. Guss, *The Festive State*, Chapters 1, 2.
2. *Optional* Bendix, Regina. 1997. From Fakelore to the Politics of Culture: The Changing Contours of American Folkloristics. In her *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies*, pp. 188-218. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. [RESERVE]

Feb. 16 Festival as Contested Terrain: Centers and Peripheries

Reading Assignment:

1. Guss, *The Festive State*, Chapters 3, 4, 5.

Week Eight: Popular Religion and Oral Narrative

Feb. 21: Festival as Contested Terrain: Indigeneity, Corporate Sponsorship, Gender

In-class discussion of individual research progress—oral report sign-ups.

Reading Assignment:

1. Perez y Mena, Andres I. 1998. Cuban Santeria, Haitian Vodun, Puerto Rican Spiritualism: A Multiculturalist Inquiry into Syncretism. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37 (1): 15-27. [CARMEN]
2. Borland, Katherine. 2003. Pilgrimage to Popoyuapa: Catholic Renewal and Ethnic Performance in Neoliberal Nicaragua. *Journal of American Folklore* 116 (462): 391-419. [CARMEN]
3. Vidaurri, Cynthia L. 2002. Las Que Menos Quería El Niño: Women of the Fidencista Movement. In *Chicana Traditions: Continuity and Change*, pp. 133-142. Eds. Norma E. Cantú and Olga Nájera Ramírez. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. [RESERVE]

Feb. 23: Film: Santería or Vodun

Reading Assignment:

1. Basso, Ellen B. 1981. A "Musical View of the Universe" Kalapalo Myth and Ritual as Religious Performance. *Journal of American Folklore* 94 (373): 273-291. [CARMEN]
2. Schechner, Richard. 1996. Waehma. In his *The Future of Ritual*. New York: Routledge. [RESERVE]
3. *Optional* Harris, Max. 1996. Moctezuma's Daughter: The Role of La Malinche in Mesoamerican Dance. *Journal of American Folklore* 109 (432): 149-177. [CARMEN]

Week Nine: Myth and History

Feb. 28: Myth, History and the Ethics of Fieldwork.

Reading Assignment:

1. Veronique Champion-Vincent. 1990. The Baby-Parts Story: A New Latin American Legend. *Western Folklore* 49: 9-25. [CARMEN]
2. Basso, Ellen B. 1989. Kalapalo Biography: Psychology and Language in a South American Oral History. *American Anthropologist* 91: 551-569. [CARMEN]

Mar. 2: Contemporary Oral Texts

Week Ten: Student Presentations

Mar. 7: Student Presentations of Individual Research

Mar. 9: Student Presentations of Individual Research

Finals Week

Mar. 13: Final Papers Due