

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2019-2020 LA ST 330 A1: The Latino Experience Abroad
(Fall Term)**

Instructor: Russell Cobb

Time: 11:00-11:50MWF

Office: 409 C, Old Arts Bldg.

Place: HC 2-15

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Office Hours: Monday, 3:00-5:00

E-mail: rcobb@ualberta.ca

or by appointment

Personal Website: <https://www.ualberta.ca/arts/about/people-collection/russell-cobb>

Course Prerequisite: None

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate prerequisites for the course.

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed, no such projects approved

Community Service Learning Component:

Optional

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students' Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exams>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

Course Description and Objectives:

Explore the diversity of Latin American cultural expressions as they migrate northward to the United States and Canada. Through an examination of a variety of texts—mostly nonfiction literature—we will highlight a number of critical terms in identity formation: imagined communities, nomadism, contact zones, and transculturation. The course aims to understand Latino identity formation especially in light of the Trump administration.

Objectives. Successful students will be able to:

- Define and discuss key terms and concepts in Latin American Studies like “transculturation,” “contact zones,” and “nomadism.”

- Recognize the stylistic differences between different genres of Latino writing; i.e. *crónica*, memoir, journal, narrative nonfiction, etc.
- Improve writing and research skills in scholarly and popular modes of writing.
- Produce a work of depth—either through the CSL component or through a traditional research paper—that showcases your expertise in one aspect of Latino cultural identity.

Course format: Lectures, discussions, and activities in class. Substantial reading and writing outside of class.

Additional Course Fees

No

Important Dates: [See Academic Schedule in current Calendar](#)

First Day of Class: September 4, 2019

Add/Delete Date: September 16, 2019

50% Withdrawal Date: October 3, 2019

Withdrawal Date: November 29, 2019

Last Day of Class: December 6, 2019

Final Exam Date (if applicable): N/A

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): Please consult the following site: [https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations_\(Exams\)](https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations_(Exams))

Deferred Final Examination: For information on how to apply for a deferred exam see [“I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?”](#)

Texts (all required):

Aguirre, Carmen. *Mexican Hooker #1: Art, Love, and Forgiveness*. Vintage Canada, 2017.

Díaz, Junot. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2007.

Acosta, Oscar Zeta. *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo*. Vintage, 1989.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Aunt Lute Books, 2012.

Ronald Mize. *Short Introductions: Latino/a Studies*. Polity, 2018.

All other readings will be scanned and held in a Google Drive folder. You MUST print them out and bring them to class on the assigned day. Sorry trees, but you can recycle the paper later.

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):
Term Work 100%

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Quizzes x 5 (20% total). There will be five 10-question multiple choice quizzes spread out through the term. The purpose of these quizzes is to make students accountable for attending class and doing readings. The questions will come straight from class discussion. The lowest score will be dropped at the end of the term. There will be no makeups for quizzes and if you arrive late, you will not get extra time.

Short essay on one keyword (20%). Students will write a short (800-1000 word) paper on one key term discussed during the first 4 weeks of class. Key words will be discussed later. Students will be asked to discuss the term and then make some sort of argument about it. Due September 30

Class attendance (10%) Two “free” unexcused absences. After each one after that, this mark decreases by 10% for each absence. Arriving more than five minutes late counts as tardy. Two tardies=one absence.

Oral presentation (10%) 15 minute presentation on a topic of interest. Topics to be discussed and assigned the third week of class. Students will be asked to relate some current topic in Latinx popular culture to theoretical discussion in class.

Informal discussion in writing (20%) Five times during the term, students will be asked to post their thoughts on a class discussion topic on a social media platform. There are only four marks possible: 4/4 (Excellent) 3/4 (good/satisfactory) 2/4 (inadequate) 0/4 (not completed). Keep in mind that that baseline is 3/4. Approximately 80% of the class will receive this mark for this portion of the grade. Each day that students are late with their post, their mark decreases one point. (If you post a “excellent” post due on Wednesday on Friday, it is worth 2 out of 4).

Non-CSL students (20%): Research essay on topic of student’s interest. Students will research one specific question in Latino/a Studies (to be cleared with professor by December 10). Word count must be at least 1500 words, not to exceed 2000 (Approximately 7-10 pages) Due on December 10 via email or Google Docs.

---OR---

CSL Students: (Transcript and reflection on CSL project 20%)

Students will log at least 20 hours of community service while building an audio or visual documentary about Latin American culture in Edmonton through CJSR radio or the

Edmonton Heritage Society/ Memoria Viva Society. By December 10, students will hand in an annotated transcript of the broadcast done with CJSR and Memoria Viva, along with a one-page reflection on the intersection between the project and course materials.

Required Notes:

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the [Code of Student Behaviour](#) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Sexual Violence Policy:

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

Territorial Statement:

“The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.” (*from the beginning of the Calendar*).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

In this course, attendance is evaluated by your presence in the classroom, your active participation in classroom discussions, and presence in online forums. Sleeping, texting, and facebooking in class will reduce your participation grade. Every absence after two unexcused absences results in a 10% reduction of the class participation segment of the course. Participation will also be assessed by preparation for discussion.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing

the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension once throughout the course with no penalty. **Late excuses will not be accepted for any reason. Assignments handed in late will be deducted 10% per each working day they are handed in late.** For example, if a paper is due on Tuesday, but you hand it on Thursday, that will incur a 20% deduction.

Disclaimer:

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB)

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall)

The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

Office of the Student Ombuds:

The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their

grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<p>Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.</p>	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
<p>Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.</p>	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
<p>Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.</p>	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
<p>Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.</p>	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
<p>Failure.</p>	F	0.0	0-59

Day by day work schedule

Wednesday, September 4

Introduction to the course: What is Latin America? How should we study it?

In-class:

1. Read the first page or so of Mize, *Latino/a Studies*: Discuss: who are you? Are you Latino? Latinx? What does that mean?
2. Discuss format of presentations: present on some aspect of Latino culture, but individually or in pairs?

Friday, September 6

Class preparation:

Read:

- Roland Mize, “What’s in a Name.” in *Short Introductions: Latino Studies*
- Nadya Sarah Domingo, “Hollywood’s problem with Latinx representation”

In Class:

1. Take some time to write down all the terms that define you. Do you think you could create a hierarchy of terms? Are the terms inclusionary or exclusionary?
 2. Discuss presentations: present and contextualize some aspect of local Latino culture in the Edmonton area individually or in pairs (10 to 20 minutes). This subject can serve as the basis for the research paper/story at the end of the course.
 3. Discuss US vs. Canadian Latinos...similarities and differences
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Week 2

Monday, September 9

Class preparation

Read:

- Mize, Chapter 2: “Historical Groundings”
- Diaz, Brief, *Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, pp.1-7 [PLEASE ACTUALLY READ THE FOOTNOTES]

Ponder (and be prepared to talk about):

1. What thematic parallels do you see in Diaz’s fiction and Mize’s work?

In Class:

1. Set up boundaries for online written discussion forums
2. Discuss Mize and Diaz
3. Assign dates and topics for presentations

Wednesday, September 11

Visit by CSL partners: Edmonton Heritage and CJSR

Read:

- Mize, Chapter 3, “Origins of Latino Studies”
- Diaz, Chapter 1, “Ghetto Nerd at the End of the World”

Ponder:

- Much of the portrait of Oscar revolves around roles for a Dominican male. What are the stereotypes of a Dominican male and how does Oscar fit--or not--those stereotypes?

In class:

1. Discuss ground presentation formats. Select dates. More housekeeping--informal writing, presentations, quizzes. (10 min)
2. Recap of Monday (5 min)
3. Address “ponder” question above with lecture and discussion

Friday, September 13

Read:

- Mize, Ch. 4 “The Arrival of Latino/a Studies”
- Diaz, Ch. 2, “Wildwood”

Assignment:

- For Monday, Sept. 16: In Mize’s chapter, he reflects on the rejection of blackness and the embrace of “blanquiamiento” in the DR. How do you see this play out in Diaz’s novel? How do you see “whitening” reflected in popular culture? Write 400-500 on the topic for informal writing #1

In class:

Lecture on Dominican history and discuss whitening in the DR. Discuss informal writing prompts

Week 3

Monday, September 16

More discussion on gender stereotypes, exiles, immigration, identity

Informal writing #1 due. Discuss responses.

Read:

- Junot Diaz, Ch. 3 “The Three Heartbreaks of Belicia Cabral” in *Brief, Wondrous Life...* pp.76-165

Wednesday, September 18

Quiz #1

More on Diaz

Read:

- Diaz, Ch. 4, “Sentimental Education,” pp. 166-200

Ponder:

- Come up with one term from class so far that has really piqued your interest. The term needs to be unique to Latino culture: Some examples: “indio” “mestizo” “reconquista.”

In-Class:

1. Take the “ponder” activity and turn it into Paper #1, due Thursday,
2. More lecture on Latino culture, history, identity.

Friday, September 20

The idea of Hispanic/Latino “invasions” “threats” etc.

Read:

- Diaz, *Brief, Wondrous, Part 2* pp. 204-261
- [Samuel Huntington, “The Hispanic Challenge”](#)

Do:

- Post on eClass: do you see the Hispanic challenge reflected in Diaz’s novel? How about in society today?

Week 4

Monday, September 23

Discuss word papers

Follow up on Hispanic Challenge

Presentation #1, Possible topics:

- merengue and politics
- impact of tourism on Dominican identity
- baseball and politics
- strife between Haitians and Dominicans
- the problem of the "Indio"

Names:

Read:

- Diaz, *Brief, Wondrous...* Chapter 6 pp. 265-308

Ponder:

- Do you have your word to analyze yet?

Wednesday, September 25

Discuss words to analyze for paper #1

- Submit a synopsis of your word for Informal Writing assignment #2, due Friday, Sept. 27

Wrap up discussion of Diaz

Read:

- Finish Junot Diaz, Part 3 to end.
- Ashley Kunsa, "History, Hair, and Reimagining Racial Categories in Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*" eClass

Friday, September 27

Workshop word papers.

Read the article below if you want to see what I'm looking for in your papers in an ideal world. TRIGGER WARNING: many of the terms discussed are slurs and should never be used to designate a person. I am assigning this reading so that you understand how these words derived the power they have in the world. Context is everything.

Read:

- Adam M. Croom, "Spanish slurs and stereotypes for Mexican-Americans in the USA: A context-sensitive account of derogation and appropriation"

<https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/soprag.2014.2.issue-2/soprag-2014-0007/soprag-2014-0007.pdf>

Monday, September 30

DUE DATE FOR WORD PAPER

In class: Begin introduction to Carmen Aguirre, Mexican Hooker, #1

- Watch interview with Carmen
- Read first chapter together--TRIGGER WARNING: Aguirre is very explicit about sex. Try to think through why she is so graphic about the content.

Wednesday, October 2

Carmen Aguirre: Latina in the Canadian context. Sex and Politics!

Read:

- Aguirre, Chs.1-3, pp. 1-42
- Melissa Leon, Dear Sofia Vergara, Now Is a Bad Time for More Latina Stereotype Jokes
- <https://www.thedailybeast.com/dear-sofia-vergara-now-is-a-bad-time-for-more-latina-stereotype-jokes?ref=scroll>

In-class:

- See Oct. 2 eClass forum question for class discussion basis

Friday, October 4

Presentation on Chileans in western Canada: impact, issues, identity (this is reserved for CSL volunteers)

Names:

Read:

- Read Aguirre, chapters 3-5, up to p.99

Monday, October 7

All week dedicated to intersection of Latina identities and feminism with Aguirre as case study

Topic for informal writing #3: With reference to one of our readings and popular culture, discuss how Latina feminists navigate cultural identity and feminism.

Read:

- Aguirre, chapter 6-7 (up to page 149)
- Mize, Ch. 5 on “Latina Feminism...” (pp. 61-74) --continued on Wednesday

Wednesday, October 9

All week dedicated to intersection of Latina identities and feminism with Aguirre as case study

Discuss informal writing responses

Informal writing #3 due

Read:

- Aguirre, chapters 8-10 (up to page 209) [note: the last two chapters of Aguirre’s book are optional. They contain graphic depictions of rape, which we will not cover in class].
- Mize, Ch. 5 on “Latina Feminism...” (pp. 61-74) --continued on Wednesday

Friday, October 11

First discussion of final project topics

Quiz #2

Presentation: Topic: Princess Nokia (or another pop culture figure) and intersectional feminism in a Latino Studies context:

Names:

Monday, October 14

Thanksgiving—no class

Wednesday, October 16

Chicano identities, La Raza, struggles, etc.

Read:

- Oscar Zeta Acosta, Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo, Chapters 1-2
- Guest???

Friday, October 18

Guest?

More on Chicano cultures and identities

Read:

- Oscar Zeta Acosta, Brown Buffalo, Chapter 3-6

Do:

- Refine topics to 3-4 research questions

Week 9

Monday, October 21

Quiz #3

Workshop topic proposal day. No reading. Visit by librarian

Do:

- You must come to class with topics ready to be refined into a pitch/prospectus.

Wednesday, October 23

Turn in pitch/prospectus.

Watch “The Rise and the Fall of the Brown Buffalo”

Friday, October 25

Read:

Acosta, Chapters 7-11

Monday, October 28

Read:

- Acosta, Chapters 11-14

In-class:

1. Finish the Oscar Wao discussion
2. Guest visit from local Latino musician/author/artist

Wednesday, October 30

Acosta

Read:

- Acosta, Chapters 15-end

In-class:

- 1.

Friday, November 1

Quiz #3

Discuss final project

Presentation: Case study in appropriation in Latin American music in North America (“Despacito” and Justin Bieber, etc.)

Names:

Read:

- Peter Wade, “Review: Globalization and Appropriation in Latin American Popular Music” https://www-jstor-org.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/stable/1555393?seq=11#metadata_info_tab_contents

Monday, November 4

Read:

- Gloria Anzaldua, Borderlands/La Frontera, Introduction-through Chapter

Presentation on Borderlands culture

Wednesday, November 6

Anzaldua

Greater Mexico

Presentation on popular culture in the Borderlands

Names:

Friday, November 8

Anzaldua vs. Rodriguez, her conservative challenger

Read:

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97799225>

Monday November 11-Friday, November 15 Reading Week

Monday, November 18

Anzaldua vs. Rodriguez part II

Wednesday, November 20

Contemporary issues in Latino Studies

Quiz # 4

Read:

- Mize, Chapter 7, “New Approaches”

Friday, November 22

Contemporary issues in Latino Studies

Read:

- Mize, Chapter 8, “New Perspectives” and “Conclusion”

Monday, November 25

Special Guest / Contemporary issues in Latino Studies

Presentation: Immigration policies re: Latin America in a comparative Canadian/U.S.

America perspective

Names:

Wednesday, November 27

Special Guest / Contemporary issues in Latino Studies
Quiz #5

Friday, November 29

Special guest / Contemporary issues in Latino Studies

Monday, December 2

Presentations from CSL groups
workshops

Wednesday, December 4

Meet at Avila Arepa for arepas and plática

Friday, December 6

No formal class: sign up for individual meetings to discuss paper progress

December 10: Absolute deadline for submitting final project