

HISPANIC WOMEN AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

FORL/WOST 191 Spring 2009

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Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays 2:00-3:00 PM and Fridays 12:30-1:30 PM
and by appointment.

Required books:

- Agosin, Marjorie. Women of Smoke.
- Cisneros, Sandra. The House on Mango Street.
- Diosdado, Ana. Yours for the Asking.
- Edited by Celia Correas Zapata. Short Stories by Latin American Women
- García, Cristina. Dreaming in Cuban.
- Pedrero, Paloma. Parting Gestures: Three Plays

Description of the course: As the Hispanic community grows in the US (currently being the largest minority), it is important for us to understand the variety of backgrounds of the Hispanics we meet in our everyday life. Contrary to the stereotype that sees the "Latino community" in the US as a "uniform" group of people, the reality is that Spanish speakers here come from very different countries, ethnic groups and social classes. The introduction to this course will help students dispel the erroneous idea that "Latino" or "Hispanic" is a uniform ethnic group. Then, the course will focus on the main social, historical, and political issues that contemporary Hispanic women face in today's world, both in the US and in many other countries.

Taking into account the social and cultural differences among countries, and the diverse backgrounds of Hispanic women, students will read and analyze several works written by these women. The works will include novels, short stories and plays (all translated into English whenever English is not the original language).

Objectives of this course:

- 1) To develop students' knowledge of the great diversity of ethnic groups and social classes in the Hispanic world, and the role of women within the different groups.
- 2) To increase the students' ability to analyze and understand the global issues that affect Hispanic women in many countries, including the US. These issues will be studied in their appropriate context and under a critical perspective.
- 3) To make students more aware of their own cultural values and the common problems that we face in today's world.

The class is organized around students' presentations and class discussion of assigned readings. All readings and lectures are in English. No previous knowledge of the Spanish language and/or culture is required for this course.

The readings, discussions and documentaries/films presented will include these major themes: History and ethnic identity, indigenous people and human rights, the feminist movement, civil war in the 20th century, political regimes and dictatorships, modern media, art, and political and cultural exile.

FINAL GRADE:

- **Preparation and attendance:** It is essential that students come to class well prepared, having read the assigned material. Attendance and **active** class participation are necessary to succeed in this class.

The daily class grades will be as follows:

A=95 *Excellent participation* (the student answers questions and offers interesting comments without the need of the professor or the debate leader calling on him/her. The comments and answers show that the student has thoroughly prepared the reading and has done the necessary background research to understand the reading).

B= 85 *Good participation* (the student answers questions and offers interesting comments whenever the professor or debate leader calls on him/her. Sometimes, the student participates without being asked. The comments and answers show that the student has prepared the readings and has done the necessary background research to understand the reading quite well).

C=75 *Fair participation* (the student answers questions and offers comments only when the professor or debate leader calls on him/her. The comments and answers show that the student has prepared the reading, but has not done much necessary background research to understand the reading).

D=65 *Poor participation* (the student answers questions and offers very brief comments only when the professor or debate leader calls on him/her. The comments and answers show that the student has a poor preparation of the reading and has not done the necessary background research to understand it).

F=55 *Lack of participation* (the student does not answer questions and does not offer any comments in the class or group discussion. The lack of comments and answers, as well as incorrect answers, show that the student has not done the reading or, if he/she has done it, it has been in a careless or incomplete way).

More than two absences will affect the final participation grade. Every absence beyond two will result in a deduction of one point taken off the final participation grade. It is the responsibility of the student to reserve his/her 2 absences for those circumstances when missing class is unavoidable (i.e. illnesses, field trips, participation in sporting events, etc.). In case of extended absences the student should talk to Students Services or the Academic Dean who will contact the professor.

Remember: Requests to excuse absences at the end of the semester will not be considered. Students have the responsibility of keeping track of their own absences. No reminders will be given.

Two late arrivals to class (10 minutes or more) will be the equivalent of one absence and students will lose 1 point off their final participation grade. Please, be respectful to other students and the professor, late arrivals are disrupting.

Please turn off your cell phone before entering class.

Students may NOT check their cell phone messages while in class.
Please, be very respectful of this requirement.

- **Exams:** There will be an in class mid-term exam and a final take-home exam (5-6 pages plus bibliography).
- **30-40 minute Power Point class presentation about the readings in pairs:** Students will pair up to do this presentation. The presentation will be on the author(s) assigned for that day. The presentation must include a brief biography and history of the author and a summary of the topic of the work read for that day. Afterwards, the student will bring 4-5 questions to the class to initiate the discussion on the author and the themes discussed.

The following specific points will be graded:

1. Explanations about the author or the reading/theme (background information when necessary).
2. Use of visual aids and other multimedia material when appropriate, such as audio, video etc.

The student can consult with the professor for advice on the preparation and organization of the presentation any time he/she wants before the due date.

Important note: For every late day that any written material in the course is handed in, one letter grade will be deducted from the grade; for example, material (essay, take-home etc.) due on a Monday that would receive a B if handed in on time, will automatically receive a D if handed in on Wednesday. Saturday and Sunday count as two days. PLEASE, do not ask for extensions or exceptions to this rule.

Academic integrity: academic dishonesty, that is, **cheating** on exams, and **plagiarism** (using another person's words and passing them off as your own) is a serious offense and will be handled according to the Moravian policy on Academic Honesty (please, see the Student Hand book). Make sure you cite ALL the sources you use for your work. It is your responsibility to avoid dishonest behavior.

FINAL GRADE

Preparation and active class participation --	25%
Mid-term exam -----	25%
Power point class presentation -----	25%
Final take-home exam -----	25 %

COURSE SCHEDULE

M=Monday W=Wednesday

January

Week 1

M 19 Presentation of the course. For next class each student will select a Spanish speaking country and will do an internet search on the history, the population and the main characteristics of that country and bring that information to class.

W 21 Historical, geographical and political introduction: each student does a brief 5-6 minute presentation on the country he/she has selected.

Week 2

M 26 Short Stories by Latin American Women: Isabel Allende (Chile), Dora Alonso (Cuba) Helena Araujo (Colombia), María Luisa Bombal (Chile).

PP Presentation _____

W 28 Short Stories by Latin American Women: Rosario Castellanos (México), Amparo Dávila (México), Guadalupe Dueñas (México)

PP Presentation _____

February

Week 3

M 2 Short Stories by Latin American Women: María Virginia Estenssoro (Bolivia), Rosario Ferré (Puerto Rico), Elena Garro (México), Nora Glickman (Argentina)

PP Presentation _____

W 4 Short Stories by Latin American Women: Lucía Guerra (Chile), Liliana Heker (Argentina), Vlady Kociancich (Argentina)

PP Presentation: _____

Week 4

M 9 Short Stories by Latin American Women: Luisa Mercedes Levinson (Argentina), Clarice Lispector (Brazil), María Elena Llano (Cuba), Carmen Naranjo (Costa Rica)

PP Presentation _____

W 11 Documentary about Hispanic Women

Week 5

M 16 Short Stories by Latin American Women: Olga Orozco (Argentina), Antonia Palacios (Venezuela), Cristina Peri Rossi (Uruguay), Nélide Piñón (Brazil)

PP Presentation _____

W 18 Short Stories by Latin American Women: Josefina Pla (Paraguay), Elena Poniatowska (México), Teresa Porzencanski (Uruguay)

PP Presentation _____

Week 6

M 23 Short Stories by Latin American Women: María Teresa Solari (Perú), Marta Traba (Argentina-Colombia), Luisa Valenzuela (Argentina),

PP Presentation _____

W 25 Short Stories by Latin American Women: Rima de Vallbona (Costa Rica), Ana Lydia Vega (Puerto Rico), Alicia Yáñez Cossío (Ecuador)
PP Presentation _____

March

Spring Break

Week 7

M 9 Mid-Term in class exam

W 11 Women of Smoke by Marjorie Agosin (Chile) Dictatorships in the Southern Cone
PP Presentation _____

Week 8

M 16 Women of Smoke by Marjorie Agosin (Chile) Dictatorships in the Southern Cone
PP Presentation _____

W 18 Dreaming in Cuban by Cristina García (History of Cuban Americans)
PP Presentation _____

Week 9

M 23 Dreaming in Cuban by Cristina García
PP Presentation _____

W 25 Dreaming in Cuban by Cristina García
PP Presentation _____

Week 10

M 30 The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros (History of Chicanos)
PP Presentation _____

April

W 1 The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros (History of Chicanos)
PP Presentation _____

Week 11

M 6 Class debate on the film *Time of the Doves* about the role of women in the Spanish Civil War

W 8 Class debate on the film *Thirteen Roses* about the role of women in the Spanish Civil War

Week 12

W 15 Yours for the asking by Ana Diosdado (The use of women's bodies for publicity)
PP Presentation _____

Week 13

M 20 Parting gestures (Play one) by Paloma Pedrero
PP Presentation _____

W 22 Parting gestures (Play two) by Paloma Pedrero
PP Presentation _____

Week 14

M 27 Parting gestures (Play one) by Paloma Pedrero
PP Presentation _____

W 29 Course review for final paper. Course evaluations.

