Nuestro Nueva York: Latin America in New York City
FRSEM-UA 640
Wednesday, 2:00–4:30 p.m.

New York City has long hosted enormous numbers of Latin Americans as travellers, short-time residents, and immigrants. People from many countries and cultures fundamentally changed the city of New York though their culture, language, food, and politics. The experience of living in this metropolis also changed the culture and politics of Latin Americans, altered the hemisphere, and reshaped the world. Immigrants built political movements like the Young Lords to defend themselves in a city that regularly marginalized or exploited them. Major Latin American thinkers and revolutionaries, like Cuban national hero Jose Martí, crafted new ideas about pan-continental solidarity in the tight quarters of the city. Latino and latina New Yorkers participated in and led the creation of hip-hop, salsa, breakdance, graffiti, and countless other influential artistic and cultural movements. We will explore the cultural and political presence of Latin America in New York through an examination of history and an exploration of the city itself. How do the foods, music, art, politics, writings, sports, and culture in New York City reflect the impact of Latino residents? How did Latin American custom and cultures change and adapt to the city?

The course will consist of two major sections. In the first section we will explore the historical context of the Latin American presence in the city. Classes in this section will include both brief lectures on some of the major factors creating an influx of Latino migrants and affecting Latino communities living in the city and student-led discussion on primary documents from the period. The second section of the course we will explore some of the culture created by Latino communities in New York City. We will have group discussion of some common works as well as discuss cultural artifacts introduced by students.

The seminar for first-year students in the College of Arts and Science, this course will provide an opportunity to introduce you to methods of research in the humanities; hone your writing, analytic, and critical reading skills; provide an opportunity to explore liberal studies; and create a chance to join a community of scholarship at the University level. Being that this is a course on New York City, this course will also provide a unique opportunity to explore the history and culture of the city where we all currently live.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation: 10%
Tamiment source analysis (2 pages): 5%
Event Paper: 13%
Event presentation: 5%
* Students will choose one of the seven “history” weeks for the completion of the first paper (3-5) and short presentation (3-4 min) on an event (election, riot, controversy etc) that affect the Latino/a community in the time period and explain its origin and context.
Midterm 10%
Culture paper: 22%
Culture presentation: 5%

**Students will choose one of the five “culture” weeks for the completion of the second paper (5-7) and short presentation (5 min) on a cultural artifact from that genre and explain its origin, context, and significance.

Final Paper: 30%
10 Page Paper on a subject of the student’s choice.

Required Texts:

**January 25. Introduction**
Harvest of Empire “Introduction.” xi-xxviii.
Screening: Harvest of Empires, film (selections)

**February 1. Bobst Research Trip and Tamiment**

**February 8. 19th Century-1920s. War, Colonies, and Exiles.*
Harvest of Empires “Bananas Republics and Bonds” and “Puerto Ricans: Citizens yet Foreigners” pp. 58-96.
Pachin Marin, “New York From Within.”
Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, “A Negro Digs Up His Past.”

**February 15. 1930s-1950s. Occupations and refugees.*
Piri Thomas “Down These Mean Streets” (selections) ~30 pages

**February 22. 1960s. Young Lords and radicalism.*
Tamiment source analysis due.
Screening: Palante Siempre Palante (selections)

**March 1. 1970s. Drop Dead!*]
Greg Grandin. Empire’s Workshop. (CH 2) 52-87.
Screening: 80 Blocks from Tiffany’s (selections)
March 8. **The 1980s.** Reagan, Central America, and Crisis.*
Harvest of Empires “Central Americans: Intervention comes home to roost” 129-149.
Empire’s Workshop. (Ch 3) 159-196.
Documents from the National Security Archive.
Screening: Los Sures (selections)

March 22. **1990s.** Life Under Giuliani. NAFTA.*
Barrio Dreams. (Ch 1, 5) 27-58; 153-181.

March 29. **Post-9/11* and Midterm**

April 5. **Art **
(Museum Day: Class will be held in Museo del Barrio)

April 12. **Film **
Students should come to class having watched “El Pueblo se Levanta,” and “Los Sures”
Screening: Living Los Sures documentary project. (selections)

April 19. **Music **/**Literature **
René Lopéz “Drumming in the New York Puerto Rican Community.”
Juan Flores, “Puerto Rocks: Rap, Roots, and Amnesia.”
Raquel Rivera “New York Ricans from the Hip Hop Zone.”
Screening: “Wild Style” (selections) and “Our Latin Thing” (selections)


April 26. **Literature**
Martin Espada, “City of Coughing and Dead Radiators.” (selections) ~4 pages.
Junot Diaz, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, Chapters 4-8. 166-335.

May 3. **Present Moment/Current Movements and Food/Sport. **
Class to be held in a restaurant with a guest lecture (readings, guest lecture, and restaurant TBD)
Final Paper Due