

SPAN 320 Iberian and Latin American Cultures
Readings on Society

Fall 2016

Two Wings of a Bird:
Cuba and Puerto Rico in the Mirror of Empire

Instructor: Ronald Mendoza-de Jesús

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Class Schedule: TTH 4:00-5:50

Office Hours: TTH 1:30-3:50 and by appointment

Class Location: VKC 160

Office Hours Location: THH 156Q

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Cuba y Puerto Rico / son de un pájaro las dos alas / reciben flores o balas / en un mismo corazón.” (“Cuba and Puerto Rico / are of a bird its two wings / they receive flowers or bullets / in one same heart.”) For many, these lines by Lola Rodríguez de Tío capture the ways in which the political and cultural histories of these two Caribbean islands have mirrored each other, from the early days of Spanish colonization until our current moment, when both islands face unparalleled political and economic uncertainty.

Taking as our point of departure Rodríguez de Tío’s metaphor of Cuba and Puerto as two wings of the same bird, this course invites students to explore a century of Cuban and Puerto Rican cultural production and socio-political history that bears witness to the uncanny parallelisms that seem to mark the political destinies of these two islands and the fates of their peoples as they navigate poverty, political distress, insularity, and exile.

II. COURSE GOALS

This course satisfies the requirements of the major and minor in Spanish (SPAN). At a methodological level, the course is designed as a research seminar to help students acquire or consolidate their command of the interdisciplinary methods that inform knowledge-production practices in the critical humanities. At a thematic level, the course will give students the opportunity to become familiar with some of the foundational questions and texts in Spanish Caribbean literary and cultural studies.

At the end of the semester, students will have

- gained experience working both *in* and *across* different languages, rhetorical registers, and modes of composition
- developed their Spanish linguistic skills
- acquired a better understanding of Spanish Caribbean culture and history, becoming more aware and sensitive to the historical specificities of foreign cultures and to the particular set of political, ethical, and epistemological questions that emerge out of regions marked by post-coloniality.

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- become more familiar with the conventions that inform the dissemination of research in the contemporary humanities
- composed pieces that use writing as a tool in different cognitive contexts, ranging from synthesizing and summarizing information, to articulating critical questions, to communicating their views or findings
- developed flexible composing and revising strategies and acquire an appreciation for the repetition that is often required to produce polished and effective written texts
- take advantage of the cultural offerings of the city of Los Angeles and become more acquainted with how the Caribbean informs culture and society in North America.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. **Written Assignments:** By the end of the semester, students will have practiced multi-modal composition in different formats and will have produced at least 20 pages of original and polished writing and 10 pages of revised material.

Writing assignments for this course consist of the following:

1. **blog** (15 pages)
 2. **portfolio** (10 pages)
 3. **final paper** (5-6 pages)
1. The major composition assignment required in this course consists of a **blog**. Students are asked to write **weekly** entries on their blogs—including the last week of class—for a total of **15** entries throughout the semester. **Spanish** entries must be **300 words** long and **English** ones must be at least **450 words** long. Students are only allowed to write **5** entries in **English**, the other **10** must be written in **Spanish**. Blog entries should be posted by **Sunday** evening of the week in course. Late submissions will be penalized.

Blog entries should fall into one of the following four categories:

- a. a close reading or a sustained analysis of some of the sources discussed in class during the week in question.
- b. an analysis of one or more articles, videos, blog postings pertaining to Cuba and/or Puerto Rico. Material at the basis of this blog posts should be of recent publication; preference should be given to contemporary sources that engage with the questions that we will be pursuing in class, including Puerto Rico's contemporary economic and political crisis and the changing relation of the US vis-à-vis Cuba.
- c. an analysis of material that is directly or indirectly related to the sources assigned in class.
- d. a topic of the students's choice, agreed upon in consultation with the instructor

Of the **15** blog entries that students will write during the semester, **10** must be close readings of material covered in class (category a). The other **5** can fall into the other three categories.

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These blog entries will serve as the basis for other two assignments that students are required to fulfill, namely, the **portfolio** and the **final paper**.

2. The **portfolio** consists of **ten** blog entries, **revised** by the student in consultation with the instructor. By week 13 (November 14-18), all students must have met with the instructor to select the 10 portfolio entries that they will be revising to include them in the portfolio. Students will be able to select only **3** of their English entries for the portfolio, which means that at least **7** of the portfolio entries must correspond to blog entries written in Spanish. Portfolios will be due on the last day of class, Thursday December 1st, 2016.
3. The final paper is also structured as a rewriting exercise. Students are asked to select up to **two** of their category A (close readings) **Spanish** blog entries, revise them in consultation with the instructor and rewrite them as a 5-6 page paper in **Spanish**, due on December 7, 2016. **The blog entries selected for the final paper cannot also be selected for inclusion in the portfolio.**

Written assignments will be due on the date indicated on this syllabus, by midnight. Students can either bring a hard copy of their paper to class or email them to me on the day that the assignment is due. **No extensions will be granted.**

Students are required to use Times New Roman or a similar font, size twelve, and to double-space all their written assignments. When writing their papers, students must follow the guidelines established by the Modern Language Association (MLA), which will be discussed in class. Hard copies of all written assignments must be stapled.

- B. Participation:** Students are expected to come to each class prepared to engage in discussion. This requires not only that students read the assigned material, but that they read it actively, posing questions to the text, identifying problems, recognizing patterns, ambiguities, bizarre word usage, strange metaphors, etc.

Students are also expected to meet with the instructor to talk about the written assignments, to discuss the selection of paper topics as well as any other issue pertaining to the course. Students are **required** to meet with the instructor at least **two times** over the course of the semester:

1. to discuss their **portfolio**
2. to discuss their **final paper**

Failure to meet this requirement will be reflected in the participation portion of your grade.

Note on Attendance Policy: Active participation requires the student's presence in class. Every student will be allowed three absences—excused or unexcused. Beyond that point, each absence will bring the student's final grade down by a third of a letter grade (from A to A-, from A- to B+, etc.). Also, every three times a student comes late to class an absence will be added to his or her record.

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Note regarding electronic devices: No laptops or any other electronic devices will be allowed in the classroom. Students are also asked to turn off their cell phones upon entering the classroom.

IV. COURSE EVALUATION

Response papers:	10% (5% per paper)
Presentations:	10% (5% per presentation)
Critical Essay:	30% (5% abstract, 10% first version, 15% rewrite)
Final paper:	40% (10% proposal, 15% first draft, 15% final version)
Participation:	10% (5% in class participation, 5% compulsory office hours meetings)

Grades:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	less 60%

Note on Academic Integrity: Any instance of plagiarism will be subject to the disciplinary process outlined by USC's Student Judicial and Community Standards. Plagiarism is not restricted to copying word by word the writings and thoughts of others. It also includes citing improperly, as well as paraphrasing ideas taken from any source other than your own thoughts without recognizing the author of those ideas. Students should be familiar with the process outlined by USC's Student Judicial and Community Standards, which can be accessed in the link below:

http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/pages/students/academic_integrity.html

Students should also consult the *Trojan Integrity: A Guide to Avoid Plagiarism*, which can be accessed in the following website:

http://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/903/docs/Trojan_Integrity_-_Guide_to_Avoiding_Plagiarism.pdf

Note on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the **Disability Services and Programs**, to obtain a letter of verification for approved accommodations. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in **3601 Watt Way, GFS 120** and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. Their website is:

<http://dsp.usc.edu/contact/>

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V. COURSE MATERIALS

Texts:

1898: Cuba and Puerto Rico between Two Empires

Lola Rodríguez de Tío, Selections from *Claros y nieblas: Poesía*
José Martí, *Nuestra América*
---. Selections from *Política y revolución: 1892-93*
Eugenio Marías de Hostos, Selections from *América: La lucha por la libertad*
Documents related to the *Insular Cases*
Selections from *Banana Wars*

1940-60: Modernity, Identity, Revolution

Antonio S. Pedreira, Selections from *Insularismo*
Fernando Ortiz, Selections from *Contrapunto cubano de tabaco y azúcar*
Nicolás Guillén, Selections from *Man-Making Words*
Luis Palés Matos, *Tuntún de Pasa y Grifería*
Lydia Cabrera, *Cuentos negros de Cuba*

1990-2016: Disidentifications, Crisis, Exile

Rosario Ferré, *Maldito amor y otros cuentos*
Antonio José Ponte, *La fiesta vigilada*
María Irené Fornés, *Letters from Cuba*
Giannina Braschi, *United States of Banana*

Films:

Crucible of Empire
El 98: Cien años después
Marcos Zuriñaga, *La gran fiesta*
Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, *Memorias del subdesarrollo*
Julian Schnabel, *Before Night Falls*

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VI. COURSE SCHEDULE

1. Cuba and Puerto Rico Today

- 08/23/16 Introduction to the course:
Lola Rodríguez de Tío, "A Cuba"
Political cartoons about Cuba and Puerto Rico in relation to the US
News Articles about the Cuba-US Relations and Puerto Rico's financial crisis
- 08/25/16 Introduction to the course:
Lola Rodríguez de Tío, "A Cuba"
Political cartoons about Cuba and Puerto Rico in relation to the US
News Articles about the Cuba-US Relations and Puerto Rico's financial crisis

2. 1898: Cuba and Puerto Rico Between Two Empires

- 08/30/16 Lola Rodríguez de Tío, Selected Poems
E. M. de Hostos, Selections from *América: La lucha por la libertad*
- 09/01/16 José Martí, *Nuestra América*
---, Selections from *Política y revolución II: 1892-1893*
- 09/06/16 José Martí, *Nuestra América*
---, Selections from *Política y revolución II: 1892-1893*
- 09/08/16 Documentary: *Crucible of Empire: The Spanish-American War*
Selections from *The Banana Wars: United States Intervention in the Caribbean*
- 09/13/16 Documentary: *El 98 cien años después*
Selections from *The Banana Wars: United States Intervention in the Caribbean*
- 09/15/16 Documents related to the *Insular Cases*

3. 1940-60: Modernity, Identity, Revolution

- 09/20/16 Antonio S. Pedreira, Selections from *Insularismo*
Fernando Ortiz, Selections from *Contrapunto cubano de azúcar y tabaco*
- 09/22/16 Antonio S. Pedreira, Selections from *Insularismo*
Fernando Ortiz, Selections from *Contrapunto cubano de azúcar y Tabaco*
- 09/27/16 Antonio S. Pedreira, Selections from *Insularismo*
Fernando Ortiz, Selections from *Contrapunto cubano de azúcar y Tabaco*
- 09/29/16 Marcos Zuriñaga, *La gran fiesta* *Instructor Away

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- 10/04/16 In-class discussion of *La gran fiesta*
Lydia Cabrera, *Cuentos negros de Cuba*
- 10/06/16 Lydia Cabrera, *Cuentos negros de Cuba*
- 10/11/16 Luis Palés Matos, *Tuntun de pasa y grifería*
Nicolás Guillén, Selections from *Man-Making Words*
- 10/13/16 Luis Palés Matos, *Tuntun de pasa y grifería*
Nicolás Guillén, Selections from *Man-Making Words*
- 10/18/16 Tomás Gutiérrez Alez, *Memorias del subdesarrollo* ***Instructor Away**

4. 1990-2016: Disidentifications, Crisis, Exile

- 10/20/16 ---. *Before Night Falls* ***Instructor Away**
- 10/25/16 Rosario Ferré, *Maldito amor y otros cuentos*
- 10/27/16 Rosario Ferré, *Maldito amor y otros cuentos*
- 11/01/16 Rosario Ferré, *Maldito amor y otros cuentos*
- 11/03/16 Rosario Ferré, *Maldito amor y otros cuentos*
- 11/08/16 Antonio José Ponte, *La fiesta vigilada*
- 11/10/16 Antonio José Ponte, *La fiesta vigilada*
- 11/15/16 Antonio José Ponte, *La fiesta vigilada*
- 11/17/16 Antonio José Ponte, *La fiesta vigilada*
- 11/22/16 María Irené Fornés, *Letters from Cuba*
- 11/24/16 **Classes Cancelled due to Thanksgiving**
- 11/29/16 Giannina Braschi, *United States of Banana*
- 12/01/16 Giannina Braschi, *United States of Banana!*

Final paper due: May 5, 2015