

Course: Migrant Voices/Voces migrantes

Instructor: Megan Thornton, John Carroll University

Course Description:

This course, taught in Spanish, will foster intercultural competence, encourage critical thinking, and raise awareness of cultural differences and discriminatory practices in the United States so that students can better understand their own worldviews and appreciate alternative viewpoints. Students will analyze systems of oppression and marginalization by listening to the voices of Latin American (im)migrants through the cultural lenses of literature, film, and music. Students will also engage the Latinx community in Cleveland through service learning. This face-to-face contact as well as course materials and class discussions will expose students to issues in social justice, as well as hone their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in Spanish.

During the course of this semester, students will:

1. Actively use Spanish by speaking, listening, reading, and writing it, both in the classroom and through service learning.
2. Learn about the history of Latin American (im)migration to the United States.
3. Learn about the political and socio-economic conditions related to Latin American (im)migration that have given rise to injustices and discrimination based on nationality, class, gender, race and ethnicity.
4. Analyze the literature and film about Latin American (im)migration.
5. Learn about cultural differences between and among Latin American (im)migrant communities.

Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will reach an Advanced Low proficiency level in presentational writing and interpretive reading, and an Intermediate High proficiency level in interpersonal communication, interpretive listening and presentational speaking. This level is based on the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Proficiency Guidelines. Attainment of this level in the various skills depends on the seriousness of one's commitment to learning the language and to the course goals. At the end of the course:

1. Learners can participate with ease and confidence in conversations on familiar topics. They can usually talk about events and experiences in various time frames. They can usually describe people, places, and things. They can handle social interactions in everyday situations, sometimes even when there is an unexpected complication. (Intermediate High level)
2. Learners can easily understand the main idea in messages and presentations on a variety of topics related to everyday life and personal interests and studies. They can usually understand a few details of what they overhear in conversations, even when something unexpected is expressed. They can sometimes follow what they hear about events and experiences in various time frames. (Intermediate High level)
3. Learners can understand the main idea and some supporting details on a variety of topics of personal and general interest. They can follow stories and descriptions of some length and in various time frames and genres. (Advanced Low level)
4. Learners can make presentations in a generally organized way on school, work, and community topics, and on topics they have researched. They can make presentations on some events and experiences in various time frames. (Intermediate High level)
5. Learners can write on general interest, academic, and professional topics. They can write organized paragraphs about events and experiences in various time frames. (Advanced Low level)
6. Learners can demonstrate knowledge of literature and film produced by and about Latin American (im)migrants.
7. Learners can demonstrate knowledge of how aspects of the history, politics, and socio-economics of Latin American (im)migration relate to injustices.
8. Learners can read and analyze cultural texts.

9. Learners can interpret events, cultural products, and/or issues from the different perspectives of Latinx immigrant communities.

All of these learning goals will be integrated and assessed throughout the semester via homework assignments, classroom activities, service learning, writing assignments, and exams. The course assessment practices are described in more detail under Evaluation & Assessment.

Required Course Materials:

1. *The Devil's Highway*, Luis Alberto Urrea
2. Readings and assignments posted on Canvas

Evaluation:

Your semester grade will be based on the following:

Participation	15%
Homework & Quizzes	15%
Writing Assignments (2)	30%
Final Reflection	10%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	15%

PARTICIPATION (15%)

Each scheduled class session is worth 5 points. Participation points will be assigned based on the following criteria:

- 5=Student arrived on time and was prepared and fully engaged; volunteered at every opportunity, participated actively in whole class activities, took on a leadership role in class/group work, and spoke Spanish at every opportunity.
- 4=Student arrived on time and was mostly engaged; volunteered occasionally during whole class activities, participated as much as others during group work and spoke mostly Spanish.
- 3=Student did not arrive on time and/or did not volunteer but participated when called upon during whole class activities, participated as much as others during group work and spoke mostly Spanish.
- 2=Student did not have an active participation day in class/group activities and/or did not attempt to speak much in Spanish.
- 1=Student was present but passive and/or only spoke English and/or arrived more than 15 minutes late and/or engaged in disruptive behavior during class.
- 0=Student did not attend class (unexcused absence).

Please note that attending class does not equal participation. You should attend class, prepare the assigned material before class, bring your textbook, and actively participate in classroom discussions and activities (both synchronous and asynchronous). Texting, checking email, doing work for other classes, taking/receiving phone calls and/or engaging in disruptive behavior as defined by the university (see University Policies below) are inappropriate during class time and therefore will result in a lowered participation grade.

HOMEWORK & QUIZZES (15%)

15% of your course grade will be based on homework assignments and quizzes that cover the course material. Homework assignments will include close readings and analysis of the assigned texts, answering comprehension questions and/or writing your own discussion questions. Most assignments will be submitted to Canvas. The homework is to be completed BEFORE class on the day it is listed on the course calendar. There will also be quizzes scheduled periodically through the semester. The homework assignments and quizzes will assess overall comprehension of the course material.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (30%)

You will write two papers in Spanish (15% each) to analyze the conditions and consequences of social injustices as they relate to Latin American (im)migration. The first one will be an analysis of one of the cultural selections from the first half of the course (before the midterm) and the second one will be an analysis of one of the cultural selections from the second half of the course (after the midterm). These papers will be used to assess learning outcomes 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

FINAL REFLECTION (10%)

You will complete a final reflection activity in which you reflect on your service-learning experience and integrate it with the course material. In your reflection, you should address what you have learned personally, culturally and linguistically, and also describe the cultural differences among the (im)migrant groups we have studied and those that you met during your service learning experience. You will also present a summary of your reflection to the class. Assignment details and evaluation criteria will be provided. This assignment will be used to assess learning outcomes 4, 5 and 9.

EXAMS (30%)

There will be a midterm exam (15%) and a final exam (15%) that will test your knowledge and understanding of the course material. The midterm exam will cover the first half of the semester and the final exam will cover material from the second half of the semester. The dates for both exams are listed on the course calendar. There are no make-ups, unless arrangements have been made in advance. The exams will assess overall comprehension of the course material, especially learning outcomes 6, 7 and 9.

Course Calendar:

Week 1: An introduction to the themes of Latin American (im)migration

Mexican (Im)migration

Week 2:

Francisco Jiménez, “Cajas de cartón”

Sandra Cisneros, Selection from *La casa en Mango Street*

Week 3: Selections by Luis Humberto Crosthwaite

Week 4: Luis Alberto Urrea, *The Devil’s Highway*

Week 5: *The Devil’s Highway* (cont.)

Week 6: Debate about Migration Politics

Watch and analyze *30 days: Immigration* by Morgan Spurlock (2006)

Essay 1 Due

Week 7: **Midterm Review and Exam**

Central American (Im)migration

Week 8:

Nicaraguans in Costa Rica: Watch and analyze *Desde el barro al sur* (2002)

Rodrigo Soto González y César Meléndez, *El Nica*

Selection from *Threatening Others* by Carlos Sandoval García

Week 9: Central Americans in the United States: Selections by Mario Bencastro

Week 10: Watch and analyze *Sin nombre* (2009), Dir. Cary Fukunaga

Caribbean (Im)migration

Week 11:

Esmeralda Santiago, Selection from “Cuando era puertorriqueña”

Dolores Prida, *Coser y cantar*

Week 12: Watch and analyze *Cuban Roots* (2000); **Essay 2 Due**

Week 13: Watch and analyze *The Dominican Dream* (2019)

Weeks 14 & 15: **Final Reflections Due**

Examination Period: **Final Exam**