

LS608: Latino Perspectives on the United States

This course will trace the development of Hispanic or Latino culture in the United States beginning with the first Spanish conquistadors who overthrew the Aztecs (the Romans of the New World) making way for the next generation of Spanish explorers who traversed Florida, Mississippi, and Texas still some 100 years before the pilgrims in Massachusetts. The establishment of Spanish missions in California opens the doorway to 19th-century Californians who were Spanish, suddenly becoming Mexican, and then two decades later finding themselves inside the expanded territorial limits of the United States. Alongside those “Americans not by choice,” 19th-century travelers and immigrants will be examined, concluding with 20th-century Chicanos and Puerto Ricans. Besides the primary texts to be read, the historical, sociological, and political development of Hispanic/Latino/Latina culture will be presented in class.

Learning Aims:

At the end of the semester, students taking *Hispanic American Cultures in the United States* will be expected to have:

- Acquired a general knowledge of the Latino Experience, its people, its politics, its social programs and its thirst for justice, in historical perspective
- Acquired the critical acumen in thinking, reading, and analyzing to understand comparatively the identities that together constitute “lo hispano” in the United States.
- Developed an appreciation for understanding the diversity of the Hispanic experience including ethnicity, class, gender, nation, geography, and ideology.
- Acquired a thorough knowledge of how history, culture and literature help us to fathom the human difficulties associated with migration in colonial and neo-colonial contexts.
- Critically appropriated all the course material to see what kinds of social and political measures are necessary to promote justice for Latino and Latina people in the United States.
- Read 1200-1500 pages of material related to the Latino experience in historical context.
- Produced 25 pages of graded writing that includes a midterm paper and a longer research paper striving toward a goal of *eloquentia perfecta*, i.e., precision in written communication.
- Given at least one seminar presentation striving toward a goal of *eloquentia perfecta*, i.e., precision in oral communication.