Course Syllabus

INT 290: History and Literature of Puerto Rico in the 20th Century

Winter Term 2015 (This is a three-credit course offered for IS/ES/SS requirements.)
Instructors .........................Jeff Kleiman and Julie Tharp
E-mail Addresses ..................jeffrey.kleiman@uwc.edu and jtharp@uwc.edu
Phone Numbers .................715-389-6558 and 715-389-6514

Course Description: Set against the initial conquest and occupation of Spanish culture, the island’s population underwent significant transformation after American seizure of the island after the war with Spain in 1898.

As a result of this new imperial power exercised by the United States, the dominant cultural group, Hispanics, found themselves regarded as no less primitive or held in contempt as they had held others. The Anglo-American occupation during the twentieth century set a new dynamic into motion that fostered a complex struggle for identity on the island.

This developed into two principal camps—those who felt that as Puerto Ricans they should retain a distinct and separate identity culturally and politically as an independent republic; and the other part of the population who wanted to celebrate their unique, Caribbean identity. Encouraged by the ideals of cultural pluralism this latter group continues to advocate statehood status in order to achieve complete political equality.

The literature of Puerto Ricans is centuries old, but we will focus on English-language literature from the past century. It was strongly influenced by the Nuyorican Movement, exhibiting a bi-cultural identity and struggle to retain Puerto Rican ways on American soil. Common literary themes that complement the historical analysis include identity, cultural heritage, social background, immigration, and racial, ethnic, and linguistic barriers.

Given these points, as we move along through the course materials and then visit the island, we want you to debate the following question: should the United States seek admission for Puerto Rico as our next state?

Course Objectives:
a. Acquaint students with a US possession in the Caribbean and its origins
b. Increase awareness of racial diversity in Caribbean and Puerto Rico
c. Promote understanding of colonial status and its implications
d. Explore impacts of US in both cultural and economic terms
e. Present examples how literature responds and shapes conflict
f. Create a case study for the intersection of literature as a living document to change
g. Allow students to experience a distinct cultural enclave within the US
**Required Readings:**


**Assignments:**

- Introductory Virtual Group Discussion........10 points
- Virtual Group Discussion A..........................20 points
- Virtual Group Discussion B.........................20 points
- Virtual Group Discussion C..........................20 points
- Quizzes..........................................................25 points
- Controversial Group Discussion ....................20 points
- Journal..............................................................25 points

**Desire2Learn stateside**

**While in Puerto Rico**

**Due the last day of trip**

1. **Online group discussions** will require you to formulate a post in response to the prompts provided. Virtual Group Discussions A, B, and C will require you to prepare additional stories for formal discussion. You will have 24 hours then to post at least three thoughtful responses to each of your group members’ posts. We will have one set of group discussions in Puerto Rico.

2. **Quizzes** will be worth 5 points each and will have questions on the historical selections and the literary selections and one question requiring you to merge the two.

3. **Journal**—your journal should just be a notebook in which you record responses to our prompts and anything else that occurs to you while reading, discussing and travelling. You will be posting **five journal kernels** (brief insights or questions) to an online discussion board during the first two weeks and providing **verbal journal kernels** during discussions in Puerto Rico.

**Policy Regarding Attendance and Late Work:**

A. Students are expected to participate in all scheduled discussions.

B. If a student does miss a discussion assignment, an alternative manner of completing the assignment must be discussed with the instructor. Failure to complete all assignments will result in a failing grade for the course.

C. Students are expected to submit bibliographic citations immediately following discussions. Submitting research late will result in a grade reduction.
**Grading:** See grading scale below for cumulative scores and corresponding letter grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100 %</td>
<td>133-140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>126-135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>122-125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>116-121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>112-115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>108-111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>102-107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>98-101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>94-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>88-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>84-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>00-59</td>
<td>0-83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proficiencies:**
Students’ abilities will also be assessed in the following basic proficiencies that apply across the liberal arts curriculum:

**Clear and logical thinking** exhibits the ability to:
- analyze, synthesize, evaluate and interpret information and ideas
- construct hypotheses and arguments
- distinguish knowledge, values, beliefs, and opinions
- integrate knowledge and experience to arrive at creative solutions
- evaluate situations of social responsibility
- make decisions based on an informed understanding of the moral and ethical issues involved

**Effective communication** involves the ability to:
- read and listen with comprehension and critical perception
- recognize fallacies and inconsistencies
- transmit information effectively through skillful speech delivery
- respond orally to questions and challenges
- work collaboratively as part of a team
- understand and communicate with people different from themselves
- gather information from printed sources, electronic sources, and observation
- learn independently, stimulating and satisfying intellectual curiosity
# Tentative calendar for the winter term 2015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fr 1/2</td>
<td>Week Zero: Read syllabus and D2L Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sat 1/3</td>
<td>Create personal profile on D2L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sun 1/4</td>
<td>Ayala and Bernabe “Introduction” (Study Sheet #1) Introduction and Chapter 1 (Study Sheet #2) “1898, Background and Immediate Consequences” Santiago, Read Introduction, “Island of Lost Causes, and “Child of the Americas” in Santiago text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mon 1/5</td>
<td>Go through Powerpoint #1 on D2L Quiz #1 Post to Introductory discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Day/Date</td>
<td>Assignment Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2 (cont.) | Tue 1/6 | Post responses to group members in Intro. Discussion  
Write journal entry in response to prompt  
Post Journal Kernel #1 |
| Wed 1/7 | Ayala and Bernabe Chapter 2 (Study Sheet #3) “Reshaping Puerto Rico’s Economy 1898-1934” and Chapter 5 (Study Sheet #4) “Economic Depression and Political Crisis”  
Santiago “American Invasion of Macun,” and “Monday Morning”  
Go through Powerpoint #2  
Quiz #2 on the readings |
| Thu 1/8 | Post to group members in Discussion A  
Write journal entry in response to prompt  
Post Journal Kernel #2 |
| Fri 1/9 | Ayala and Bernabe (Study Sheet #5) Chapter 8 “Birth of the Estado Libre Asociado” and Chapter 9 (Study Sheet #6) “Transformation and Relocation: Operation Bootstrap”  
Santiago “How to Know the Puerto Rican“ and “Niggerlips“  
Go through Powerpoint #3  
Quiz #3  
Respond to Discussion A |
| Sat 1/10 | Post to group members in Discussion B  
Write journal entry in response to prompt  
Post Journal Kernel #3 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sun 1/11</td>
<td>Respond to Discussion B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|      | Mon 1/12 | Ayala and Bernabe (Study Sheet #7) Chapter 13 “Economic Stagnation and Political Deadlock, 1976-1992”  
Santiago “Boy without a Flag” and “Looking Good”  
Go through Powerpoint #4  
Quiz #4 |
|      | Tue 1/13 | Post to group members in Discussion C  
Write journal entry in response to prompt  
Post Journal Kernel #5 |
|      | Wed 1/14 | Ayala and Bernabe (Study Sheet #8) Chapter 14 “Politics and Social Conflict in the Epoch of Neo-Liberalism, 1992-2004”  
Santiago “Babylon for the Babylonians and “Letter to a Child Like Me”  
Go through Powerpoint #5  
Quiz #5  
Respond to Discussion C |
|      | Thu 1/15 | Post Journal Kernel #5 |
|      | Fri 1/16 | **Departure for Puerto Rico** |
|      | Sat 1/17 | Journaling, tours, and group discussions during trip to Puerto Rico |
|      | Sun-Fri 1/24 | Continue journaling, tours, and group discussions |
|      | Sat 1/25 | **Return home** and start new semesters. Grades will be recorded on PRISM. |
Study Sheets for the reading that will help focus students on material relevant to the online discussions and assignments.

Study Sheet #1  Ayala and Bernabe, “Introduction”

1. As you plow through the reading (I know, it can get pretty dense at times) pay attention to the three major elements that will shape the coming arguments and evidence: **economics, politics, and culture**.

2. By **economics**, the authors mean how ordinary people can make a living and how that has an impact on their personal wellbeing (health, safety, chances for education). For instance, the United States operates under a form of limited free-market capitalism. How did that shape the direction of economic development on the island after occupation by the U.S.? Did most people have a chance to pursue careers as we have on the mainland? Wisconsin (e.g., independent farming)?

3. The role of **politics** decides who has access to the power of making and enforcing decisions of all sorts (social and economic policies, for example). Did Puerto Ricans ever have any control over their own political fate? To what degree will we see the islands residents given the chance to provide some response or input to decision-making that guides their lives? For the authors, the connection between economic and political power seems obvious. The rich and powerful in the U.S. use their influence to create regulations that allow them to maximize profits by exploiting both the people and natural resources. Denied political power, most of the ordinary people, especially the poorest, have no say in altering their economic opportunity.

4. **Culture**—in the form of literature, language, and social customs—helps to provide a sense of identity for oneself and a group. It serves as a powerful force that can ground somebody solidly in providing a sense of purpose, a role in the world, as well as describes and defines a meaning to life. What happens if one’s cultural identity and all its expressions becomes the object of disdain? If it is somehow not good enough, or does not meet with the approval of those who hold power, how do you respond? Do you reject your own background in order to adapt to seek acceptance? Do you hold onto your cultural roots at all costs, even if it means limited access to the rich and powerful? Or might you seek to keep a foot in both camps?

5. Taking these together will help facilitate understanding the Introduction along with the key arguments, evidence, and conclusions set out by the authors. These will also help you think about the roles of political and economic reform along with the values of cultural pluralism/ multiculturalism in the United States.
1. How did the invasion by the United States transform Puerto Rican life in 1898?

2. What do the authors mean by the *hacendado* class (do web search for the term’s meaning and implications) versus subsistence farmers?

3. How did American ownership of Puerto Rico reshape the island’s economic direction?

4. Who initially supported statehood for Puerto Rico in 1898 and what did they hope to gain by it?

5. What did the Foraker Act and Insular Cases create in terms of political and economic relations between the U.S. and Puerto Rico?

6. In what way did U.S. attitudes toward race at the turn of the last century influence official (and unofficial) developments after 1900?
1. What is “free trade”—and what impacts did it produce on opportunities for the island’s residents? How did this policy shape Puerto Rico’s social and economic structures?

2. Did this pattern reappear with the introduction of tobacco?

3. What ripples reverberated into the society after the collapse of the great coffee plantations? Who did this affect most of all in island life? Were these effects unusual or were they shared with people the U.S., especially the cities? Are there parallels today as regards the manufacture of clothing?

4. What fate awaited people who were not great planters (such as subsistence farmers) along with the majority of ordinary people in the subsequent decades?
Study Sheet #4  Ayala and Bernabe, Chapter 5 “Economic Depression and Political Crisis”

1. The Great Depression in the United States emerged as part of a larger, global economic collapse. The most important things for us to recall about U.S. history at this point are:
   a. Unprecedented high unemployment (about 25%—one in four wage-earning men) caused unparalleled hardship in the forms of hunger, homelessness, widespread poverty, and shrunken household incomes for those who still had work;
   b. The failure of traditional “hands-off” governmental approaches (i.e., Laissez-faire –also known as the traditional Liberalism of the 18th and 19th centuries) pushed for a serious rethinking of the federal government’s power and responsibility in providing economic security and stability for all Americans;
   c. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal (do a quick search online) changed our assumptions about federal government’s economic role and ushered in a new definition of Liberalism where regulation of the marketplace, encouragement of organized labor, along with a slow commitment to social and political equity all fell under the auspices of the federal government (without seriously challenging notions of American capitalism);
   d. The role of America’s marginal groups (i.e., ethnic, religious, racial communities who fell outside the ideal of an Anglo-Protestant appearance and culture) emerged as critical new players in the Democratic Party, providing the essential majority vote to bring and sustain that party in power ever since the mid-1930s until today.

2. How were events and developments mirrored in Puerto Rico?

3. What role did Munoz Marin play—and what did he hope to accomplish? How did the Plan Chardon fit into the larger New Deal scheme? Who opposed it and why?

4. What did the Partido Nacionalista (the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party) advocate for the island’s economic and political status? Why has it been considered controversial? How do the authors interpret the party and its impact?

5. What is there about 1936 that looms large in Puerto Rico’s history? To what do the authors attribute this?
1. There are several important background points to keep in mind as we work to understand these events in this chapter and their significance:
   a. Political parties in Puerto Rico went through a variety of transformations regarding their platforms, membership, and role in trying to build winning coalitions (see fig. 7.1, 143);
   b. These changes reflected the shifting political and economic fortunes of the island’s residents, while trying to establish some degree of limited local control through a Puerto Rican legislative branch;
   c. Ultimately, the federal government retained ultimate control through the ability to appoint a governor (the executive branch) and very limited authority granted to the judicial system. Given the United States’ judicial and constitutional powers, Puerto Rico remained an effective colony, despite the benefits and influences of the New Deal;
   d. Therefore, pressures grew among Puerto Ricans to assert a greater degree of independence and realm for latitude of action regarding economic policy and the island’s relation to the United States.

2. What were the political problems faced by both the United States and Puerto Rico that create the ESL (Estado Libre Asociado) as a common political solution? What are plenary powers (check online for answers) and their significance in this context?

3. What was the connection between United States Public Law 600 (P.L. 600) of 1946 and the Nationalist Insurrection of 1950s? How profound and widespread was the violence? Who were the advocates? How do the authors see the role of the Gag Law of 1948 playing into this sustained rebellion?

4. Why did the United Nations become involved in a debate about the United States’ relation with Puerto Rico? (It is useful to check online regarding the U.S. stance on decolonization after W. W. II and how this played out in Africa and Asia by the early 1950s.)

5. Where did the U.S. courts find contradictory meanings to the ELA status for Puerto Rico? Even though not resolved, in what direction did these debates take the island’s residents? To what degree did economic vitality influence these debates?
1. How would you paraphrase the opening paragraph to this chapter—and how do the authors’ arguments presented here serve to segue between the previous chapter and where we will be going in this one?

2. What major changes characterized insular society and economy in the twenty years after 1945? Why do the authors focus on the role of native Puerto Rican mass outmigration during this time?

3. The PPD (Partido Popular Democratico) aimed to maintain a sweep of social and economic reforms, especially agricultural ones from the late 1940s into the 1950s. What became of these reforms? Were they very radical? Did they challenge any of the ultimate economic or legal power held by the United States?

4. What was the Industrial Incentives Act of 1947 (passed by the Puerto Rican government)? How did it reshape economic relations between Puerto Rico and the United States?

5. As you read the paragraph beginning “The state now redefined its role” (190), to what degree does this reflect the role played by many state governments today in the U.S.? To what degree do the outcomes this act produced mirror what we see in Wisconsin and other states?

6. What role did mass outmigration play in holding down unemployment? How sizeable and long term was this outmigration? What did mainland manufacturers and farmers hope to gain by encouraging migration from Puerto Rico?
We learn here that the economic recession of the late 1970s and early 1980s prompted the limited creation of a new political party that promoted statehood as preferable to the colonial accommodations offered by the ELA status (or Commonwealth as it is also known). How dramatic are the numbers recounted at the start of this chapter? How do they help to represent these new challenges?

Why is it worth noting that “a considerable portion of the income generated was not reinvested in the island?” (268) How would this contribute to economic decline? In what way does this suggest that Puerto Rico remained a colonial economy?

What were some of the U.S. corporations that shifted earnings (but not investments) to Puerto Rico in order to avoid paying federal corporate taxes? How could they do this?

How do the authors use the economic measurements (fig. 13.1, 271) to make their case that Puerto Rico houses many wealthy corporations, but does not benefit from them?

Why did the ELA government increase spending? How did it finance this growth? What has ultimately happened by 1992 to this attempt to promote a degree of stability for the island’s economy? Where do we see the results of this in comparison with other regions of the United States (fig. 13.2, 274)?

In this and subsequent chapters, remember that what we call conservatism or neo-conservatism, the authors call neo-Liberalism (most of the world uses this term, the U.S. is almost unique in this regard; recall that hands-off or small government called Laissez-faire –is the traditional Liberalism of the 18th and 19th centuries). In America, neo-conservatism (neo-Liberalism) became discredited by their notion of simply letting things play out during the Great Depression, while the successful response provided by the Democratic Party and the New Deal in the United States remained the norm until the late 1970s and then the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980.

How did these developments play out in the debate between those who pushed for independence and those who sought statehood?

According to the authors, what prompted the Congress and President to favor the status quo rather than endorse either option for Puerto Rico?

Why do the authors stress the importance of a “close material connection to the United States while also promoting the feeling of a distinct Puerto Rican identity” as crucial to understanding both the political and economic stalemate on the island by 1992?
1. In what way is the Partido Nuevo Progresista (New Progressive Party) representative of Neo-Liberal trends that emerged in the 1980s in the United States with the Republican Party under Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush and in Great Britain under the Tory government headed by Margaret Thatcher (feel free to check these references online)?

2. How did Rosello’s government deal with the earlier Puerto Rican PPD’s efforts to enlarge the public sector in order to provide a degree of economic growth and stability?

3. How did the U.S. Congress’ phase out of the Puerto Rican tax-exemption policy for U.S. corporations have an impact on the island elections by 2000? What challenges did the PPD (Partido Popular Democratico) face now as a result?

4. What does it say about the current and continuing relation between the United States and Puerto Rico that the U.S. Congress and over-ride Puerto Rican law?

5. How did politics in the United States at this time, especially those that denounced people who did not speak English, influence the important plebiscite (popular vote) for independence versus statehood versus the status quo (ELA).

6. Why did the statehood plebiscite fail in 1998? Why would the Neo-Liberal PNP (New Progressive Party) favor statehood as a way to implement policies of government retrenchment and privatization?

7. How did the PNP’s stance toward organized labor continue to undermine their drive for statehood?

8. What continuing role did Puerto Rican outmigration play in the political developments of the island and the U.S. mainland? How did this new migration differ from earlier migration to the U.S. mainland?

9. Why do the authors describe the impact of changing bank deposits to make their point about the role of large U.S. corporations continued impact of the island’s domestic economy?

10. How do the authors use the Federal Death Penalty Act of 1994 to summarize the state of Puerto Rico in its relation to the US today? How do they use this summary to return to discussing the economic conditions of the island? What are their general conclusions?