This Is (Briefly) What It’s All About

From *picante* to *bandido*, from *telenovelas* to *Despacito*, media representations of Latinas/os abound around us, constructing a loose — yet unified — concept, Latinidad. This course invites you to explore multiple relevant images, videos, sounds, and texts through which the label ‘Latinas/os’ is filled with meaning in popular culture and news media. Departing from a historical look, we will follow the evolution of different forms of media and their representations of Latinidad, only to return to the current state of affairs, and then question the future direction of these representations.

We will navigate the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts in which Latinas/os have come to be and continue to be constantly remade as a path to understanding the complex relations shaped through the intersection of Latinidad with race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and other identities.
What You Will Learn

In this course, you will learn about the fascinating processes through which the media have transformed Latin American immigrants and their descendants under the homogenized umbrella of ‘Latinas/os,’ as well as the implications of that transformation, both good and bad. By exploring different media representations of Latinas/os, you will gain a broad perspective on the main issues that contributed (and continue to contribute) to the social, political, economic, and cultural dynamics around Latinas/os.

The first section of the course will provide you with a solid base to develop your critical understanding of media representations of Latinas/os. To do so, we will approach the theory behind these representations by the hand of cultural studies. We will delve into the most salient cultural traits associated with Latinidad and explore the historical pathways through which Latinas/os have come to be construed as a defined and unified group. We will question common-held beliefs and propose routes to grapple with the intersectionality of the heterogenous peoples that become bundled up in the Latina/o construct.

In the second part of the course, we will explore the different practices through which media representations of Latinas/os articulate their identity. To do so, we will approach these practices from the study of both, the areas of communication in which representations of Latinas/os take place and the different types of media in which they occur. We will be looking at news and non-fictional media, as well as cinema and fictional television, popular music, cartoons, and even humor & comedy.

By the end of this course, you will walk away understanding how media have played (and continue to play) a crucial role in shaping how Latinidad becomes articulated, both by Latinas/os and by other social groups. You will also take with you vast learnings on Latina/o culture and the issues that are central for developing more culturally-responsive communication across cultures. You might even learn some Spanish or improve your fluency and enrich your vocabulary... ¡Manos a la obra, pues!

The Course Syllabus Is A General Plan For The Course; Deviations Announced To The Class By The Instructor May Be Necessary.
How We’re Going To Do This

Our class sessions will be structured around lectures, but there’s plenty of opportunities to show off the great things you’ve learned.

Quizzes

Throughout the semester, there will be 5 quizzes, each one worth 6 points, for a combined total of 30 points. These multiple-choice quizzes will cover material from the lectures, but may include elements from the required engagements noted for each week.

Individual Project: Participant Observation

“Observing Latinidad”

You will conduct a participant observation, exploring a practice or situation of your interest that involves Latinas/os as the central social actors. By immersing yourself in the world of Latinas/os and approaching their cultural practices from an ‘insider’ (emic) position, you’ll bring to question your own pre-conceived notions of Latinidad, fostering a critical understanding of the processes of representation. This individual project will carry a weight of 40 points. Details about this project are listed later in the syllabus and will be expanded upon in week 3 of our course.

Group Project: Media Organization Analysis

“You know the game, but do you know the players?”

You will also be asked to participate in a group project about a media organization catering to Latinas/os. The project will require that you conduct documentary research (using documents as your source material) and will carry a weight of 70 points. You are expected to deliver a typed, 8-10 pages, written report as well as doing an oral presentation of your group findings to the course. Further information about this project are listed later in this syllabus will be expanded upon during week 4.

Individual Project: Textual Analysis

“What’s that they said?”

Finally, you will have the opportunity to dive right into the world of media representations by conducting your very own textual analysis on a selection of materials that articulate representations of Latinas/os. At least 3 materials (texts, videos, sounds, images — or a combination of them) must be selected for this project. This individual project will carry a weight of 40 points. More Details about this project are listed later in this syllabus and will be expanded upon in week 10 of the course.

The Course Syllabus Is A General Plan For The Course; Deviations Announced To The Class By The Instructor May Be Necessary.
Good Work, Good Grades

I’m sure by now you’re asking yourself what does it take to do well in this course. Well, besides the tips posted in the column to the right, pay close attention to the following specific information about grades in this course.

What Counts Toward Your Grade?

Each one of the components of your grade are summarized in the following chart. Please note that only due dates are listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>DUE</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>Week 05</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media organization analysis</td>
<td>Week 09</td>
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<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Textual analysis</td>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual project</td>
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TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE | 200 | 100%

Late assignments will carry a penalty of 5 points/day of tardiness.

So, What Grade Will You Get?

This is the scale of grades I will use for this course:

A: 93% - 100%  B+: 80% - 83%  D+: 67% - 69%
A-: 90% - 92%  C+: 77% - 79%  D: 64% - 66%
B+: 87% - 89%  C: 73% - 76%  D-: 60% - 63%
B: 84% - 86%  C-: 70% - 72%  F: <59%

The grade you get will reflect the effort you put into the course and the quality of your work. I do not negotiate, bump, fix, nudge, push, tweak, curve, etc. grades. It’s quite demeaning to you and very bothersome to me, so please don’t even ask. Seriously.

Some tips for great grades

- Work for the grade you want! Quoting Einstein, “genius is 1% talent and 99% hard work.”
- Question everything! More than mere curiosity, set out to interrogate it all.
- Actively engage with the materials! They will help you better grasp the topics of the course.
- Check your spelling... then, check it again! Before you hand in something in writing, make sure you’ve checked your spelling, preferably various times.
- Be thorough in your work! Don’t force your audience (and me) to fill in the gaps.
- Don’t miss deadlines! They are there for a reason.
- Ask questions! It’s kind of hard to do well when you don’t understand… no?
- Be proactive! Just because something is not required doesn’t mean you can’t benefit from it!
- Approach all topics and materials with openness! Only by setting aside our preconceived notions can we fully interrogate the world around us.

The UNR Spanish Club

If you attend the UNR Spanish Club meetings, you will be rewarded with 1 extra credit point per meeting, for a maximum of 10 extra points in total. You must sign the course attendance sheet that will be made available at the beginning of the meeting! For more info, please visit http://bit.ly/2GxkVoz
Here’s The When & The What, The Calendar

The following calendar shows you the topics we will be dealing with throughout the course, as well as the required engagements that you are expected to have completed before each session. I have also included the project assignment date and its due date for your reference. Keep in mind that this syllabus is a general plan for the course and, as such, it is subject to change, shall I consider it necessary to do so. Any deviation from the plan outlined here will be promptly announced by me.

| Week #1 |
|------------------|------------------|
| INTRODUCTIONS | REQUIRED ENGAGEMENTS |
| WHAT IS REPRESENTATION? | Hall, S. (1997). Ch. 1 |
| LATINAS/OS YOU SAID? | Latinos Beyond Reel: challenging a media stereotype |

During this first week of the course, we will be getting to know each other, as well as laying out the groundwork we need to get the course off the ground. Once we're done with the introductions, we will turn our attention to trying to define and understand what representation is all about. Finally, we will begin to explore the complex — yet exciting — construction of Latinas/os in the media.

| Week #2 |
|------------------|------------------|
| LATINIDAD IS FLUID | REQUIRED ENGAGEMENTS |

This week, we will begin delving deeper into how Latinidad is articulated, meaning how different elements that constitute the quality of being Latina/o coalesce around a homogenized representation. Our point of departure will be de-stabilizing the fixed notion of Latinas/os in favor of a more dynamic — even fluid — conception where acculturation and immigration seem to work in opposite directions. Later in the week, we will turn our attention to the spaces of Latinidad, making special emphasis on the barrio, the archetypal media representation of the Latina/o spaces.

| Week #3 |
|------------------|------------------|
| PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION | REQUIRED ENGAGEMENTS |
| | Garcia Bedolla, L. (2005). Ch. 1 |

Individual Project: “Observing Latinidad” — ASSIGNED

Our third week of class will require we make a quick detour through research methods, particularly participant observation. Derived from the area of ethnography, participant observation allows us to approach common, everyday practices within the natural spaces where they take place, while allowing us to adopt an emic (insider) perspective. Speaking on perspective, that ties perfectly well with what we dealing with during the second half of the week: the shifting perspectives around power relations between Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os, as well as those between and among different Latinas/os groups.
As we begin diving head-first into the elements commonly assumed as inherently Latina/o, this week will find us tackling three ‘biggies’: familism, religiosity, and language. These three elements, considered somewhat the cornerstones of Latinidad, will help us initially gauge the relative distance between media representations of Latinas/os and the heterogenous population they presumably shape.

Individual Project: “Observing Latinidad” — DUE

Moving right along, we will encounter the heteronormative hyper-sexualization of Latinas/os in our sixth week of class. Built upon the presumed tacit acceptance of machismo and female objectification, frequent representations of Latinas/os resignify Latinidad by constructing upon descriptors such as ‘caliente’ (hot) and ‘picante’ (spicy). On the flip-side, the intersectionality inherent to queer Latinidad (our topic for the latter half of this week) not only fractures the dominant heteronormative representations of Latinas/os, but further helps understand the urgency of problematizing swooping generalizations that result either in the erasure of marginalized Latina/o sub-groups or their dismissal as questionable caricatures.

Our seventh and eighth weeks will be devoted to the representation of Latinas/os in non-fictional media. Starting with the representations articulated through news media (week 7), we will explore the concept of the newsworthy Latina/o as the result of contesting valuations, ranging from the criminalization to the absolution of Latinas/os in news media. Particular emphasis will be made on the local/national dichotomy between local and national news media, as well as those catering to Latinas/os and those catering to non-Latinas/os, and the representations each one articulates.
Week #8

THE LATINO STAKEHOLDER
THE LATINO TARGET/COMMODITY

Required Engagements
Dávila, A. M. (2012). Ch. 3

Finishing off our two-week immersion into representations of Latinas/os through non-fictional media products, we will explore the construction of Latinidad from a dual perspective of strategic communications, that of public relations and that of advertising. Given that both of these areas underline the centrality and relevance of their subject (in this case, Latinas/os), the articulation of these representations become informed by and simultaneously inform other representations of Latinas/os.

Week #9

Group Project: “You know the game, but do you know the players?” — DUE

Remember all the work you put into researching a media organization? All groups will present their findings through an in-class oral presentation; however, not all group members are required to present. Content from these presentations may find its way into our quizzes, so it’s advisable you attend all of them!

Week #10

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS
THE WRITTEN LATINA/O

Individual Project: “What’s that they said?” — ASSIGNED

Required Engagements
Brennen, B. S. (2017). Ch. 8

On our second (and final!) detour through research methods will guide us toward the study of material documents (such as texts, videos, photographs, etc.), in an attempt to elucidate their contents, the cultural practices, and representations that become enabled through/by/against said material production. The latter part of the week will allow us to initiate the exploration of representations of Latinas/os in fictional narratives articulated through the media. Our journey will begin, then, by delving into the production of Latinas/os through practices of non-fictional print media and gradually shift to literary fiction.

Week #11

RADIO & PODCASTS
POP MUSIC

Required Engagements
Rivera, R. (2002). Ch. 8

To continue our exploration of representations of Latinas/os in the media, we will turn to sound in our tenth week of the course. During this week, radio and podcasts on one hand, and popular music on the other, will guide us into the world of the sounds around Latinidad. Departing from the emergence of the first Spanish-language radio broadcasts in the US in the 1920s-1930 in otherwise unused time slots to current-day transboundary offerings of Radio Ambulante, we will explore the representation of Latinas/os through the airwaves and its modern offspring, the podcast. During the second part of the week, we will turn our attention to the representation of Latinas/os through pop music, as much in Spanish and in English, as well as in Spanglish. We will be exploring (and enjoying!) tunes that construct the Latina/o in relation to both, the non-Latina/o in the US and the Latin American.
As our course winds down, we will dive into the rich and tremendously complex arena of audiovisual representations of Latinas/os. As these representations have become articulated on the silver screen, they have evidenced a series of systemic failures and economic barriers that have privileged and maintained an uneasy relationship between Hollywood's representation of minorities — Latinas/os included — and the general public. We will explore those imbalances, as well as the resulting relations, exploring the many ways in which Latinas/os have had to negotiate their presence behind and in front of the camera along the spectrum extending from compliance to contestation. The second part of the week will find us dealing with the televisual representations of Latinidad. We will focus on the readily accessible representations of Latinas/os through television shows and commercial ads construed as a privileged vehicle for the articulation of these representations since the mid-20th century to our days.

Week 13 of our course will lead us online, both to web products and services, and to social media and social networking sites. Technical changes over the last three decades have displaced the privileged site of representation from traditional media to online vehicles. As such, current (and, most likely, future) representations of Latinidad (will) commonly take place in cyberspace. One of the elements we will be centering our attention on will be the lack of a location-based media production/consumption dynamic of online media that allows other content providers — namely, those targeting 'the other Latinas/os' (Latin Americans) — to divert representation of Latinas/os outside the realm of US-based media organizations. Finally, we will look at the ways in which cultural characteristics and transboundary familial relationships play a key role in the formation of Latina/o (self)representation through social networks and media.

In closing our explorations of media representations of Latinas/os, we will presumably take somewhat of a light-hearted turn toward cartoons and humor/comedy. As you're surely aware, cartoons are much more than mere animated features for kids, having a longstanding tradition of serving as vehicles for the stereotyping of minorities. From articulating highly derogatory portrayals of outlaws and bandidos to underlining the model citizenry produced by the acculturation of second-generation Latinas/os (such as Handy Many or Dora The Explorer), representations of Latinidad in cartoons are quite something. The second part of this week will be devoted to humor/comedy and the complex negotiations of identity and representation that have become articulated around Latinas/os, both from 'inside' as well as from 'outside.'
In this project, you will be asked to go out into the field and observe a practice or situation that involves Latinas/os as its central social actors. While conducting this observation, you should assume the ‘insider’ role, becoming a part of the social group you are attempting to study. To do this, it is important that you do two seemingly contradictory actions: on one hand, foreground your fieldwork with sufficient documentary research and readings, so as to inform your observations; on the other, once in the field, suspend your prior deep knowledge and center your observation around the meanings that your subjects give to their actions and interactions.

Your observation should be thorough, taking between 30 to 60 minutes and allowing you to explore what is happening in the situation. Pay special attention to trying to identify the social dynamics, to understanding the interactions between subjects, and the relations that become enacted, as well as the ways in which all of these take place and the context within which they occur. Think that whatever is happening in your surroundings — regardless of how familiar or foreign it might seem to you — is, indeed, the product of real societal relations, wrought by real social actors, as the real result of a series of historically-informed and economically-determined conditions.

You must actively interrogate your perceptions of the situations, not only by describing them, but also through their analysis. Keep in mind that rather small elements might provide you with an unforeseen wealth of information. You will be responsible for making the necessary arrangements for conducting your observation. Although you are not required to take pictures during your fieldwork, you very well may, granted that it is not intrusive and does not represent a profound alteration of the situation or practice under study.

Once you’ve conducted the fieldwork, return to your prior knowledge of your subjects and the situation and interrogate it based on your observations. When analyzing your fieldnotes and writing your 3-5 page typed report, be thorough and provide thick descriptions that go beyond the mere telling of what-you-saw in favor of constructing what-you-understood. Include your fieldnotes, as well as the supporting images (if available), and references in your final report.
The goals of this project are for you to gain additional skills by identifying the key characteristics of a major player in the Latina/o mediascape and understanding how it articulates representations of Latinidad through content selection. In this project, you are expected to actively contribute equal time and effort to the group project, working productively as part of a team to reach a common goal. Given the characteristics of this type of research, you should use extensive documentary research, seeking out information that is publicly available through reputable sources (trade publications, formal news sources, corporate communications, scholarly works, etc.).

Your pitch for this project must be presented as a one-page document that clearly identifies the media organization your group has selected, as well as the reasons for considering that media organization relevant in the representation of Latina/os. You must also identify at least three different products/contents on which you will center your attention. As for your final report and presentation, keep in mind that they will be graded on how well and how explicitly they fulfill the following requirements. I will provide additional grading criteria once I assign this project in week 4 of the course. Keep in mind that your final report you must provide full attribution (using footnotes, endnotes, or in-text citations) of all information that is not the product of your group’s own thinking.

Your report and presentation must include: (1) a summary of the media organization’s history, its vision and mission, and notable or distinctive elements that differentiate this media organization from its competitors; (2) at least three different products of the media organization that articulate representations of Latinas/os, broadly discussing how they construct their audience; (3) a commentary about each product’s representation of Latinas/os; (4) a discussion about how your media organization fits within the mediascape of Latinidad. This should be contained in a written document between 8 and 10 typed pages, plus a typed list of references or sources used. Your presentation should include only the most relevant information and use visual aids to construct a compelling, interesting, and engaging presentation.

You will be asked to evaluate the effort and contributions of your teammates (peer eval) at the end of the project. Any student obtaining a 0 from all other members of the team will get a 0 for this project.
You will have the opportunity to conduct a textual analysis of a selection of materials articulating representations of Latinas/os. A minimum of 3 materials must be selected for the purpose of this project. The selected materials must be cleared with the instructor by pitching your selection on week 11 of the course.

Although textual analysis does not require you to previously investigate the practices per se, your accumulated knowledge of the groups/subjects under study, as well as that the practices through which they provide meaning to the world will be crucial for the richness of your analysis. As such, it is important that you look at all the materials you have selected through the lens of theory, thus allowing you to recognize and problematize elements and the connected practices of production beyond the mere description.

A series of suggested research questions for this project are listed below. Please feel free to adapt or alter them or to incorporate new ones, should you consider it necessary. You can establish comparisons between the materials you choose or draw from other sources outside of them to inform your analysis.

- How are Latinas/os portrayed/framed/referenced?
- What are the salient elements on which the representations of Latinidad becomes articulated in those materials?
- How do the different sources articulate different representations of Latinidad?

When conducting your analysis, keep in mind that although your findings are crucial and will be taken as the central part of my grading of this project, the ways in which you came to them (the methods you used and the thinking process behind them) will allow me to contextualize and understand your approach. Your final report should be a 4-6 page typed, written document, in addition to the supporting materials you analyzed (images, texts, etc. or URL if publicly available).

**TIPS & RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Careful selection of materials
- Use of theory to guide you
- Think outside the box!

**KEY DATES**
- Project assigned: week 10
- Pitch deadline: week 11
- Project due: week 14
Let’s State This Clearly

As I’m sure you know, there are some norms that we simply cannot (and will not) overlook. I take the following statements very seriously and will not hesitate to enforce them to the extent of my capacity.

Statement on Academic Dishonesty

“Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include filing a final grade of "F"; reducing the student's final course grade one or two full grade points; awarding a failing mark on the coursework in question; or requiring the student to retake or resubmit the coursework. For more details, see the University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog.”

Statement of Disability Services

“Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or the Disability Resource Center (Pennington Achievement Center Suite 230) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.”

This course may leverage 3rd party web-multimedia content, if you experience any issues accessing this content, please notify your instructor.

Statement on Audio and Video Recording

"Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.”

Title IX Statement

The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to providing a safe learning and work environment for all. If you believe you have experienced discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, whether on or off campus, or need information related to immigration concerns, please contact the University’s Equal Opportunity & Title IX office at 775-784-1547. Resources and interim measures are available to assist you. For more information, please visit the Equal Opportunity and Title IX page.

Statement for Academic Success Services

"Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (775) 784-4433, Tutoring Center (775) 784-6801, and University Writing Center (775) 784-6030. These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.”