

African American and Latina/o Histories

AMH 4930.8P01

Professor Paul Ortiz

University of Florida

Fall Semester, 2021; Thursdays, 12:50 to 3:50

Keene-Flint 115

Course Description:

In this research seminar we will undertake a comparative study of African American and Latina/o histories, cultures, and politics from the American Revolution to the present. Major themes include slavery, colonialism, revolutions, social movements, and racial formations in the modern era. Emphasis is placed on overlapping as well as distinctive histories and struggles for freedom and human rights. Course will include analyses of African American and Latina/o oral traditions, film, poetry, drama, memoir, and various forms of expressive cultures.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes:

We will explore histories, cultures, and politics of the African American and Latin American diasporas especially since the Haitian Revolution and the Mexican War of Independence. Students will gain a greater understanding of relationships between major hemispheric events such as the abolition of slavery in Latin America, the Mexican-American War, and the US Civil War. We will delve into linkages between Reconstruction and the Ten Years War in Cuba including efforts by African Americans to support the struggle for Cuban independence. We will study ties between the expansion of empire and the *Jim Crow/Juan Crow* systems. Journeying deeper into the 20th century, we will seek to understand Black and Brown workers' freedom struggles against systemic racism in the Sunbelt, and the pivotal role of these workers in the making of the New Deal. We will study the rise of the first and second Rainbow Coalitions between the 1960s and 1980s as well as the ways that Black and immigrant workers contributed to the election of the first African American president in US history.

Students will gain critical research, writing, and oral presentation skills on the way towards completing a major research paper. Seminar participants will learn how to connect contemporary social changes (including the US transition to a minority-majority society) with historical processes, labor markets, and US foreign policy. Students will also achieve an understanding of the increasing economic, political, and cultural integration of the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa.

UF Oral History, Latinx and Black Histories

The Samuel Proctor Oral History Program (SPOHP) has been conducting oral history interviews with African Americans and Latinas/os, and these may be used for your final research projects. Links to one interview example may be found at: [History and the People Who Make It: Sonja Diaz](#). SPOHP's [Latinx Diaspora in the Americas Project](#) as well as our [Joel Buchanan Archive of African American Oral History](#) may be useful to your research projects. Collections include oral history interviews with alumni of the Student Action with Farmworkers organization at Duke University, as well as the Farmworker Association of Florida.

COURSE FORMAT

Synthesis Essays: You will write three synthesis essays this semester that compare and contrast readings across weeks. Each essay will be 4-5 pages in length. Your first essay will focus on Piri Thomas's *Down These Mean Streets*. In these essays you should reference our major reading assignments. I am looking for serious engagement with the major themes, and historical comparisons of African American and Latino experiences. Synthesis Essay due dates: Friday, September 18, Friday, October 29, Friday, December 3rd.

Mid-Term Exam: A take-home mid-term exam will be distributed in class on Thursday, October 7. The exam is due, Friday, October 15, Pugh Hall, #245. The exam is based on readings and materials through October 7.

Attendance:

Unexcused absences will result in a reduction in the final grade. Excused absences are explained in the undergraduate catalog: (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) and require appropriate documentation. If you miss class you are responsible for getting notes and/or assignment instructions from one of your peers or instructor during regular office hours.

Final/Research Project: Each student will write a fifteen-page research paper on a topic dealing with an aspect of comparative Latino/African American history. Early in the term, we will meet in the Reading Room, 2nd floor Library East for a research workshop led by P.K. Yonge Library Curator Dr. James Cusick. We will discuss final papers in seminar on a regular basis; however, you must meet with the instructor during office hours to receive formal approval for your research papers. You will present your project proposal in class the week of October 7th for peer review. Letter grades on the research paper will be based on three criteria:

- Evidence--how good is the command and deployment of the relevant course material, and is the student employing the best evidence available to make his/her points;
- Interpretation--has the student developed an argument or point of view that is pertinent to the issue at hand, and that has breadth, coherence, and insight; and
- Expression (style)--is the prose (writing) clear, concise, and engaging?

Project Proposal: The project proposal is your mechanism for organizing research for the final paper. It includes: a tentative research project title; statement of topic; research questions; bibliography of primary and secondary sources; description of one primary source. The proposal is due in class October 7.

Oral Presentations: Students will give periodic class presentations of their research a 10-15 minute oral presentation of their research towards the end of the semester with a question-and-answer period to follow each presentation. Letter grades will be based on:

- Clarity—how well does the student present the work-in-progress to a general audience?
- Organization—does the student present the major ideas in a logical manner, explaining primary and secondary sources?
- Significance of research—is the student able to explain why the project is historically significant?

Grading: Class participation, including discussion (10%); Mid-Term exam (10%) Synthesis Essays (30%); Project Proposal (10%); Oral Presentation (10%) Final Research Paper (30%).

Office Hours: I will be holding office hours this semester via Zoom and at my office at the Oral History Program, Pugh Hall, # 245, on Mondays, 3:00 to 4:30 and Wednesdays, 3:00 to 4:30. I am also available for meetings via appointment. My cell phone number is 831-334-0131.

Email: Check our Canvas page on a regular basis for reading questions and course updates.

Required Texts: (Available at Library West Reserves and UF Bookstore.) Piri Thomas, Down These Mean Streets; Juan Gonzalez, Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America; Paul Ortiz, An African American and Latinx History of the United States; August Wilson, The Piano Lesson; Martín Espada, Zapata's Disciple; Johanna Fernández, The Young Lords: A Radical History

Syllabus & Reading List

PART I: RETHINKING THE AMERICAS

“Both the Spanish and the American colonial enterprises were grounded in racism—in a system of status inequality built on presumed racial difference.”

--Laura Gomez

“Opposite One-Drop Rules,” (89)

“It is urgent that our America learn the truth about the United States”

--José Martí, Cuba

WEEK OF AUGUST 26: RE-VISIONING US HISTORY, SEEING THE AMERICAS WHOLE

Wednesday: *Syllabus overview; ice-breaker; introductions*

Friday: *Syllabus review; In-class exercise and Discussion Questions for next week.*

Primary documents: "An Open Letter To Black Americans From Latinos," August 25, 2003.

“Another Threat Against Mexico,” The Afro-American, June 20, 1925

Ralph Matthews, “Yes, We have No Bananas,” Cleveland Call & Post, July 3, 1954

Frederick Douglass in Belfast, Ireland, 1846

Farm Labor Organizing Committee/Black Workers For Justice, Juneteenth, 2001 Event

FILM: Gordon Parks, “The World of Piri Thomas”

Short Lecture: African American and Latina/o histories, 1800s to present

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 2: WALKING DOWN THESE MEAN STREETS

Reading discussion, Piri Thomas, Down These Mean Streets, Introduction to pp. 148 and afterward.

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Ian F. Haney López, "Chance, Context, and Choice in the Social Construction of Race," in: The Latino Condition: A Critical Reader, 9-15 (**Canvas: CV**)

Héctor Tobar, "Home Country: What does it mean to be Latino?" *Harper's Magazine* (2021) (**CV**)

William Darity, Jr., et. al., "Umbrellas Don't Make it Rain: Why Studying and Working Hard Isn't Enough for Black Americans," *Duke Center for Social Equity*, (2015) **CV**

["Wells Fargo Settles for \\$175M Over Steering Blacks and Latinos to Subprime Loans,"](#) 2012

Suggested: Luis Alvarez and Daniel Widener, "A History of Black and Brown: Chicana/o-African American Cultural and Political Relations," *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, 143-154. **CV**

Interview with Piri Thomas: <http://www.peacehost.net/WhiteStar/Voices/eng-piri.html>

In-class film screening: Jonathan Robinson, "Every Child Is Born A Poet," film on the life of Piri Thomas

Short Lecture: Racism, Labor and Functional Stereotypes

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 9: BEYOND THE BLACK/WHITE PARADIGM

Reading: Piri Thomas, Down These Mean Streets, 149-230.

Paul Ortíz, "Making History Matter: Teaching Comparative African American and Latina/o Histories in an Age of Neoliberal Crisis," for: *Kalfou: A Journal of Comparative and Relational Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 3, Issue 1 (Spring 2016), 125-146. (**Canvas: CV**)

"Deaths of People of Color by Law Enforcement Are Severely Under-Counted," California State University, San Bernadino, *Latino Education & Advocacy Days* (**Canvas: CV**)

Julissa Arce, "It's Long Past Time We Recognized All the Latinos Killed at the Hands of Police," *Time* (July, 21, 2020), <https://time.com/5869568/latinos-police-violence/>

James Baldwin, [Fifth Avenue, Uptown by James Baldwin \(esquire.com\)](#)

Film: "Decade of Fire"

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 16: HARVEST OF EMPIRE: MIGRATION IN THE AMERICAS

Reading Discussion: Piri Thomas, Down These Mean Streets, finish book

Piri Thomas: "Voices of Fighters Against Oppression," *New York Amsterdam News*, 1985 (**CV**)

Juan Gonzalez, Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America, Introduction to 78

In-Class: Juan Gonzalez, Harvest of Empire, documentary film

Listen: Susana Baca, *Sounds of Afro-Peru and Legacies of Slavery in South America*

Lecture/Slide Show, The Spanish “Casta” system, Mestizaje, and the origins of race in the Americas.

1st Synthesis essay due: Friday, September 18, 8 pm, Pugh Hall, #245 (Oral History Program)
PART II: REVOLUTION & THE EMANCIPATION OF THE AMERICAS

“First Haiti invented human rights, and then Latin America invented democracy.”
 --Laurent Dubois

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 23: RETHINKING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH: INDEPENDENCE

Reading Discussion: Paul Ortiz, *An African American and Latinx History of the US*, Author’s Note to 94.

Library Research Presentation

“[Why This Mexican Village Celebrates Juneteenth](#),” *Texas Monthly*, June 19, 2021,

George Reid Andrews, “The Wars for Freedom 1810-1890,” and “The Politics of Freedom,” in *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000*, 53-115. (CV)

Haitian and Dominican Relations: *A Conversation with Edwidge Danticat and Junot Díaz*, [INTERVIEW: A conversation with Edwidge Danticat and Junot Díaz | Neo-Griot \(kalamu.com\)](#)

"Casta Paintings: Inventing Race Through Art Reveals 18th-Century Attitudes on Racial Mixing," *National Public Radio*, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=3043790>

Suggested Reading:

Gerald Horne, *Race to Revolution: The U.S. and Cuba during Slavery and Jim Crow*

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 30 : HEMISPHERIC TRADITIONS OF LIBERATION

Reading Discussion: Paul Ortiz, *An African American and Latinx History of the US*, 95-142.

Guadalupe T. Luna, "The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and *Dred Scott v. Sandford*: 'Aren't They All Illegal Anyway?'" in Stokes, Meléndez, et. al., *Race in 21st Century America*, 297-312. CV

José Martí, “A Town Sets a Black Man on Fire,” “The Abolition of Slavery in Puerto Rico,” “The Truth About the United States,” in, *José Martí: Selected Writings*, 314-333. CV

[José Martí on Antonio Maceo](#), *Patria* (October 6, 1893)

Paul Ortiz, "[Cinco de Mayo About Much More Than Having Fun](#)," *The Progressive*, 2013.

Short Lecture: Frederick Douglass on the Causes of the Civil War

In-class Screening: Danny Glover, "Buffalo Soldiers"

WEEK OF OCTOBER 7: FREEDOM STRUGGLES

Due: Project Proposal Plans (Bring one copy to class for peer review; one copy for instructor)

Mid-term take-home exam distributed at end of class.

Reading discussion: Juan Gonzalez, Harvest of Empire, 81-163.

Gay Theresa Johnson, "Constellations of Struggle: Luisa Moreno, Charlotta Bass, and the Legacy for Ethnic Studies," *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, vol. 33, (Spring 2008), 155-172 (CV)

Christina Heatherton, "University of Radicalism: Ricardo Flores Magón and Leavenworth Penitentiary," *American Quarterly* (2014) (CV)

Zaragosa Vargas, "Labor Rights are Civil Rights," (**Rise of industrial unionism & New Deal**) (CV)

Winston James, "From a Class for Itself to a Race on its Own: The Strange Case of Afro-Cuban Radicalism and Afro-Cubans in Florida, 1870-1940," in Winston James, Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America, 232-261. (CV)

Suggested:

["Tainted Justice at the EPA," Los Angeles Times, August 18, 2005](#) (*Environmental racism*)

Imara Jones, "A Food Crisis Is Coming, But Urban America Already Has It Solved," Colorlines, February 16, 2011, http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/02/urban_america_is_nurturing_the_future_of_food.html

Discussion groups to review/critique research project plans

Mid-Term Exam Distributed. Due, Friday, October 15, 7 pm., Pugh Hall, #245.

PART III: Literature and Liberation

WEEK OF OCTOBER 14: MIGRATION, FREEDOM & MEMORY: AUGUST WILSON

Reading Discussion: August Wilson, The Piano Lesson

James Baldwin Open Letter to Angela Davis (1971) CV

Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*, 167-224

“August Wilson, Writing to the Blues,” <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1700922>

Film Screening, Piano Lesson

Friday, October 15: Mid-Term Essay Exam Due

WEEK OF OCTOBER 21: INTERCULTURAL CONNECTIONS: MARTIN ESPADA

Reading Discussion: Martín Espada, *Zapata’s Disciple*

Paul Ortiz, *An African American and Latinx History of the United States*, 143-162.

Listen: “Now the Dead will Dance the Mambo,” by Martin Espada;

D. Bacon, “[How Mississippi’s Black/Brown Strategy Beat the South’s Anti-Immigrant Wave](#),” *The Nation*

[Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance](#)

PART IV: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

WEEK OF OCTOBER 28: CIVIL RIGHTS IN BLACK AND BROWN: THE YOUNG LORDS

Reading Discussion: Johanna Fernández, *The Young Lords*, 1-134.

Cesar Chavez, “The Organizer’s Tale,” CV

Maria Varela, “Time to Get Ready” (The 1960s Freedom Struggle in Mississippi), CV

In-class film screening: “*Fight in the Fields*”

2nd Synthesis Essay (on “Literature and Liberation”) due: Friday, October 29, 8 PM.

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 4: RAINBOW COALITIONS

Reading Discussion: Johanna Fernández, *The Young Lords*, 135-269.

Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, “From Little Mississippi Girl to Mississippi Amazon,” CV

Paul Ortiz, “2013 Immigration Summit with Congressman Ted Yoho,” Marion County, Florida (CV)

Mike Davis, “Burning All Illusions: Urban America Sees its Future,” *The Nation* (1992) CV

Mike Davis, “Armageddon at the Emerald City,” *The Nation* (1994), CV

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 11: VETERAN’S DAY HOLIDAY!

Make Progress on Seminar Papers!

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 18: INTERRACIAL ORGANIZING

Reading Discussion, Johanna Fernández, *The Young Lords* (Finish book)

Paul Ortiz, *An African American and Latinx History of the US*, 163-epilogue.

L.A. Kauffman, “Tofu Politics in Berkeley,” *The Nation* (1991) CV

Angela Davis & Elizabeth Martinez, [*Coalition Building Among People of Color*](#)

Bill Fletcher, Jr. “[*The Immigrant Rights Movement: Forging Black-Brown Unity*](#),” *National Lawyers Guild*

Roberto Lovato, “[*Juan Crow in Georgia*](#),” *The Nation*, May 26, 2008,

Mike Davis, [*Policing the Third Border | Colorlines*](#)

Research Paper Week: in-class consultations

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 25: NO CLASS

WEEK OF DECEMBER 2: ADELANTE: NO NEW READING

Research Project Presentations

Synthesis Essay #3 on Social Movements, due, Friday, December 3, 8pm, My office.

Week of DECEMBER 13: FINALS WEEK

RESEARCH PAPER DUE: Wednesday, December 13, 8 pm, My office, Pugh Hall

Class Demeanor:

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and other electronic devices in the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all.

Course Evaluation Criteria:

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Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Counseling and Mental Health Resources

Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, (352-392-1575) and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Current UF Grading Policy

Review current UF Grading policy at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

About The Instructor

Paul Ortiz is a PEN-award winning author. He is a third-generation military veteran and a first-generation university graduate. Paul received his PhD in history from Duke University in 2000. He earned his BA from the Evergreen State College in 1990 and his Associate of Arts degree from Olympic College in 1988. He is currently professor of history and director of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program at the University of Florida.

He served from 1982 to 1986 with the 82nd Airborne Division and 7th Special Forces Group in Latin America where he was a radio operator and instructor for mobile training teams in multiple combat zones. He received the US Armed Forces’ Humanitarian Service Medal for meritorious action in the wake of the eruption of the

Nevado del Ruiz stratovolcano in Tolima, Colombia in 1985. He attained the rank of sergeant E-5 and received an honorable discharge in 11/1986.

Professor Ortiz's book *An African American and Latinx History of the United States* was identified by *Bustle* as one of "Ten Books About Race to Read Instead of Asking a Person of Color to Explain Things to You." *Fortune Magazine* listed it as one of the "10 books on American history that actually reflect the United States." *Beyondchron.org* called *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920* "As both an essential teaching of American history and a critical resource for understanding grassroots organizing today." Paul co-edited *Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Tell About Life in the Segregated South* which received the Lillian Smith Book Award from the Southern Regional Council.

Dr. Ortiz was a consultant and featured narrator for Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s *The Black Church: This is Our Story. This Is Our Song*, which premiered on PBS in 2021. His pathway to academia included years of organizing work with the United Farm Workers, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, and many other unions. He is currently president of the United Faculty of Florida-UF (FEA/NEA/AFT/AFL-CIO) the union that represents tenured and non-tenure-track faculty at the University of Florida.

Paul is the faculty advisor for *Por Colombia*, CHISPAS, NextGen and many other student orgs.

Ortiz has published essays in *The American Historical Review*, *Latino Studies*, *Cultural Dynamics*, *The Oral History Review*, *Truthout*, *Southern Exposure*, *Kalfou*, the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, and many other journals. He has been interviewed by *Agencia De Noticias Del Estado Mexicano*, *ARD German Radio and Television*, *Newsweek*, *Telemundo*, *The Guardian*, *The Undeclared*, *ABC News*, *BBC*, *Hong Kong Daily Apple*, and a variety of media on the histories of social movements and immigration among other topics.

Dr. Ortiz is a past president of the Oral History Association (2014-2015). He is a member of the inaugural editorial advisory board for the University of North Carolina Press's *Latinx History* series.

Paul recently finished the co-edited book, *People Power: History, Organizing, and Larry Goodwyn's Democratic Vision in the Twenty-First Century*, published by the University Press of Florida in July 2021.