

School of Arts and Sciences-Rutgers University
Department of History--Department of Latino and Caribbean Studies

The History of Puerto Rico
LatCar 371/Hist 371

Dr. Aldo Lauria Santiago
B200 Lucy Stone Hall-LIV
alauria@rci.rutgers.edu
Office Hours:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide students an advanced introduction to the history of Puerto Rico in Caribbean and American context. The study of post-conquest Puerto Rican history covers over five centuries. Four hundred years under Spanish rule and over 100 under US rule. Puerto Rico is often presented as a completely exceptional place with a history unlike any other but in fact it shares many aspects of Caribbean and American history. Despite its long history as an unsovereign territory it shares even its lack of sovereignty with other parts of the Caribbean that continue being part of European or US rule. All the same, Puerto Rico presents some unique characteristics because of its hybridity-a self-identified nation that is thoroughly integrated into the United States and has no sovereignty; a principally Spanish-speaking country that considers itself part of Latin America; a diasporic nation with millions of island born people living on the US mainland.

The study of colonial rule is peculiar. Every colonial place is unique and as much as we want to respect its autonomy there is no such thing as studying a colonial place independently of its colonial metropolis. Puerto Rico's experience as a US territory is paradoxical and it would be a mistake to teach the island's history as if it could be detached from the history of the US and the actions of its government, military and colonial office. Yet, at the same time, its history is most definitely not the history of the US. So in addition to all the familiar social categories that historians need to consider (class, political economy, gender, development, exploitation, etc.), colonial rule poses some special challenges that aren't always solved by any particular theoretical or conceptual resources that derive from the comparative study of colonialism...

Perhaps the only persistent constant that we can find in the colonial matrix of Puerto Rican history, beyond the ideologically driven debates, is the constant search for autonomy, reform and *effective but not systemic* anti colonial demands.

Our course will emphasize political and economic history with significant coverage of social history content and occasional inclusion of cultural themes.

Those of you familiar with the history of Puerto Rico will know that there are a few themes that dominate discussions of Puerto Rican history: the political "status" issue, the alternation of political parties and, lately, the government's fiscal crisis. We will discuss these issues but in a timely manner at the end of the semester, but I will not allow for our discussions to constantly

return or be reduced to these issues. It would be a mistake and a waste of our time to try to learn the rich history of Puerto Rico as if the current or contemporary issues were inevitable or predictable. And as much as we will be talking a lot about nation, nationalism, colonialism, etc. it is important that we make an effort to not start with a political or cultural nationalist reading of the history we are studying. In other words, suspend political ideology until the appropriate time. If you don't want to have historical research and discussions challenge your political ideas then don't take this course.

As a 300 level course it will require significant student work. Expect about 100 pages of readings per week (3 chapters, articles or equivalent).

If you want to request alternative readings in Spanish by Puerto Rican or other historians please let me know and I will recommend an alternative or supplementary reading.

LEARNING GOALS

After completing this course, the attentive and responsible students who do the required work will be able to:

- Become familiar with the most significant names, dates, places and events in Puerto Rico's history, especially during the 20th Century
- Place the basic themes in the history of Puerto Rico in context of the major trends, similarities and difference of Caribbean history
- Describe the principal political, economic and historiographic controversies and debates that form part of the study of Puerto Rico
- Become familiar with the geography both physical and social of Puerto Rico

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, ASSESSMENT, AND GRADING

Students are expected to read all required readings, view all scheduled films, attend class on time, and participate actively in the discussions that follow every lecture, films, and in-class group assignments. Grades will be based on attendance and active participation in class discussions and group work, written work, and exams according to the formula listed below.

Requirements:

1. Attendance, class participation, short assignments, and improvement: 30%
2. Three short research and analysis assignments: 10% each
3. First partial exam: 20%
4. Second partial exam: 20%

Final grades will be calculated according to the Department's current grade policy:

A (93-100) / B+ (89-92) / B (81-88) / C+ (77-80) / C (70-76) / D (65-69) / F (64 and Below)

Readings might change as the semester develops but I will let you know a week ahead of time. I will also call on students in class and there may be unannounced quizzes on the readings throughout the semester.

COURSE POLICIES

1. Electronic gadgets

I HAVE ZERO TOLERANCE FOR TEXTING OR OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN CLASS.

Cell phones and ALL other electronic devices and software not necessary for your readings or notes must be turned off during class. **If you look at your phone once or twice in the semester because you are expecting some important text reply thatâ€™s acceptable if you put your phone away immediately. If you do this more than a few times Iâ€™ll ask you to leave. I am standing in front of all of you and I can see all of you!** Failure follow policy on electronic gadgets will result in a deduction of points from class attendance and participation. If a student persistently violates this rule she or he will be asked to leave. It is not acceptable to be doing ANY online work other than what is required by our course or social interactions electronically during class time. Tablet use for PDF readings is encouraged but I have zero tolerance for in-class social media and email use. PUT IT AWAY AND CLOSE IT FOR 80 MINUTES!!

2. Class attendance and participation.

Attendance and active participation in this course is mandatory and absences will only be excused under extraordinary circumstances such as medical emergencies. In such cases, students must email me and bring a doctor's or US Marshalâ€™s note for the following class. Missing classes without presenting proper documentation will affect your final grade for this course. Students will sign the attendance sheet at the beginning of class. Lateness is very disturbing to the development of class dynamics and will not be tolerated. If you arrive more than 5 minutes late you will lose points on the attendance portion of your final grade! Failure to turn off electronic gadgets will result in a deduction of points from class attendance and participation. You are also expected to use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me generated by this system.

3. Communication with professor

I value direct and clear communication with students. If you have any sorts of issues which are affecting your participation in this class, come to my office hours or contact me via email to set up an appointment. In general, students are encouraged to use the office hours to seek help with processing course materials and to discuss your progress in the course. Information regarding this course will be circulated on email via Sakai. It is your responsibility to check your email the day before class for important updates.

4. Writing assignments

Any sources informing your writing for this class must be cited appropriately and included in a bibliography at the end of the paper or assignment using standard social science citation practice (in-text citations and an appropriately formatted final bibliography at the end-we will go over

this in class before the first assignment is due). Students must proof-read and run spell-check before turning assignments in. Points will be deducted on written assignments that do not meet such basic standards. Students are strongly encouraged to seek help with writing assignments from any of the Campus Writing Centers. Assignments must be submitted to your Sakai dropbox before the beginning of class. No hardcopies are necessary unless otherwise indicated by the Professor. No late assignments will be accepted and make-up work may not be requested for missed assignments unless exceptional circumstances such as medical emergencies inhibit a student to hand in work on time.

5. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas, words, or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one's own creation. Using the ideas or work of others is permissible only when the original author is recognized. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original source. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. It is the student's responsibility to recognize the difference between statements that are common knowledge (which do not require documentation) and restatements of the ideas of others. Paraphrase, summary, and direct quotation are acceptable forms of restatement, as long as the source is appropriately cited. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism. Students caught copying from another source without due credit will automatically receive an F on the assignment in question and will fail the course. In addition, they will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs (SJA) and appropriate sanctions will be applied. Please familiarize yourself with Rutgers' policy on academic integrity available at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/policy-on-academic-integrity>. If you still have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, ask!

6. Students with disabilities.

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

READINGS, FILMS & ON-LINE RESOURCES

The course materials consists of journal articles, legal documents, essays, text selections, and book chapters that are available from the Sakai site at sakai.rutgers.edu. To access the readings, log in with your Rutgers net-ID and click under "resources" tab. If you have any problem downloading the assigned readings, please let me know ahead of time via email.

Week one (): Requirements and Goals; Geography and Demographics

Documents:

- Map of Puerto Rico
- Map of Caribbean
- Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican historical demographics
- Topography and urbanism map
- Chronology of Puerto Rican history
- https://www.census.gov/econ/islandareas/historical_data.html#prg

Week Two (): Conquest, Settlement and Marginalization in Caribbean and Imperial Context, 1500-1812

- Pico. History of Puerto Rico. Chaps. 1-5.
- Pick one:
 - Stark. "Rescued from Invisibility."
 - Chinae. "A quest for freedom."
 - Scarano & Curtis. "Puerto Rico's Population Padrones."

Week Three (): Reconquests, Slavery, Peasants, and Commercial Agriculture, 1812-1868

- Wagenheim. Puerto Rico: an Interpretive History. Chap. 7.
- Figueroa. Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom. Chaps. 1-3.
- Gonzalez Mendoza. "Puerto Rico's Creole Patriots."

Week Four (): Revolt and Spanish Colonial Rule, 1868-1898

- Wagenheim. Puerto Rico: an Interpretive History. Chap. 8.
- Bergad. "Towards Puerto Rico's Grito de Lares."
- Cubano Iguina. "Political Culture."
- Schmidt Nowara. "Cuestion de Brazos: The Rise of Puerto Rican anti-Slavery."
- Ayala. American Sugar Kingdom. Chap 7 Partial.
- Cubano Iguina, "The slaves of hacienda La Esperanza, Manatí."
- Ramos Mattei. "Plantations of the Southern Coast of Puerto Rico 1880-1910."

- First short research discussion due

Week Five (): Liberation by Invasion: 1898: The transition to US Rule in Caribbean Context

- Ayala & Bernabe. Puerto Rico in the American Century. Chap. 1.
- Caban. Constructing a Colonial People. Chap 3.
- Document: Carroll. Report on the Island of Porto Rico. 1899.
- Garcia. I am the Other: Puerto Rico in the Eyes of North Americans, 1898
- Scarano. Liberal Pacts and Hierarchies of Rule: Approaching the imperial Transition in Cuba and Puerto Rico.

- Garcia. "South Puerto Rico Sugar."

Week Six (): Elite Politics of Negotiation, Adjustment and Accumulation--Colonial Rule and Transformation through 1920s

- Ayala & Bernabe. Puerto Rico in the American Century. Chaps. 2.
- Guerra. "The Promise and Disillusion of Americanization: Surveying the Socioeconomic Terrain of Early-Twentieth Century Puerto Rico."
- Matos Rodriguez. "Their Islands and our People"
- Document: Fowles. Down in Porto Rico. 1910.
- Recommended:
- Sola. Colonialism, Planters, Sugarcane, and the Agrarian Economy of Caguas, Puerto Rico, Between the 1890s and 1930.
- Baldrich. "The Tobacco Trust" in Puerto Rico From Cigarette Manufacturing to Agribusiness, 1899-1911

Week Seven (): Working Class Life and Politics

- Nodin Valdez. *Organized Agriculture and the Labor Movement*. Chaps 1.
- Ayala & Bernabe. *Puerto Rico in the American Century*. Chaps. 3.
- Pick one:
- Findlay or Silvestrini.
- Recommended:
- Ayala & Bergad. Rural Puerto Rico in the Early Twentieth Century. LARR
- Levy. Puerto Ricans in the Empire. Chaps. 1-3.

Week Eight (): The Depression and Crisis: Elite Crisis, Labor Revolt and Nationalist Insurgency, 1929-1939

- Ayala & Bernabe. Puerto Rico in the American Century. Chaps. 5.
- Rodriguez. Representing development: new perspectives about the new deal in Puerto Rico 1933-36. Centro Journal.
- Optional:
- Ayala & Bernabe. Puerto Rico in the American Century. Chaps. 6.
- Welsh. Students Resist Americanization, 1930.

Spring Break! ()

Week Nine (): New Deal and War Restructure the Colony, 1939-1946

- Ayala & Bernabe. Puerto Rico in the American Century. Chaps. 7.
- Franqui. Fighting for the Nation. Chap 5
- Dietz. Economic_History of Puerto Rico. Chap 4.

Week Ten (): Neo Colonial Autonomy: Pact or Imposition? 1948-1952

- Ayala & Bernabe. Puerto Rico in the American Century. Chaps. 9.
- Garcia Colon. Playing and Eating.
- Pick one:
- Ayala. Cold War and the Second Expropriations.
- Ayala. From Sugar Plantations to Military Bases.

Week Eleven (): Economic Transformation and the Public Sector, 1948-1980

- Ayala & Bernabe. Puerto Rico in the American Century. Chaps. 10-11
- Duany & Pantojas. "Fifty Years of Commonwealth."
- Pico. History of Puerto Rico. Chaps. 14-15.

Week Twelve (): Emigration and Diasporic Culture

- Pick FOUR of these:
- Duany. A Transnational Colonial Migration.
- Lauria-Santiago. TBA
- Garcia. Claiming Equality
- Duany. Nation, Migration, Identity.
- Findlay. Portable Roots.
- Findlay. Meanings of Race.
- Whalen. The Day the Dresses Stopped.
- Duany. Caribbean Migrations to Puerto Rico.
- Document:

Week Thirteen: () Crisis, Recovery and Crisis, 1980-2015

- Ayala & Bernabe. Puerto Rico in the American Century. Chaps. 12-13.
- Garcia. Goliath against David. The Battle For Vieques.
- Pico. History of Puerto Rico. Chaps. 16.

Week Fourteen: (): The Never Ending Debate: Status, The US's Colonial Politics and the Management of Autonomy

- Ayala & Bernabe. Puerto Rico in the American Century. Chaps. 14.

Week Fifteen (): Conflicts, Movements, Social Life, Solutions

- TBA