

AML 4685

IS LATINIDAD CANCELLED?

T 10:40-11:30am/ TH 10:40-12:35pm

Matherly 115

Thomas Conners, Ph.D.

Office hours TBA and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: In an Instagram post in 2018, AfroZapotec artist Alan Pelaez Lopez declared “Latinidad is Cancelled.” In doing so, they affirmed what many have long known: that latinidad has disavowed Blackness and erased indigeneity by relying on a whitewashed construct of Latin America migrated north. Debate ensued as some came out in defense of latinidad, while others lauded its cancellation, all the while blurring the bounds between Latinx and Latin America. This course takes “Latinidad is Cancelled” as a point of departure, not to decide whether or not that should be the case, but rather to study the histories of Latinx inclusions and exclusions that “cancellation” emphasizes. We will engage, for example, government documents and legal cases that have created “official” definitions of Latinidad, alongside US-based works by Honduran-Garifuna writers, Haitian authors, Indigenous and AfroLatinx poets, and AfroIndigenous artists that think through, against, and beyond latinidad. The course will culminate in a multimedia final project focused on creating and questioning (non)dominant historical and cultural narratives.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: The work we will do together will be both skill building and knowledge building. By the end of the semester, you will have had the opportunity to:

1. Refine language for academic expression in writing and oral presentation
2. Demonstrate knowledge of major historical events, figures, works, and trends in canonical and non-canonical Latinx cultures
3. Develop literary and cultural analysis skills paying attention to components like race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course is designed to support your development as a thinker, writer, and speaker. Part of it has been structured to include important texts and building blocks that will support you towards this aim. The other part will be structured over the course of the first four weeks and through a series of scaffolded assignments, resulting in a co-constructed syllabus and course of study.

Academic policies: This course complies with all UF policies. Please see this link for the most up-to-date University policies about attendance, accessibility, grading, course evals, honesty policies, in-class recordings, academic resources, and Campus Health and Wellness Resources: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>.

Assignments: The assignments listed below are opportunities for you to demonstrate you are building knowledge and skills in relation to the central focuses of our course. Your course grade will be determined by the quantity of assignments you complete in connection with these goals, assuming they follow instructions and satisfy Canvas rubrics. *Submitting work for this course, including contributions made in live, in-person discussions, presumes compliance with the University's Honesty Code and Honor Pledge.*

Canvas posts (9 x 5% = 45%): in order to demonstrate a growing understanding of historical events, figures, works, and trends in Latinx cultures, students will post a “keyword, question, quote” in advance of Tuesday’s class about Tuesday’s readings. These are graded on completion but require relevance: the keyword, question, and

quote should draw from assigned or closely related texts (no need for full sentences—bullet points and brief explanations will suffice). Due by 7:30am each Tuesday.

Student-led discussions (15%): in order to facilitate our continued understanding of Latinx cultures while refining academic expression, students will lead 50 minutes of course discussion at least once during the semester (pending enrollment, these might be partner-led). These will take place on Thursdays and should include: an overview of the relevant figures and historical contexts and a series of scaffolded, discussion-generating questions that advance our collective understanding of history, politics, and form. Early preparation and consultation with the professor in advance of the presentation is recommended.

Final proposal (10%): in order to prepare for the final presentation, students will write a final project proposal that details the central question their project seeks to explore, a brief overview of the texts or contexts they will use, and a tentative outline of how their ideas will be organized (this must explain the anticipated form—a Tiktok, a brief podcast, a video, etc.). See Canvas for details.

Final presentation (25%): in order to work towards mastery of course objectives, students will produce a multimedia final project focused on creating and questioning (non)dominant historical and cultural narratives. Details will be co-constructed as a class and posted to Canvas no later than the week before spring break.

Reflection email (5%): in order to refine written academic expression, specifically in a reflexive move, students will send a final reflection email during the last week of class. This email should include at least two components: first, a synthesis of no fewer than three impactful final projects circulated in class. What were they about, how where they in conversation, what overarching lessons did they teach you? Second, a paragraph response about which texts, theories, or debates will stay with you after this course ends. What were they about, why are you still thinking about them, how might they appear in your life (or work or studies) in the future? This email should be sent to Tommy by the end of the day on Friday, April 24.

In-class activities: adapting to the uneven length of our course meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays (50 minutes and 100 minutes, respectively), Tuesdays will focus on critique—digesting secondary, critical texts, while Thursdays will focus on creation—longer works of literary production. It is recommended you begin reading those in advance.

Required reading: all readings will be uploaded to Canvas, except those prohibited by copyright law. Students will need to purchase these or consult the library reserves. These include:

- Piri Thomas, *Down these Mean Streets* (1967)
- Hector Tobar, *The Tattooed Soldier* (1998)
- Cristina García, *Monkey Hunting* (2003)

If you purchase these texts, choose the cheapest (used) version available. No need for specific editions or hardcovers.

COURSE CALENDAR: Please see Canvas for the most up-to-date schedule of readings.