SPAN 4360/6360: **Covering Arts & Latin (o) American Culture in the U.S.**

Professor: Dr. Paul Alonso

Classroom:

Schedule:

Office: Swann 217

Office hours:

E-mail: paul.alonso@modlangs.gatech.edu

**DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE**

In times when international and cultural reporting have considerably decreased in the U.S. media and the Latino population in the U.S. has become the largest minority in the country, stories and alternative narratives about Latin American cultures are not only scarce, but also tend to be superficial portraits and simplistic generalizations of complex societies heavily filtered through the Mexican experience. Latin American multilayered, hybrid cultures are rarely explored in relation to the local and transnational tensions that shape their struggle for identity, their connections and contradictions in relation to the United States, and their negotiations within today’s global media culture. In times of xenophobia and extreme political discourses based on ethnocentric assumptions (or plain ignorance), this course aims at offering students critical thinking tools in order to approach other cultural realities that resist regional stereotyping, while at the same time actively participating in the investigation, production, and post-production phases of the development of creative multi-media content.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

* Analyze contemporary media reporting on the LatinX culture in the US and Latin America in relation to their contexts of production
* Develop content and discourse analysis skills
* Develop multi-media production skills for Spanish-language-focused work
* Understand how the Internet and multimedia platforms offer new alternatives for the development of cross-cultural communication
* Develop an understanding of historical and cultural contexts related to various regions, including the impact of globalization and cross-cultural communication on economic, political, and social development

**EVALUATION**

Participation: 10%

Writing assignments (2): 20%

Oral presentation: 10%

Mid-term exam: 10%

Podcast project: 25%

Video project: 25%

**Participation (10%):**

Active participation in class is essential. The student is required to complete the readings before each class, watch any assigned videos or materials, do homework, and read his/her notes before the discussions. While this grade is the most subjective one of the class, students’ interventions are evaluated in terms of accuracy and depth of content (40%), clarity and correction of language (40%), and respectful attitude towards the class and the instructor (20%).

**\*Required readings will be available on T-Square or the professor will send them by email or hand them in class.**

\*Students will be updated on their grades on T-Square weekly.

**Written assignments (20%):**

Students will submit two written assignments during the semester (the deadlines are in the syllabus). Grades will be based on: 1) ability to follow the instructions of the assignment and use the techniques and readings explained in class (40%); 2) clear writing and use of correct academic language (40%); 3) citations of all pertinent sources and including bibliography (20%). Late assignments will not be accepted. Not submitting an assignment will result in a grade of zero.

**Mid-term Exam (10%):**

The mid-term includes all the topics discussed in class. If a student misses the exam without previous notification and official excuse, they will receive a grade of zero.

**Oral presentation in class (10%)**

Students will prepare one oral presentation of approximately fifteen minutes during the semester. It will be a critical analysis of a digital media outlet that covers international arts & culture in the US. Specific instructions will be offered two weeks in advance. A rubric for the oral presentations will be uploaded in T-Square. The rubric considers the following aspects: Introduction (10%), Body of Content (40%), Conclusions (10%), Powerpoint (10%), Delivery (30%). The presentation is 10% of the total grade. Students should use PowerPoint or other similar visual aids in their presentations and generate interaction with the class.

**Podcast Project (25%)**

Students will research an assigned topic related to Latin(o) American arts & culture, and will produce a 30-minute podcast about it. The topic and the podcast outline need to be approved by the professor beforehand. Specific instructions, and a rubric for the podcast project will be uploaded in T-Square in advance. The rubric considers the following aspects: Design of the project (25%), Body of Content (40%), Production Quality (35%).

**Video Project (25%):**

Students will produce two short video interviews with local characters that participate actively in the arts and culture scene of Atlanta. The interviewees, and list of questions need to be approved by the professor beforehand. Specific instructions, and a rubric for the video project will be uploaded in T-Square in advance. The rubric considers the following aspects: Design of the project (25%), Body of Content (40%), Production Quality (35%).

**\*Students taking this class at the 6000-level will be producing one more podcast and one more video as part of their grade. The distribution of grade percentages remains the same for both graduates and undergraduates.**

**Important class guidelines:**

\* All papers in the course should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font.

\* Students should not use cell-phones or similar devices in class, except with the professor’s authorization.

**Attendance:**

Attendance to class is mandatory and essential. Three absences without a formal excuse will result in a 5-point deduction of the final grade. Any additional absence will result in an additional 3-point deduction of the final grade. Students should arrive on time; two tardy arrivals will be counted as an absence from the course. If a student misses class, it is his/her responsibility to stay updated on the contents and homework of the course. Official absences are allowed following the Institute guidelines: “Students who are absent because of participation in approved Institute activities (such as field trips, professional conferences, and athletic events) will be permitted to make up the work missed during their absences. Approval of such activities will be granted by the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, and statements of the approved absence may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar.” http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/

**Disability Services**:

The Office of Disability Services offers self-identified students with permanent or temporary disabilities assistance with registration, accessibility, transportation, parking, housing, counseling, note taking, recorded textbooks, advocacy, test proctoring, referral services, and other needs. Disability Services promotes disability awareness programs for departmental faculty and staff, as well as the Georgia Tech community. Students and prospective students who wish to learn more about accommodations for students with disabilities should contact: Office of Disability Services Suite 221 Smithgall Student Services Building Georgia Institute of Technology Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0285 call 404.894.2563 (voice) or 404.894.1664 (TTY) visit <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu> email [dsinfo@gatech.edu](mailto:dsinfo@gatech.edu).

Suggested Books/Readings

* Diccionario de la Lengua Española
* The Associated Press Stylebook
* The Elements of Style (Strunk & White, any edition)
* El Estilo del Periodista (Alex Grijelmo)
* The New York Times Reader: Arts & Culture (edited by Don McCleese)
* Cross-Cultural Journalism: Communicating Strategically About Diversity (edited by Maria Len-Rios and Earnest Perry).
* News Writing & Reporting (The Missouri Group)

CALENDAR OF THE COURSE

Week 1: Cross-Cultural Journalism

The role of popular culture in socio-political discourse

Week 2: Latin American Multicultural, Hybrid, and Diverse Societies

Latino, LatinX, & Latin American Culture: Connections & Disconnections

Week 3: Latin (o) American Culture in the US media

Week 4: Covering Arts & Culture

Writing assignment 1

Week 5: Covering Latin (o) American Arts, Culture & Entertainment: A Guide to Cross-Cultural Coverage [Writing Reviews]

Oral Presentation

Week 6: Covering Latin (o) American Arts, Culture & Entertainment: A Guide to Cross-Cultural Coverage [Interviewing Techniques]

Week 7: Covering Latin (o) American Arts, Culture & Entertainment: A Guide to Cross-Cultural Coverage [Writing Reviews]

Week 8: Covering Latin (o) American Arts, Culture & Entertainment: A Guide to Cross-Cultural Coverage [Video/audio production]

Mid-term exam

Week 9: New Alternative Media Experiments to Narrate the Latin (o) American Realities in the Digital Age

Writing assignment 2

Week 10: Covering Latin (o) American Arts, Culture & Entertainment: A Guide to Cross-Cultural Coverage [Writing for the Web]

Week 11: Bilingual Multi-media Projects (video interviews, stories & podcasts)

Week 12: Bilingual Multi-media Projects (video interviews, stories & podcasts)

Week 13: Bilingual Multi-media Projects (video interviews, stories & podcasts)

Video Project

Week 14: Bilingual Multi-media Projects (video interviews, stories & podcasts)

Podcast Project

Week 15: Bilingual Multi-media Projects (video interviews, stories & podcasts) Showcase of projects

=========

*NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to accommodate instructional and/or student needs.*

**Academic Honesty:**

As a student at Georgia Tech, you are expected to fully understand and to carefully follow the policies and standards of academic honesty set forth in *The* *Student Handbook*, which is available from the office of the Dean of Students and online. Lack of familiarity with the university’s policy on academic honesty will not be accepted as an excuse or justification for violations. The policy set forth in the Handbook offers examples of plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized collaborations. If you have any questions, or concerns about this policy, you should consult with your academic advisor, instructor, or department chair. Confirmed violations will result in appropriate disciplinary actions.

While several forms of academic dishonesty are possible, the most common form is plagiarism, the essence of which is representing the work of others as your own by not attributing sources of ideas and facts, failing to indicate and cite direct quotations, or falsifying citations. Any widely used style guide, such as the APA, will offer guidelines regarding attribution, quotation, and citation, and these rules should be followed completely and consistently. These rules apply equally to books, journals, newspapers, other hard copy publications, and materials obtained over the Internet.