Educational Studies 307
Latinas/os in Education: Local Realities, Transnational Perspectives
Trinity College Spring 2010
M 1:15-3:55pm McCook 305
http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/educ

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Office hours: M 4-5, T 1:30-4:00

Course Description
This course examines the education of Latinas/os in the U.S. as a field of cultural and political struggle. Latinos are the nation’s largest and fastest growing minority group. In many urban school districts across the country, including Hartford, Latinos make up the majority of the school enrollment; yet Latinos are grossly underrepresented in higher education. This course will examine the socio-historical, cultural, and political contexts that shape the educational experience of Latinas/os in the U.S., paying particular attention to issues of cultural identity and representation as they affect the education of Latinas/os. Central questions we will explore are: How do cultural constructions of Latinas/os (as immigrants and natives, citizens and non-citizens) shape educational policy and teaching practices? What views of citizenship and identity underlie school programs such as bilingual education, as well as Latina/o responses to them? How have Latino communities protested, resisted, engaged with and transformed educational policies for their children, and how have they designed alternatives? We will explore these questions by engaging in a local community-based setting for the education of Latinas/os and bringing scholarly perspectives into dialogue with local issues.

We will also explore the emerging phenomenon of transnationalism, or the social processes through which immigrants link their countries of origin with their communities of settlement, and its implications for the education of Latinos. How do transnational cultural frames shape Latino immigrants’ views and expectations of the educational system? How do they animate new forms of participation and resistance? Drawing on selected readings from Latin America as well as the United States context, the course will cover three main areas: 1) historical perspectives, 2) the experience of inequality, and 3) resistance to inequality. We will begin with an overview of theoretical perspectives on difference in education.

Course objectives:
- Develop an understanding of Hartford’s Latino community through immersion in a community-based context for the education of Latina/os
Examine cultural constructions of Latina/o youth, parents, and communities in the mainstream media and educational discourse on Latina/os
Understand the historical context that shapes the educational experience of Latina/os in the U.S.
Identify transnational issues shaping the experience of Latina/o immigrant students
Identify how knowledge of historical, cultural and transnational contexts challenges mainstream media and policy discourses about Latina/o students.

Readings:
Available at bookstore in Ed Studies section:
Additional readings will be made available in class.

Course Requirements

1) Readings and participation

Students will be expected to do the assigned readings and come to class prepared to participate in discussion. Each student will be required to facilitate a 15-20 minute discussion on one of the readings on the syllabus. Guidelines for facilitators will be distributed in class. Each student will also be required to write two 1-2 page response papers for two different readings on the syllabus.

2) Community research

A major part of students’ course experience will involve a research project in a Hartford school or community organization serving Latina/o youth and/or adults. Students must commit to three hours of fieldwork per week in their placement site, or a total of at least 30 hours over the course of the semester, and will sign a Community Learning contract to be shared with the community coordinator and the instructor. Students will keep weekly journals on their experience in their site and reflections on the readings. As part of their research, students will be required to submit a preliminary paper on the local context (see below) and a final research paper.

This semester, students have two options for the research paper:

Option 1: Identify a research topic from course themes that you explore through interviews and observations at your placement site (for example: transnational migration, educational aspirations, activism, anti-immigrant sentiment, cultural identity, etc.). The final paper should draw on at least four research articles or book chapters to illuminate and analyze the student’s original findings. Suggested length is 15-17 pages.

Option 2: Identify a research topic in consultation with the staff at your placement site (teachers or program coordinators) that meets the program’s needs for information and
feedback. For example, staff at a program may want to know how students are responding to a new curriculum, or what other programs parents would like to see (these are two areas that have been mentioned to me by our coordinators). You would collect data to answer their questions and present it to the program staff at the end of the semester, in whatever format you and they agree on (it might be a Powerpoint or multimedia presentation). If you select this option, the program staff will evaluate your presentation. You will write a paper for me describing the research you undertook, reflecting on what you learned and how it relates to course themes. Suggested length of this paper is 8-10 pages. My evaluation will be based on your paper and the program staff’s evaluation of your presentation and participation at the site.

2a.) Observing the local

In order to ground your research in the local context, students will be required to submit a 5-7 page paper providing a portrait of the community or neighborhood where their research is situated. This should be based on census data, observation, oral histories, or a combination of these. Things to examine include: changing neighborhood demographics (race, ethnicity, income/poverty, citizenship, family, crime, youth), immigration history, political economy, segregation, jobs, and community institutions. Consider using Philippe Bourgois’ “A Street History of El Barrio” as a model. This paper (or part of it) can be included in your final paper, but will be graded separately.

Assessment

Class Participation (including facilitator roles) 20 pts
2 Reading Response Papers 2 x 10 = 20 pts
Journals 15 pts
“Observing the local” assignment 15 pts
Final research paper 30 pts
TOTAL 100 pts

Course sessions

Mon Jan 25 Introduction to the course and syllabus; overview of Hartford community placements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Agencies &amp; Coordinators</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Main Phone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academy of Latino Studies</td>
<td>195 Putnam Street</td>
<td>695-2980</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol Shapiro</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut Puerto Rican Forum</td>
<td>95 Park Street</td>
<td>247-3227</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claudia Nunn</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi Casa Family Service Center</td>
<td>590 Park Street</td>
<td>522-5222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carmen Rivera, Program Coordinator</td>
<td>522-5222 x321</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Oak Cultural Center</td>
<td>21 Charter Oak Avenue</td>
<td>249-1207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Thompson, Youth Arts Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
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I. Theorizing Difference in Education

Feb 1


II. Historical perspectives

Feb 8 Historical perspectives, Part 1


Facilitators: ____________________, ____________________, ____________________

Reviewers: ____________________, ____________________, ____________________

Feb 15 Historical perspectives, Part 2


“Founding Principles of LULAC” and “Méndez v. Westminster School District, Orange County, California, 1946,” in Victoria-Maria MacDonald (Ed), *Latino Education in...*

Facilitators: ___________________, ___________________, ___________________
Reviewers: ___________________, ___________________


III. Experiencing inequality

Feb 22 Subtractive Schooling

Facilitators: ___________________, ___________________
Reviewers: ___________________, ___________________

Mar. 1 NO CLASS -- TrinityDays

Mar 8 Immigrant communities and anti-immigrant movements


López and López, Introduction and Chapter 1, “Examination of Plyler v. Doe and its Aftermath” (pp. 1-53), and Chapter 5 section on Immigration Enforcement at Schools (pp. 124-143).
Facilitators: ___________________, ___________________, ___________________
Reviewers: ___________________, ___________________, ___________________

Video in class: Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary

Mar 15: The Politics of Language

López and López, Chapters 3-4, “Speak No Evil: Language Education Policy from Lau to the Unz Initiatives and Beyond,” and “Accountability under No Child Left Behind” (pp. 91-111).

Facilitators: ____________________, ____________________, ____________________

Reviewers: ____________________, ____________________, ____________________

**Mar 22**  NO CLASS – Spring Break

**Mar 29**  Higher Education


López and López, Chapter 2: “Documented Dreams, the Underground Railroad and Underground Undergraduates” (pp. 55-89).


Recommended:


Facilitators: ____________________, ____________________, ____________________

Reviewers: ____________________, ____________________, ____________________

**IV. Resisting Inequality: Making change within and beyond schools**

**April 5**  Youth activism


Facilitators: ____________________, ____________________

Reviewers: ____________________, ____________________

**Thursday, April 8** “Observing the local” assignment due by 5:00pm
April 12  Everyday activism: making change from within schools

Carmen Mercado (2005), “Seeing What’s There: Language and Literacy Funds of Knowledge in New York Puerto Rican Homes”. In Ana Zentella (Ed.) Building on Strengths: Language and Literacy in Latino Families and Communities. New York: Teachers College Press


Facilitators: ___________________, ___________________, ___________________

Reviewers: ___________________, ___________________, ___________________

April 19  Claiming space and finding voice in higher education


Excerpts from Mi Voz, Mi Vida: Latino College Students Tell Their Life Stories.

Facilitators: ___________________, ___________________

Reviewers: ___________________, ___________________

Guest speakers (2:30pm): Roberto Cotto, Viana Turcios, and Enrique Sepúlveda

Special event: April 22-23 Conference on “Educating Women in the 21st Century” at Trinity. Attendance at Friday, April 23 panels on “Exclusion and activism” and “Immigration and education” required.

April 26  Transnationalism


In class: Jigsaw, and discussion of film My American Girls (Media Ctr: F128.9.D6 M9 2001)

**May 3** Adult Latina/o immigrants and community-based spaces for change


Video in class: Madres Unidas: Parents Researching for Change

Reflections and wrap-up

Journals DUE in class

**Monday, May 10** Final papers DUE by 5:00pm