

Latinos en Estados Unidos: FYS “Latinx Legacy”

During Fall 2025, the First-Year Seminar “Latinx Legacy” returned to Trinity College after a 5-year absence. The seminar delves deeply into the fabric of Latino identity in America and its representations in media. Through theater, film, TV series, and music, students became familiar with the broader Latino community in the United States and, in many cases, their own identities.

Latinx Legacy is not a typical seminar. It is an exploration of the history, resilience and diversity of an American community that has had to fight for every right and space it possesses. Marked by stories of immigration, assimilation, colonialism, and marginalization, students had the unique opportunity to learn about Latino culture from Professor Aponte-Avilés, a distinguished scholar of Hispanic Studies. Through her expertise, she guided students through the semester by analyzing depictions of Latinos in films and series from *I Love Lucy*, *West Side Story*, *Scarface*, to *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* and *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. All peppered by history, art and music... Even Bad Bunny made an appearance!

The participants in the seminar were a microcosm of the student population at Trinity and a reflection of the diverse topics we covered. International students coming from Latin America, Hispanic Americans, and non-Latino students all engaged in this fascinating class. The multiculturalism of the class was also evident in additional opportunities the students had. Throughout the semester, the class was visited by La Voz Latina, Trinity’s Hispanic cultural organization, and had the opportunity to walk around Frog Hollow to witness the rich Latino history embedded in Hartford. The class also visited a local Latino restaurant and traveled to Repertorio Español in New York City to attend *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. This play is based on the Pulitzer-winning novel of Junot Díaz, another author the students studied in the seminar.

The seminar also equipped students with experience navigating academic spaces at Trinity. Acknowledging the historical marginalization of Latinos and the difficulty first-generation students often find navigating higher education, the seminar was welcomed at the Career and Life Design Center in November. There, a coach explained to them all resources available to Trinity students to gain professional readiness including mastering cover letter and resume writing, LinkedIn, and looking for internships. Students also engaged in a library tour at the beginning of the semester that introduced them, similarly, to all resources available to the Trinity community at the library, which extends far beyond book checkout and study spaces. Furthermore, they attended a talk about academic research and the use of AI.

Latinx Legacy goes beyond a regular class at Trinity, creating a sense of community in the classroom and the broader Latino experience in Hartford and the United States. The students, each with their unique connection to their identity, foster empathy and diversity of thought that enriches class discussions. Professor Aponte-Avilés has crafted an outstanding educational experience that has left its mark on students and will keep on guiding their journey at Trinity and as they engage with the Latino community in America.



Members of La Voz Latina during their visit to the seminar in September. They introduced the class to the role of the organization on campus, their events, and how they aim to increase Latino representation at Trinity



Students during their visit to the Career and Life Design Center



Professor Aponte-Avilés, Seminar Mentor Juan Rayo, and the students during the first week of class



Students and Mentor at Grand Central Terminal in New York City during the trip to attend the play



Students and mentor at Repertorio Español, attending *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*