Within the field of Chicana/o studies, spirituality has often been approached with a hermeneutic of suspicion. However, there remains an urgent need to articulate how the spiritual practices of the Latinx community has in fact served as a key source of empowerment and spiritual resistance. In order to fully understand and appreciate the complexity of Latinx culture within the context of daily life, a study of these syncretic spiritual systems is a necessity. This course provides a framework for Latinx spirituality and religion. We will begin the course with an overview of Latinx faith within Christianity, as it still remains the most influential in terms of cultural identity. From there, we will explore the spirituality of Latinxs in a few of the major world religions. By the end of the course, students will be able to identify the concrete ways in which culture and spirituality are deeply intertwined in the Latinx community.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

• Recall key themes as articulated in the readings and in our class discussions of Latinx Spirituality.
• Identify the broad range of spiritual practices and rituals of the Latinx Community.
• Illustrate how Spirituality has served as a powerful source of cultural and political resistance for the Latinx Community.
• Compare and contrast how Latinx spirituality is expressed in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim contexts.
• Propose new ways of understanding Latinx Spirituality within a Chicana/o Studies framework.
• Evaluate the complex intersections of Latinx Spirituality, culture, and politics.
Required Texts


Suggested Reading


Grading and Assessment – 4 major components

1) **Regular Attendance and Participation [20% of Final Grade]**
As this course meets only once per week, attendance and participation are crucial. Two or more absences will result in a lower grade. You are responsible for all material missed due to absences. Students are expected to be well prepared for class and will actively engage in a discussion of the readings each week. Participating in conversation based on the assigned texts, asking questions, and respectful dialogue are all essential components of this course. Students will sign up in advance and lead our seminar-style discussions each week. In addition to leading the discussion, the presenters will highlight central issues and themes as part of a continued dialogue through the course of the quarter.

2) **Reading Response Papers [25% of Final Grade]** 5 papers worth 5% each
Students will submit 5 reading response papers over the course of the quarter. Students will submit their reading response papers electronically by midnight on Monday (prior to class on Tuesday) to allow for richer dialogue in class. In your reading response paper of 2 pages double-spaced, articulate the key theme(s) from the readings as it relates to Latinx Spirituality. Identify the thesis of each reading as well as how that particular author supports it. At the end of your paper, you may provide 1 or 2 specific questions that will serve as a springboard for our class discussion.

3) In-Class Presentation [15 % of Final grade]
Students will sign up for one in-class presentation. Presentations will run for 45 minutes and focus on the following questions, “How is Spirituality being lived out in the Latinx community? How are culture and spirituality interconnected within the context of daily life?” Creativity is encouraged and active engagement with the class is expected. I recommend creating a 1-2 page handout for the class. Students will consult with Dr. Guerra at least one week ahead of time to discuss and prepare for the presentation.

4) Final Research Paper [40% of Final Grade; 10% presentation + 30% research paper]
Students will choose a relevant theme on Latinx Spirituality based on the course. Students will develop a 10-12 pages (double spaced) research paper on that theme. Students will have the option, in consultation with Dr. Guerra, to tailor the final paper topic towards their specific research interests. A topic proposal and substantial outline of the paper will be due Nov. 7th. Students will also briefly share their work with the class in the last two class sessions on Nov. 28th and Dec. 5th as a preliminary requisite for submission of final version. The completed research paper must be submitted electronically by Tuesday Dec. 12th by Midnight via TurnItIn.com. No late papers will be accepted.

Grading Scale

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Additional Policies

Academic Integrity
Please review UCLA’s student conduct code and university policy on Academic integrity [http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Academic-Integrity](http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Academic-Integrity).
Proper citation of all research materials is expected. Any form of plagiarism or the purchasing of a paper will result in failure of the course and further review by the university.

Technology
If you chose to use a laptop to take notes or are using electronic PDF copies of the assigned readings on your laptop screen then, please turn off the Wi-Fi on your computer so as to minimize distraction. Please do not check email or Facebook while you are in class and silence your cell phone.

Language
You are encouraged to utilize gender inclusive language in all of your posts, papers, and speech.

Reading Response Papers and Final Research Paper
Your written assignments for this course must be typed and follow a standard format. Papers must be double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman Font, 1-inch page margins all around. Page limits do not include space utilized by images or bibliography. Bibliography for your research paper must follow Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style. Late submissions will be marked down by 5% per day late.

CAE Accommodations
Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310) 825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit [www.cae.ucla.edu](http://www.cae.ucla.edu).
Course Readings

[Oct. 3]: Introduction to Latinx Spirituality
- Edwin Aponte, *Santo! Varieties of Latino/a Spirituality*

[Oct. 10]: Latin American Liberation Theology and Spirituality
- G. Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation* [part I and II: pp. 1-43]
- G. Gutierrez, *We Drink From Our Own Wells*

[Oct. 17]: U.S. Latino/a Theology and Spirituality
- Timothy Matovina, *Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America’s Largest Church* [pp. vii-41; 162-218]
- Maria Pilar Aquino, “Theological Method in U.S. Latino/a Theology” [in *From the Heart of Our People*, pp. 6-48]

[Oct. 24]: Latina Feminist Spirituality
- Michelle Gonzalez, *Embracing Latina Spirituality*

[Oct 31]: Chicana Spirituality & Activism
- Laura Medina, *Las Hermanas: Chicana/Latina Religious-Political Activism in the US*
- Nancy Pineda-Madrid, *Suffering and Salvation in Ciudad Juarez*

[Nov. 7]: Latinx Pentecostal/Evangelicals
- **Final research paper topic and outline due in class today**
- Loida Martell-Otero and Zaida Maldonado Perez, *Latina Evangélicas: A Theological Survey from the Margins*
[Nov. 14]: Caribbean and Afro-Latinx
- Ennis B. Edmonds and Michelle Gonzalez, *Caribbean Religious History* [pp. 1-120]
- Michelle Gonzalez, *Afro-Cuban Theology: Religion, Race, Culture, and Identity* [Ch. 5 & 6]

[Nov 21]: Latinx Muslims

[Nov. 28]: Latinx Judaism and Final Presentations Required for Research Paper
- Ilan Stavans, *Return to Centro Histórico: A Mexican Jew looks for his roots*

[Dec. 5]: Wrap up Session and Final Presentations; Required for Research Paper

**Note:** Final Exam Week is Dec 11-15. Your final research paper is due via *TurnItIn.com* on **Tuesday Dec. 12 by Midnight**.
No late papers will be accepted.