

Department: HIST/LAMS/PRLS

Course No.: 1570

Credits:

Title: Migrant Workers in Connecticut

Contact: Patricia Szarek (Honors); Kenneth Gouwens (Chair, History Dept C&CC)

Content Area: CA 1 Arts and Humanities CA 4 Diversity and Multiculturalism

Diversity: Non- International

Catalog Copy:

HIST/PRLS/LAMS 1570: Honors Core: Migrant Workers in Connecticut

Four Credits. Prerequisite: Open only by instructor consent. Overmyer-Velázquez; Gebelein

Interdisciplinary honors course on the life and work experiences of contemporary Latin American and Caribbean migrant workers with focus on Connecticut. Integrated service learning component. Field trips required.

Course Information:

Justification:

a) reason for adding/dropping/revising the course: Addition to Honors Core Curriculum.

b) why course is appropriate for inclusion at 1000 or 2000 level (or 100 or 200 level): Part of Honors Core Curriculum for 1st and 2nd year honors students.

c) effect on department's curriculum,

Course has been approved by the Honors Program Board of Directors. The Honors Program will provide appropriate compensation to the History Department for replacement staffing for Overmyer-Velázquez.

d) effect on other departments,

Will be cross-listed with PRLS and LAMS

e) amount of overlap with existing courses, None. This service learning course is the first of its kind at UConn in the study of migrant populations.

f) other departments consulted,

PRLS/LAMS

g) effects on regional campuses,

None

h) specific costs approved by dean,

The Honors Program acknowledges that the service learning dimension of the course will require additional funding.

i) if course is to be cross listed supply reason for cross-listing and approval from all departments affected (Submit a separate email of approval), PRLS/LAMS

Meets Goals of Gen Ed.

The course, Honors Core: Migrant Workers, integrates, to varying degrees, all of the basic purposes of general education as stated in the UConn General Education Guidelines. 1. Become articulate. In addition to several small writing assignments, regular individual and group presentations will foster careful articulation by the students in both oral and written formats. Moreover, structured daily class discussion will challenge students to articulate their ideas in a more extemporaneous context. 2. Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility. The transnational subject matter and multidisciplinary instruction and source material for this course will require the students to expand their intellectual and analytical frameworks. Furthermore, examining how historical questions have been approached differently across time, geographic location, and by individuals with different backgrounds (gender, racial/ethnic, generational, etc) will encourage students to inspect their own notions of the production of knowledge. 3 - 5. Acquire critical judgment; Acquire moral sensitivity; Acquire awareness of their era and society. This course simultaneously addresses basic purposes 3, 4, and 5 by requiring students to critically examine the history of the United States' relations with Latin America from the 19th century to the present. Encouraged to develop an empathetic and moral sensitivity to the historical experiences and actions of both elites and commoners, students will be asked to construct their own judgments of the political dimensions of Latin America's long history with the United States. Historical issues treated in this course that demands these types of analysis include, colonialism, cultural and economic imperialism, racism, migration, and citizenship. 6. Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience. This course explores a wide range of human experiences and thoughts, from an study of state officials to the role of transborder performance artists in the articulation of nationhood and ethnic and gendered identities. Students will be asked to pay careful attention to shifting conceptions of US citizenship, especially in the recent past and present. The lives of migrants in the United States and along the U.S. - Mexico border will also figure prominently in our readings and discussions 7. Acquire a working understanding of the processes by which they can continue to acquire and use knowledge. The multidisciplinary approach to the topic will introduce students to several paths to the acquisition, production, and circulation of knowledge both inside and outside the academy.

CA1 Criteria:

This course engages students in historical and critical investigation and analysis by examining

the historical relationship between migrant sending regions of Latin America and the host country of the United States. Particular attention is paid to analyzing the enduring colonial and economic dynamic between the two regions.

CA4 Criteria

The course integrates, to varying degrees, many of the criteria of this group. 1. Emphasize that there are varieties of human experiences, perceptions, thoughts, values, and/or modes of creativity. This course explores a wide range of human experiences and thoughts, from an study of state officials to the role of transborder performance artists in the articulation of nationhood and ethnic and gendered identities. Students will be asked to pay careful attention to shifting conceptions of US citizenship, especially in the recent past and present. The lives of migrants in the United States and along the U.S. - Mexico border will also figure prominently in our readings and discussions. 4. Develop an understanding of and sensitivity to issues involving human rights and migration. Studying the lives of migrant workers necessarily requires students to carefully analyze issues of human rights and migration. Intra and international migration from the late nineteenth century to the present has shaped fundamentally the contours of US and Latin American history. Beginning with the large exodus of Mexican workers to the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century, this course examines the history of migrant laborers and labor rights in both Mexico and the United States. Students will read and discuss historical documents such as personal narratives (testimonios) of migrants and changing Mexican and U.S. governmental legislation on migration. 5. Develop an awareness of the dynamics of social, political, and/or economic power in the context of any of the above four items. Students will be asked to consider how dynamics of social, political, and economic power are integral to the issues examined in criteria 4 above. Migrant laborers leaving Latin America and living and working in the United States have been central to how both regions have understood and legislated citizenship. A key political issue, immigrant labor has been central to the economic prosperity on both sides of the border. Students will also study the social dimension of migration as it has greatly affected the historical development of families and communities simultaneously in both nations.

Syllabus:

HONORS CORE: MIGRANT WORKERS [HONORS COURSE PROPOSAL]

HIST/PRLS/LAMS 1570 – Spring 2009

Professor Mark Overmyer-Velázquez

This interdisciplinary, team-taught Honors course examines the life and work experiences of migrant workers. Weekly sessions will be coordinated by Professor Overmyer-Velázquez and taught by different faculty from across the university and by practitioners in the field, combining short lectures and discussions of assigned readings. The emphasis is on migrant workers – mostly Spanish-speaking from the Caribbean and mainland Latin America, but with some attention to non-Spanish-speaking migrants (e.g., from Haiti) – in the United States with a significant focus on migrant workers in Connecticut.

This seminar is introductory. We assume that most, if not all, of you are generally unfamiliar with much of the basic literature pertaining to migrant life and labor. The course is thus intended

to provide a very broad and eclectic perspective on the world of migrant labor and experiences. Instructors from a variety of disciplines will bring their own particular areas of specialization and expertise on a weekly basis to the seminar. We encourage all of you, in both your written work and in class discussions, to make the effort to be understood, and to speak, across disciplinary boundaries.

We begin our transborder journey by collecting our family's history of migration to the U.S. and then move to examine broad historical definitions of "nation" and "citizen" before turning to a more detailed analysis of the myriad forces and structures that shape migrants' lives here in Connecticut. This seminar combines classroom and service learning as fundamental and equally valued elements of each student's experience. Within a clearly defined structure of training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation, students must commit to 20 hours of active work in a migrant service organization.

This innovative interdisciplinary course challenges students imagine and practice their responsibilities as global citizens by creatively placing critical issues of the 21st century within their own rich historical and cultural contexts. This course seeks to foster ideas and practices of global citizenship by exposing students to new and interdisciplinary research.

The course also provides students with the essential practical experience and intellectual tools required to participate in an optional field study course in Mexico: (<http://www.history.uconn.edu/undergraduate/studyabroad.htm>). The UConn Winter in Oaxaca, Mexico Study Abroad Program, also directed by Professor Overmyer-Velázquez, is offered in the winter intercession semester. In addition to receiving an introduction to Mexico's history and culture, the study abroad program exposes students to the cultural and historical origins of Mexican migrants found in Connecticut. Students will visit community centers, talk with researchers studying migration in Mexico and observe the economic, environmental and social conditions that affect Mexican migrants at their points of origin. These study experiences will profoundly impact students' lives and equip them to analyze and critically participate in the complexities of globalization that they will face in their future.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

1. Define and explain U.S. immigration in historical and cultural perspective
2. Explain how the parameters of migration are defined by and define the nation-state
3. Critically analyze the myriad forces and structures that shape migrants' lives
4. Examine how your family's story is part of the larger history of migration in the U.S.
5. Formulate conceptual frameworks in order to evaluate the dimensions of Latin America's long history with the United States with particular emphasis on the state of Connecticut
6. Develop an understanding of learning through practice by engaging in and reflecting critically upon responsible and challenging service work in Connecticut migrant service organizations
7. Provide valuable labor to Connecticut migrant service organizations as part of an enduring and productive relationship with those organizations.

Faculty Coordinator

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Participating Faculty/Instructors

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Assignments

Course requirements include an oral history, weekly papers, a journal, political letters, and participation in a service learning project to be arranged in conjunction with the instructor. Please note that each of these components is required for the course and has specific criteria, as follows:

I. Participation

Consistent and thoughtful participation will determine a substantial part of your final grade; for a better grade you should plan on coming prepared each week having read the material carefully and prepared with questions and comments. If discussion comes readily to you, look for ways to encourage others to participate. Absence from class precludes participation and has, therefore, an adverse effect on your grade. If you do miss a class meeting you will be responsible for finding out what was missed and for making up any assignments.

II. Family Interview

Students will research and write a 2-3 page (double spaced, 12 point font, with one-inch margins) oral history of one family member that places that individual's story within the context of the major themes and issues of the course. During the third week of class, each student will present a brief synopsis of their research process and findings. At our first meeting we will review a set of interview questions. **Due in class Week 3.**

III. Response Paper

Most weeks you will write a one-page (double spaced, 12 point font, with one-inch margins) response paper in which you do two things: first, very briefly summarize what you see as the main arguments and points in the week's readings; and two, raise at least one, if not more, question(s) for discussion at the seminar. Response papers should be sent via email by **2pm** on the day before the seminar to Professor Overmyer-Velázquez and the instructor for the given week's readings. These will be returned to you with comments and a grade.

IV. Journal

Service learning asks you to integrate what you learn from your service with what you learn in the classroom. The journal is the place in which you are asked to reflect on the relationship between your classroom and field learning. You will keep a weekly journal (2 to 3 pages per week) in which you explicitly reflect upon discussions and readings from class *in relation to* your service learning project and experience. You will be required to submit the journal for review three times over the course of the semester (**Week's 5, 10, and 15**). During the semester, selections from your journal will be posted on our course web blog.

V. Service Learning Project

The service learning component is crucial to this course. Service learning options will be discussed in more detail the first week of class. However, you should estimate devoting *approximately* 20 hours, over the course of the 15-week semester, to your service learning project. If you have any concerns at all about your ability to participate in this, please see us at the beginning of the semester. A liaison will be available on a weekly basis to assist students in a variety of ways with their projects. We will take approximately 15 minutes at the beginning of seminar each week to discuss how the service projects are going, questions that arise, and the like. Your service learning grade will be assigned based upon supervisor comments, a roundtable presentation at the end of the semester, your journal, and fulfillment of duties.

Service learning involves the student in on-site study and work with a variety of organizations in Connecticut that assist the state's migrant community. Students will travel five times during the semester for four hour at a time to organizations in Willimantic and Hartford. The organizations include: Hispanic Health Council (migrant health education); Area Health Education Center (ESOL and GED instruction); Greater Hartford Legal Aid (legal advocacy); Hartford City Council (public policy); UConn Migrant Farmworker Clinic (migrant health care); Windham Elementary School (migrant youth teaching).

VI. Letters

Students will craft two cogent and concise (one page) letters focusing on migrant issues and targeted at local and federal politicians with differing political orientations. We will hand deliver our letters to Connecticut legislators during our field trip on **Week 14** and send the letters to the D.C. office of federal politicians. We will review the letters in class in **Week 13**.

Grade Breakdown

I. Participation	30%
II. Oral History	5%
III. Response Papers	15%
III. Journal	10%
IV. Service Learning Project	35%
V. Letters	5%

CA Justification:

c. List the major themes, issues, topics, etc., to be covered.

Study of migration from multidisciplinary perspectives: history, sociology, economics, literature, geography, law, anthropology, health, education, and political science.