

Workshop: De Aqui y De Alla: Essential Latinx Topics for Humanities Curriculum

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Room: WSCC, 2A

Time: Friday, December 6, 11:15 AM—12:30 PM

Essential Questions:

- What do you prioritize when teaching about Latinx history, culture, and people? Whose story gets told? Who gets to tell it?
- Who gets to be American? What is the American Dream? Whose Dream is it?
- How can teachers incorporate current events surrounding migration and other Latinx issues into their curriculum, regardless of whether or not the course specifically centers Latinx people?

In *Harvest of Empire*, Juan Gonzalez argues that “US economic and political domination over Latin America has always been -- and continues to be -- the underlying reason for the massive Latino presence here.”

Excerpt from the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine (1904):

All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.

Excerpt from Pedro Pietri, "Puerto Rican Obituary" (1969)

They worked/ They were always on time/ They were never late/ They never spoke back/ when they were insulted/ They worked/ They never took days off/ that were not on the calendar/ They never went on strike/ without permission/ They worked/ ten days a week/ and were only paid for five/ They worked/ They worked/ They worked/ and they died/ They died broke/ They died owing/ They died never knowing/ what the front entrance/ of the first national city bank looks like

Juan/ Miguel/ Milagros/ Olga/ Manuel/ All died yesterday today/ and will die again tomorrow/ passing their bill collectors/ on to the next of kin/ All died/ waiting for the garden of eden/ to open up again/ under a new management/ All died/ dreaming about america/ waking them up in the middle of the night/ screaming: Mira Mira/ your name is on the winning lottery ticket/ for one hundred thousand dollars/ All died/ hating the grocery stores/ that sold them/ make-believe steak/ and bullet-proof rice and beans/ All died waiting dreaming and hating

Juan/ Miguel/ Milagros/ Olga/ Manuel/ From the nervous breakdown streets/ where the mice live like millionaires/ and the people do not live at all/ are dead and were never alive

.....

Here lies Juan/ Here lies Miguel/ Here lies Milagros/ Here lies Olga/ Here lies Manuel/ who died yesterday today/ and will die again tomorrow/ Always broke/ Always owing/ Never knowing/ that they are beautiful people/ Never knowing/ the geography of their complexion

PUERTO RICO IS A BEAUTIFUL PLACE/ PUERTORRIQUENOS ARE A BEAUTIFUL RACE/ If only they/ had turned off the television/ and tune into their own imaginations/ If only they/ had used the white supremacy bibles/ for toilet paper purpose/ and make their latino souls/ the only religion of their race/ If only they/ had return to the definition of the sun/ after the first mental snowstorm/ on the summer of their senses/ If only they/ had kept their eyes open/ at the funeral of their fellow employees/ who came to this country to make a fortune/ and were buried without underwears

Recommended Reading List:

Harvest of Empire, Juan Gonzalez

We Took the Streets, Mickey Melendez

Tell Me How It Ends, Valeria Luiselli

Empire's Workshop, Greg Grandin

Latinx, Ed Morales

An African American and Latinx History of the United States, Paul Ortiz

The Battle for Paradise, Naomi Klein

War Against All Puerto Ricans, Nelson Denis

Puerto Rico Strong, edited by Marco Lopez et. al

The Poet X, Elizabeth Acevedo

Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, edited by Miguel Algarin and Bob Holman

Borderlands, Gloria Anzaldua

The House on Mango Street, Sandra Cisneros

Dreaming in Cuban, Cristina Garcia

Down These Mean Streets, Piri Thomas

Puerto Rican Obituary, Pedro Pietri

"I Am Joaquin" (poem), Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzalez

Bless Me Ultima, Rudolfo Anaya