Spring 2003: V55.0515.01
World Cultures: Latin American Transcultures

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Mon. and Weds. 3:30-4:45
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Transculturation. This course takes its title from the concept of transculturation, introduced into cultural theory by the Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz in 1940. He used this term as a corrective to the notion of acculturation, prevalent in U.S. social science. By transculturation he meant the reciprocal influence that various groups have on each other in the creation of a new national identity. Instead of assimilation into an already constituted society, Ortiz imagined the migratory process as one in which all groups gave a new shape to the society resulting from their encounter. Both the U.S. and Latin American countries are societies of immigrants. However, the U.S. was imagined throughout a good part of the 19th and 20th centuries as normatively white and Anglo-conforming. In Latin America, by the beginning of the 20th century, a different notion of the national citizen emerged, one that included all of the different groups that comprise their societies: whites, blacks, indigenous peoples, and other groups as well.

Transculturation is the recognition that there is no originary culture, but that a society is formed by the encounter of multiple groups. This is a theme prevalent in much Latin American thinking about identity. To be sure, the elites who endeavored to create nations out of fragmented colonies sought to give these societies a homogeneity that did not exist. The early readings in the course are a testament to these endeavors. Latin American intellectuals and political leaders also had to contend with the influence of European, and subsequently, U.S. intellectual, political, social and cultural forms on their own societies. In the face of these multiple pressures, was it possible to fashion an autonomous culture? By the 1960s, many intellectuals recognized that cultural autonomy may be as difficult to achieve as economic and political autonomy, especially with regard to the enormous impact of U.S. film and music. One of the most innovative developments in this period was the recognition that all culture is sampled (as in hip hop music, for example). This view went under various names: cannibalism, mixing, mestizaje, and, of course, transculturation.

Required Texts
We have created an on-line course packet that contains many of the readings for this class. You can access the course packet through your NYU Home account: click on the “Academics” tab. You must be registered for the course and have an NYU Home account in order to access the course packet, which also contains valuable supplementary materials (slides, video and music clips, handouts). [Note: hard copies of the readings are available in the Reserve Room at Bobst Library]. Assignments will also be included in the course packet. You can also hand in your written work on line, and participate in course-related discussion boards and chats. After the last page of the syllabus we have included a reference page on setting up your NYU Home account and a quick guide to using the course packet. For additional help, contact NYU’s ITS Help Center. The staff can be reached by phone at 998-3333; via e-mail at: helpdesk@nyu.edu; or on the Web at: http://www.nyu.edu/its/helpdesk/.

In addition to the on-line materials, there is one text you must purchase (it is available at NYU Book Center):


WEEK ONE

Wed Jan. 22
Introduction: what is transculturation?
No assigned readings
WEEK TWO

Mon Jan 27

Travel artists

Halperin, The Contemporary History of Latin America, pp 42 - top 48, 63-73


Wed Jan 29

Halperin, pp. 74 - top 87, 102-106; 113-14, 150-52


WEEK THREE

Mon Feb 3

Halperin, pp. 108-113


Wed Feb 5

Halperin. pp. 115 - top of 28, 131-38


WEEK FOUR

Mon Feb 10

Halperin, pp. 155-57


Giral, Sergio, director. El Otro Francisco. Avery Fisher Media Center: VCA 2058

Wed. Feb. 12

Halperin, pp. 158 - top 170, 174-76, 197-200

WEEK FIVE

Mon. Feb. 17

Halperin, pp. 180-86

Vasconcelos, Jose. 1997. La Raza Cosmica/The Cosmic Race. (complete, + introd.)

Wed. Feb. 19

Vasconcelos, continued


WEEK SIX

Mon. Feb. 24


_________________________ “Indigenism and Social Realism.” In Art in Latin America., pp. 195-214.

Weds. Feb. 26

Halperin, pp. 195-97


WEEK SEVEN

Mon. Mar 3

Halperin, pp. 170-72, 202-03


Wed. Mar 6

Freyre, continued.

WEEK EIGHT

Mon Mar 10
Review for Mid-term exam

Weds Mar 13    MID-TERM EXAM

Mon Mar 17     Spring Recess
Wed Mar 19     Spring Recess

WEEK NINE

Mon. Mar. 24


Weds Mar 26

Halperin, pp. 208-220, 240-42


WEEK TEN

Mon Mar 31


Wed Apr 2    Wilfredo Lam


WEEK ELEVEN

Mon Apr 7    Introduction to Brazil

Halperin, 231-34, 247-58, 258-62; 292-337.


Wed Apr 9    Cinema Novo

Cinema Novo; Johnson, Randal & Robert Stam, eds. *Brazilian Cinema*. New York:


WEEK TWELVE

Mon Apr 13  Tropicalia


Videos, CDs  TBA

Weds Apr 15  Mixing MPB

Halperin, pp. 338-405

Moehn, Frederick. "Mixing MPB." (unpublished manuscript)

Videos, CDs  TBA

WEEK THIRTEEN

Mon Apr 20  Brazilian Funk and Afro-Reggae


Videos, CDs  TBA

Weds Apr 22  Zapatistas and Cyber-culture


WEEK FOURTEEN

Mon Apr 27  Ethnography of Hegemonic Institutions

Yudice, George. “Producing the Cultural Economy: the Collaborative Art of Insite.” In *The Expediency of Culture*.

**WEEK FIFTEEN**

Mon Apr May 4  Hybridity and Consumption


Wed May 6  review for final exam

Mon May 11  review for final exam
USING THE ON-LINE COURSE PACKET ON NYU’S BLACKBOARD

1. Log on to NYU Home. On your personal NYU Home Page, you will see a banner for “Academics”. Click on this banner and you will see a listing for “World Cultures: Latin American Transcultures.” Click on the listing to enter the course page. Note: you may also see other courses listed if any of your other professors are using Blackboard.

1. On the left-hand side of the screen you will see a list of banners, which contain the on-line course materials. Click on any banner to view its contents. They are:

   **Announcements**
   general information, updates. Please check this frequently since we will post information about special events, cancellations, etc.

   **Syllabus**
   You should probably save the syllabus on your desktop or a diskette.

   **Course Documents**
   When you open “Course Documents” you will see a list of folders containing the readings for each week. These correspond to the listings on the syllabus. The folders are labelled “Week Two”, etc. When you click on the folder, you will see a list of readings available on-line. Underneath the title of the article or book is a link to the text. Click on the link to retrieve the text. Where there are a lot of illustrations in a text, the illustrations have been placed in a separate folder. [Note: not all readings have been scanned and uploaded yet. It has taken us some time to work out the kinks in the scanning process but we will try to keep at least a few weeks ahead of the schedule]

   **Assignments**
   Detailed descriptions of the short essays that you will write throughout the semester, along with due dates.

   **Communication**
   Discussion board and chats. We will set up on-line groups for each recitation section. Your section leader will give you more details.

   **Student tools**
   This contains some tools that are course-specific; others may be of more general use. Digital drop box allows you to submit your written assignments as attachments. You can also create a personal home page, an address book and calendars.