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: You should purchase a course packet at the New University Copy Shop, 11 Waverley Place (next to the Falafel and Juice store).

We shall also be using BLACKBOARD for communications AND FOR SOME OF THE READINGS THAT ARE NOT IN THE PACKET. You can access BLACKBOARD 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).

Assignments will be posted on BLACKBOARD. So be sure to check it on a daily basis.
Additional assistance for this class is available to you free of charge at the College Learning Center located on the 1st Floor of Weinstein Hall (right behind Java City). For information on one-on-one and group peer tutoring, please stop by the CLC or go to their website: http://www.nyu.edu/cas/clc/index.html

CRITERIA FOR GRADING
1. 4 bi-weekly two-page reaction papers, each of which is worth 6 points, for a total of 24 points
2. Midterm and final exams, each of which is worth 25 points, for a total of 50 points
3. Four surprise quizzes, worth 4 points each; for a total of 16 points.
4. Attendance at lectures and recitations, and participation in recitations, worth 10 points.

This adds up to 100 points.
The GRADING SCALE is as follows:

95 - 100 = A
90 - 94 = A-
87 - 89 = B+
83 - 86 = B
80 - 82 = B-
77 - 79 = C+
73 - 76 = C
70 - 72 = C-
67 - 69 = D+
63 - 66 = D
60 - 62 = D-
0 - 59 = F
SCHEDULE OF READINGS

WEEK ONE

Wed Sept 7  Introduction: what is transculturation?
No assigned readings

WEEK TWO

Mon Sept 12  Travel artists


Wed Sept 14  Nation-Building


WEEK THREE

Mon Sept 19  Nation-Building


Wed Sept 21  Comparative Nation-Building


WEEK FOUR

Mon Sept 26  Nation-Building and Race


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

Wed. Sept 28  Criticizing Empire within the “Belly of the Beast”

WEEK FIVE

Mon. Oct 3 Latin American Mestizaje vs Anglo Segregation


Wed. Oct 5 Art and Nation-Building


WEEK SIX

Mon. Oct 10 NO CLASSES

Wed. Oct 12 A Critique of Liberal Solutions to the “Indian Problem”


WEEK SEVEN

Mon. Oct 17 Mestiçagem as an Aesthetic Betterment of the Citizen


Wed. Oct 19 Mestiçagem as an Aesthetic Betterment of the Citizen

Freyre, continued.


WEEK EIGHT

Mon. Oct 24 REVIEW FOR MID-TERM EXAM

Wed. Oct 26 MID-TERM EXAM

WEEK NINE

Mon. Oct 31 Hight Art Meets Popular Music

Wed. Nov 2 Transculturation


WEEK TEN

Mon. Nov 7 Transculturation in Music

Santería

Wed. Nov 9 Afro-Cubanism


Afro-Cuban music TBA

WEEK ELEVEN

Mon. Nov 14 Afro-Cubanism


Afro-Cuban music TBA

Wed. Nov 16 Wilfredo Lam And Afro-Cuban Aesthetics


WEEK TWELVE

Mon. Nov 21 Roberto Schwarz and Misplaced Ideas


Wed. Nov 23 Cultural Disjuncture and Combined and Unequal Developmen


WEEK THIRTEEN

Mon. Nov 28 Cinema Novo: A New Visual Culture for a “Peripheral” Culture


**Wed. Nov 30**  
**Tropicália 1**


Videos, CDs  TBA

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**WEEK FOURTEEN**

**Mon. Dec 5**  
**Tropicália 2**


Videos, CDs  TBA

**Wed. Dec 7**  
**Brazilian Funk and Afro-Reggae**


Videos, CDs  TBA

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**WEEK FIFTEEN**

**Mon. Dec 12**  
**Hybridity and Consumption**


Videos, CDs  TBA

**Wed. Dec 14**  
**Review for Final Exam – Last day of class**