Portuguese-American Literature and Culture: Immigration Stories

Course Description:
Described as a “national drama” and a self-perpetuating cycle without end, massive out-migration has significantly shaped the fabric of Portuguese society for over two centuries. The emigrant constitutes a national symbol that frames the lives and outlooks of almost every Portuguese citizen, and leaving one’s home to make a better life elsewhere has long been a viable option for members of all sectors of Portuguese society. The resulting diaspora in the U.S. and elsewhere around the globe thus encompasses recent immigrants as well as multiple generations of descendants and long histories of settlement. Exploring the Portuguese case offers us the opportunity to understand the connections between both 20th century waves of U.S immigration (pre and post 1965) and contributes important nuances to the entrenched scholarly portrait of these periods of immigration as largely separate and distinct. Our class will examine theories of assimilation, practices of adaptation to and rejection of host environments, struggles over the expression of ethnic and immigrant identities, conceptions of home and belonging and challenges characteristic of the second generation such as bilingualism, “double identity,” and familial fragmentation. This class takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of migration; we will be reading scholarly texts from the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and ethnomusicology, as well as reading poems, novels and screening films. Students are expected to be able to process, discuss and write about these varied texts and cultural forms with analytical insight and seriousness of purpose. This class fulfills the core requirement for “Other Liberal Arts.”

Required Texts: The two texts beside bullet points below are to be purchased by students at the vendor of their choice. Amazon.com has plenty of used and new copies of the two novels by Charles Reis Felix and Anthony de Sa. You can also order the Charles Reis Felix from www.umass.edu. Please buy these books TODAY so that you will have them in time for the
assigned reading. If there are any problems getting the books, please tell me before Sept 7. Otherwise I will assume you have successfully ordered and will be able to start reading from them on Sept 18.

- Charles Reis Felix, *DaGama, Cary Grant and the Election of 1934*
- Anthony de Sa, *Barnacle Love*

Excerpts from *Community Culture and the Makings of Identity: Portuguese-Americans Along the Eastern Seaboard*, eds. Kimberly DaCosta Holton and Andrea Klimt (BB)

Excerpts from *Behind the Stars,More Stars: The Tagus Disquiet Collection of New Luso America Writing*, eds. Christopher Larkosh et al. (BB)

**Required Films:**
We will screen at least the beginning of all films in class. In the event that time runs out before we finish the film, students are responsible for viewing the rest at home for homework.

*Alzira’s Story*
*Lisboetas*
*The Accused*

**Schedule:**

Wed 9.4 Introduction

Mon 9.9: de Sa and Borges, “Context or Culture” [bb]

Wed 9.11: Becker, “The Role of the School in the Maintenance” [bb]

Mon 9.16: Film: *Alzira’s Story*

Wed 9.18: Felix, *DaGama, Cary Grant* [pp1-28]

Mon 9.23: Felix, *DaGama, Cary Grant* [pp29-91]

Wed 9.25: Felix, *DaGama, Cary Grant* [91-143]

Mon 9.30: Excerpts from *Behind the Stars* [bb]

Wed 10.2: Excerpts from *Behind the Stars* [bb] [Students must declare in writing which option they choose for final project]

Mon 10.7: Moniz, “The Shadow Minority” [bb]

Wed 10.9: Film: *Lisboetas*

Mon 10.14: Film: *Lisboetas* and writing prompt

Wed 10.16: Exam #1

Mon 10.21: Oral History Workshop
Wed 10.23: Holton, “Dancing Along the InBetween” [www.academica.edu]
Mon 10.28: de Sa, Barnacle Love
Wed 10.30: de Sa, Barnacle Love
Mon 11.4 de Sa, Barnacle Love
Wed 11.6: de Sa, Barnacle Love
Mon 11.11: de Sa, Barnacle Love
Wed 11.13: Poetry Writing Workshop
Mon 11.18: Poetry Slam
Wed 11.20: Almeida, “Media Made Events” [bb]
Mon 11.25 Film: The Accused
Wed 11.27: No Class (Friday Schedule)
Mon 12.2: Film Discussion (Finish The Accused for Homework)
Wed 12.4: Oral History Interview Readings
Mon 12.9: Exam #2
Wed 12.11 Catch Up Day (Final Projects are due at the beginning of class; no late projects accepted)

Blackboard: All important documents, announcements, most class readings, etc will be contained on our blackboard site. You are required to check this site at least twice a week before class. Please bring either an electronic copy or a paper copy of the assigned reading to class. We will read aloud from these texts and any student who does not bring the reading with them, will compromise their attendance grade. In class cell phone use or internet use unrelated to class will detract from your attendance grade and result in your device being taken away. Policy for computers and cellphones: cellphones, computers and tablets must be shut off and put away unless we are reading aloud from assigned texts.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is a serious offense and will result in university sanctioned repercussions. Please consult the Rutgers academic integrity webpage for specifics: (http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu)

Office of Disability Services: Should any student need the services of the ODS, the contact information is: 973 353 5375; ODS@newark.rutgers.edu. Director: Alan Sheffield.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes: “Topics: Portuguese-American Literature and Culture: Immigration Stories” is designed to help students develop and improve reading, writing, oral communication, and critical analysis skills. It is also designed to
for students to learn foundational theories of immigration studies and apply these theories to specific case studies of migrant groups.

**Assignments/Grading Policy:**

1. **Preparedness:** (Attendance: 12.5%, Quizzes: 12.5%). Over the course of the semester students will be given short unannounced quizzes at the beginning of class. The quizzes, which students have 10 minutes to complete, evaluate students’ level of preparedness and independent comprehension of assigned readings. Students who are absent or late during a given quiz will receive a “0”. There will be no make-up quizzes unless there is an excused absence with official documentation. The attendance grade (which includes evaluation not only of being physically present and on time, but also whether or not the student has made thoughtful contributions to class discussion based on careful reading of assigned texts) will comprise 12.5% of the preparedness grade. The quizzes will count as the other 12.5%. More than 2 absences and lateness of more than 5 minutes will detract from your attendance grade. **Cellphone, computer and tablet use in class is prohibited (unless we are reading aloud from texts)** and will detract from your attendance grade.

2. **Exams:** (Exam #1: 25%, Exam #2: 25%). Exams will test students’ understanding of assigned readings, in-class films and discussions, and historical background given during lectures. Exams will challenge students to compare and contrast texts and historical periods as well as to demonstrate “close reading” analysis of individual texts and films.

3. **Final Project:** (25%) Students will complete an original, independent final project related to the issues examined in this class. Students will be able to choose from the following options:
   
   **Option #1:** An annotated, illustrated book of 10-12 poems. Students who choose this option are to write 10-12 well-developed poems. They are to challenge themselves to write at least 3 different types of poem forms/structures (for an excellent discussion with examples of many different poetic forms, see [https://poets.org/collection/poetic-forms](https://poets.org/collection/poetic-forms)). In addition, each poem should be annotated—meaning there should be a note at the bottom explaining which part of our readings or discussions or films inspired the poem and how. Lastly the book of poems should be illustrated. The nature of the illustrations (form, materials, placement etc) is up to the individual student.
Options #2: A transcribed oral history interview with a foreign-born immigrant of any national origin (must be 1st generation immigrant, not 1.5 or 2nd generation). The interview must be at least 45-60 minutes in length and cover substantive topics that we have discussed in class. I will distribute a list of sample questions to guide your interview, and we will have a workshop where we learn the basics of interviewing skills. Students who choose this option must use a pseudonym for the interviewee to protect anonymity. Students must hand in the audio source as well as the entire transcript. At the end of the interview students must also write a 1-2 page essay reflecting on the ways in which the interview content relates to the readings and discussions of this class.

For all assignments and the submission of final grades, the following correlation between number and letter grades is used:
97-100 A+
94-96 A
90-93 A- (at Rutgers this becomes an A)
87-89 B+
84-86 B
80-83 B- (at Rutgers B)
77-79 C+
74-76 C
70-73 C- (at Rutgers C)
67-69 D+
64-66 D
0-63 F