



01:595:215 (CRN 09988)

## RESEARCH METHODS IN LATINO & CARIBBEAN STUDIES

SPRING 2020 – COVID-19 COMPLIANT SYLLABUS<sup>1</sup>

Tues. & Thurs.; 1:40-3:00pm

### ADMIN INFO

Instructor: **Kenneth Sebastian León, PhD**  
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Office Phone: **848.445.4242**  
Office Hours: **Tuesdays 11am-12p via Skype or Phone Call**  
Course Management: **Canvas**

### ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICE

This syllabus has been modified from its previous iteration to comply with the university's academic continuity plans in response to a public health emergency.<sup>2</sup> For all inquiries regarding the university's operating status, please see [www.coronavirus.rutgers.edu](http://www.coronavirus.rutgers.edu). For officially vetted information on the current status of COVID-19, see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and the World Health Organization (WHO) <https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/joint-icao-who-statement-on-covid-19>.

### COURSE OVERVIEW

Latino and Caribbean Studies (LCS) offers interdisciplinary insights into the social, political, cultural and economic conditions of various Latino subjectivities in the United States and the Caribbean. As a political location, LCS also seeks to improve, democratize, and emancipate various Latino subjectivities as part of the knowledge generation process. This mandate involves not only the concentrated study of substantive topic areas, but also the development of analytic perspectives and methodological skill sets that enable such a project.

Datapoints and observations are fundamentally different from how we interpret, contest, or reinterpret their meaning. We will therefore examine convergent and divergent research methods, orientations, and debates found in the humanities and social sciences.

This course offers an introduction to research methods from interdisciplinary vantage points located within and beyond Latino & Caribbean Studies. In addition to a robust but accessible introduction to major theoretical, epistemological, and political tensions in humanities and social science research methods, you will also be challenged to learn a variety of specific research methods and apply them to your individual and collective interests. Lastly, you will be asked to demonstrate your competency in theoretical and practical skills through the completion of an original research proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/supporting-our-students/>

The class format consists of substantive lectures, small-group workshops, and class-wide discussions. Guest lectures, group activities, and multimedia assignments may be incorporated at the discretion of the instructor.

It is my professional objective to ensure that, upon completion of this course, you feel comfortable, confident, and qualified to continue cultivating a research-oriented imagination and build upon the skills you will gain throughout the semester. Welcome to the course.

### **PRE-REQUISITES AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

No prior research experience or methods training is required. However, this is a discussion- and workshop-intensive course, and students are expected to bring both analytic rigor and personal curiosity to the subject matter. In lieu of a conventional reading load, students will be required to invest substantive amounts of time practicing and experiencing the research process, and sharing their experiences both verbally and in writing. Students who are not prepared to dedicate the corresponding time and energy to these demands should consider taking this course another time.

### **LEARNING GOALS**

This course will directly advance the learning goals of both the [Latino & Caribbean Studies](#) major. Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Read, analyze, and critically engage with academic, historical, and cultural texts;
2. Examine methodological approaches to the study of race and ethnicity in the United States;
3. Demonstrate an introductory mastery of key issues, themes, and debates in social science research methods, with an emphasis on Latino & Caribbean Studies;
4. Develop a working familiarity with the principles and applications of interdisciplinary research methods;
5. Show proficiency in advancing an original research question and an individualized research plan;
6. Effectively articulate in oral and written form complex ideas about knowledge, power, and the research process.
7. Improve methodological literacy, including the ability to critique measures, themselves, as “objective” indicators in the social world.

This course satisfies the SAS Core Curriculum Goal [ITR]: *Analyze and Critically Assess Information from Traditional and Emergent Technologies*.

A complete description of Department Learning Goals and Major/Minor requirements can be found on the LCS website: <http://latcar.rutgers.edu>

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

Required readings and multimedia will be provided via Canvas or as in-class handouts. All students are required to have a notebook for recording class activities.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS, ASSESSMENT, AND GRADING**

#### **GRADING SCALE**

A=93-100, B+=89-92, B=81-88, C+=77-80, C=70-76, D=65-69, F=64 and below
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