

Women's Studies 576: Women and Visual Cultures of Latin America  
Winter 2007  
T/R 3:30-5:00pm  
Dreese Laboratories 357

Dr. Ruby C. Tapia  
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Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:30-3:00 and by appointment

**Prerequisites:**

Women's Studies 101/110 and 5 additional credits of Women's Studies or approved related course work.

**Course Description:**

This interdisciplinary course offers students an introduction to Latin American women visual artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Focusing primarily on the mediums of photography, film, painting, and performance, students will examine visual texts produced by specific women artists in Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, Panama, and other countries of Latin America for how they depict and analyze the intersections of gender, sexuality, class, disability, race and ethnicity within the contexts of colonialism, nationalism, and globalization. Introductory readings and discussions about the social relationships and cultural and theoretical practices that attend modernity and postmodernity will complement our treatment of these artists' works. Of primary importance will be the examination of these texts and contexts with an emphasis on contemporary feminist theories of visual culture. Class discussions and texts will be in English, and/or contain English subtitles.

**Course Goals:**

- Provide overview of approaches to the study of visual culture (historical, ideological, psychoanalytic, feminist, etc.)
- Offer basic knowledge about a selection of Latin American women visual artists, their work, and the social and cultural contexts of its production
- Highlight the representation of gendered roles, identities, and struggles within the work and criticism of these artists
- Conduct research and produce web resource – including biographies and bibliographies – on Latin American Women visual artists

**Required Texts:**

**Print:**

- Gillian Rose, [Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials](#). London: Sage, 2001 (excerpts available on CARMEN as pdfs).

- Marjorie Agosin, Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: The Arpillera Movement in Chile, 1974-1994. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996 (available as electronic book on OSCAR).
- Ruby C. Tapia, Ed. Course Reader: Gender and Visual Cultures of Latin America. Available from Zip Publishing and at SBX.

**Film:**

- Maria Luisa Bemberg, *Yo, La Peor de Todas/ I, the Worst of All*
- Fernando de Fuentes, *Doña Barbara*
- Lourdes Portillo and Susana Muñoz, *Las Madres: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*
- Lourdes Portillo, *Señorita Extraviada*
- Ursula Biemann, *Performing the Border*
- Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gomez-Peña, *Couple in a Cage*

**Course Website:**

Women’s Studies 576 has its own WebCT website, which students can access by opening their web browser (such as Netscape Navigator or Explorer), going to [www.carmen.osu.edu](http://www.carmen.osu.edu), and logging on with their username. The course syllabus, requirements, assignments, and announcements can be found on the web site.

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**Course Requirements and Grading System:**

The success of students’ performance in this course depends on their fulfillment of all requirements stipulated in this syllabus. Students must

- attend all class meetings
- arrive on time and stay for the full class period
- prepare for classes by completing all reading assignments by their due dates
- contribute to a productive learning environment by participating appropriately and respectfully in class discussions
- complete every assignment by its due date

Students will earn their grade based on the following grading system and breakdown of assignments and percentages:

		B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%
A	93-100%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%

Attendance	10%
Class Participation	15%
Group Presentation	15%
Reading Response Journal	20%
Research Assignment, Web Component	20%
Research Assignment, Paper Component	20%

### **Attendance (10%) and Participation (15%)**

The class is designed to accommodate and to promote substantive analyses and discussions of the assigned readings and visual material. While these texts will be supplemented by periodic mini-lectures, the intention of the course is to establish a temporary formal work group, every member of which will contribute constructively to the collective project of exploring the course themes. It will be impossible for students to have an optimal learning experience if they do not attend every class meeting, having read every assigned text carefully and well enough in advance to allow themselves time to absorb the material. Attendance will be taken during every class meeting. Students should be certain to sign the roll sheet. Late assignments be accepted only in cases of extreme emergency. In this case, students must contact the professor with written documentation of the emergency and obtain explicit permission to turn in the assignment.

### **Group Presentations (15%)**

Students will complete one small-group presentation on an assigned visual text. The professor will make the assignments at the beginning of the quarter and distribute details about each group's responsibilities one week in advance of their presentation. The text will not be assigned to the rest of the class, so the group will be responsible for introducing the piece and (perhaps) the artist, and for leading a short discussion.

### **Reading Response Journal (20%)**

Each student is required to keep a journal of responses to the assigned theoretical texts. Each weekly response should total 350-400 words, and should briefly address the following questions with regard to one of the assigned texts for that week. (Consult assignment schedule to determine which text).

1. What is the author's main argument/s?
2. To what gendered issues or themes is the author's work relevant? How does the work theorize connections between gender, other social categories/issues, and visual culture?
3. What connections do you see between the issues/arguments raised in this text and other discussions or texts we've engaged in the course?
4. What did you find most compelling about the work? What new experience/notion/image of gender and visual culture in Latin America did it present for you?

On days when reading responses are due, ten to fifteen minutes will be devoted to a reading response exchange, in which students will pair up and share with one another their responses for that week. This exercise is meant to encourage diligent reading habits, to facilitate critical thinking, and to provide an alternative to more traditional modes of sharing knowledge and ideas in the classroom. The instructor will collect the responses at the end of the class period and return them to students with a grade based on evidence of careful reading, effective writing, and the level of engagement with the assigned questions. Each reading response is worth 10 points total. Grades will be assigned according to the following criteria.

1. Careful reading: Worth 2 points. Considerations: whether or not the student read the text completely and carefully. If it is clear from their response that they did not, I will deduct points.

2. Clear, careful, grammatically correct writing: Worth 1 point. Considerations: whether or not the student took time to convey her/his ideas carefully and with attention to her/his writing.
3. Thoughtful answer to question 1, reflective of clarity on the text's arguments/purpose: Worth 2 points.
4. Thoughtful answer to question 2, reflective of an effort to situate the text within/in reference to broader discussions/ideas about gender, other social categories/issues, and visual culture. Worth 2 points.
5. Thoughtful answer to question 3, reflective of an effort to connect the text to other readings/discussions encountered in the course. Worth 2 points.
6. Thoughtful answer to question 4, reflective of sincere engagement with texts and ideas presented within them: Worth 1 point.

**Two-Part Research Assignment:  
Html page (20%) and 6- Page Paper (20%) on Artist of Choice**

**Html page**

Each student will create a profile of a Latin American woman artist of their choice, and submit it to the instructor as an html file. The page will include biographical information on the artist, as well as a bibliography that includes the artist's works and U.S. and Latin American-published popular and scholarly critical reception of these works. A list of suggested artists will be distributed during the third week of class, but students may work on any Latin American woman visual artist of their choice. The individual html files that students produce will be published as part of a website on Latin American Visual Artists that the instructor will create. All students will be given credit as co-authors.

**Paper**

In addition, each student will write a 6-page paper of feminist criticism of two works by the artist they've chosen to research. The paper must examine how the works depict or address gendered issues and identities prevalent at the historical moment of their production.

These two assignments comprise a quarter-long independent project, the final products of which are due on Friday of finals week. Both components of this assignment will be facilitated by instructor-guided orientations to the Latin American Studies collection in our library, as well the visual arts resources in the Fine Arts Library, and an orientation to online digital media databases. Students will turn in progress reports documenting their research activities during Weeks 5, 7, and 9.

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**Statement on Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).

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## **Statement on Plagiarism**

As defined by University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses that can be committed in an academic community; as such, it is the obligation of this department and its instructors to report all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. After the report is filed, a hearing takes place and if the student is found guilty, the possible punishment ranges from failing the class to suspension or expulsion from the university. Although the existence of the internet makes it relatively easy to plagiarize, it also makes it even easier for instructors to find evidence of plagiarism. It is obvious to most teachers when a student turns in work that is not his or her own and plagiarism search engines make documenting the offense very simple.

- Always cite your sources
- Always ask questions before you turn in an assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism.
- Always see your professor if you are having difficulty with an assignment.

To preserve the integrity of OSU as an institution of higher learning, to maintain your own integrity, and to avoid jeopardizing your future, DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!

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## **Accommodation of students with disabilities**

Students who wish to have an accommodation for disability are responsible for contacting the professor as soon as possible. The Office for Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall; 292-3307; 292-0901 TDD) verifies the need for accommodations and assists in the development of accommodation strategies.

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## **Resources**

Professor: Please make use of the professor's office hours to discuss the course material and assignments, and/or any questions or concerns you may have.

Library Collections:

You may wish to make an appointment for reference services with the following individuals:

Edward A. Riedinger, Head of Latin American Collection at OSU Libraries

Linda Krikos, Head of Women's Studies Collection at OSU Libraries

Leta Hendricks, Reference Librarian for fine arts resources

The OSU Writing Center: The OSU Writing Center offers free individual tutoring with writing consultants who can help writers working at any level. While I encourage you to take advantage of this resource, you are not required to do so, and any/all of your visits to the Center can remain confidential. The Center is located in room 485, Mendenhall Lab, on the south side of the Oval. Phone: 688-5865. Website: <http://www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/cstw/writingcenter.html>.

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*The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus if the need arises.*

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## **Schedule of Readings, Discussions, and Assignments**

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Unit 1:  
Introduction: Gender and Visual Cultures of Latin America

Week Two:

Tuesday, January 9: Welcome and Administrative Issues

Thursday, January 11:

Texts:

*Frida Kahlo* documentary

Week Three:

Tuesday, January 16:

Lecture and Discussion: *Visual Culture: What is it?*

Thursday, January 18:

Texts:

Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, Chapter 1, pp. 5-32.

Gustavo Verdesio. "Colonialism Now and Then: Colonial Latin American Studies in Light of the Predicament of Latin Americanism." Colonialism Past and Present: Reading and Writing About Colonial Latin America Today. Eds. Alvaro Felix Bolanos and Gustavo Verdesio. Albany: State University of New York Press. 2002. 1-18. Course Reader

Nelly Richard. "Women's Art Practices and the Critique of Signs." Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America. Ed. Gerardo Mosquera. London and Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996. 145-153. Course Reader

Lecture and Discussion: *Introduction to Latin American Women's Art of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Diversity in Text and Colonial Contexts*

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Unit 2:  
Re-membering Pain and Belonging: The (Gendered) Body in the (National) Self/"Portrait"

Week Four:

Tuesday, January 23: Meet at Fine Arts Library for orientation to resources

Thursday, January 25:

Texts:

Gannit Ankori. "Introduction: Frida Kahlo's Search for Self," "The Body-Self," and "The Broken Body, The Double Self." In Imaging Her Selves: Frida Kahlo's Poetics of Identity and Fragmentation. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002. Course Reader

Lecture and Discussion: *Situating Identity and Fragmentation in the Work of Frida Kahlo*

Week Five:

Tuesday, January 30:

Robin Adele Greeley. "Painting Mexican Identities: Nationalism and Gender in the Work of Maria Izquierdo." Oxford Art Journal. 23:1 (2000) 51-72. Course Reader

Luis Rius Caso. "Leonora Carrington's Magical World of the Mayas." Artes de Mexico. No. 64(2003) 42-9, 74-6. Course Reader

Due: Reading Response to Greeley's, "Painting Mexican Identities."

Due: Progress Report on Research: Indicate Choice of Artist and Reason

Due: Small Group Presentation I

Lecture and Discussion: *Landscapes of Struggle: Gender, Authenticity, and the Visual Form of Nation*

Unit 3:

Photographic Subversions:

The Form of Difference in the Work of Tina Modotti and Lola Alvarez Bravo

Thursday, February 1:

Carol Armstrong. "This Photography Which Is Not One: In the Gray Zone with Tina Modotti." October. No. 101 (Summer 2002) 19-52. Course Reader

Sarah M. Lowe. "The Immutable Still Lives of Tina Modotti: Fixing Form." History of Photography. V.18 (Autumn 1994) 205-210. Course Reader

Lecture and Discussion: *In the Gray Zone of Art, Politics and Identity: Tina Modotti*

Due: Reading Response to Armstrong's "This Photography."

Week Six:

Tuesday, February 6:

Texts:

Elizabeth Ferrer. "Lola Alvarez Bravo: A modernist in Mexican Photography." History of Photography. V. 18 (Autumn 1994) 211-18. Course Reader

Olivier Debroyse, Lola Alvarez Bravo: In Her own Light (excerpts). Tuscon: Center for Creative Photography, 1994. Course Reader

Due: Small Group Presentation 1

Lecture and Discussion: *Transient Issues: Politics, Aesthetics, and Home*

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Unit 4:

(Melo)Dramatic (Re)Visions of Gender and Sexuality: Matilde Landeta and Maria Luisa Bemberg

Week Seven:

Tuesday, February 13:

Texts:

Joanne Hershfield. "Mexican Cinema and the Woman Question." and "Cinema, Woman, and National Identity." in Mexican Cinema/Mexican Woman, 1940-1950. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1996. 35-77. Course Reader

Due: Reading Response to Hershfield, "Cinema, Woman, and National Identity."

Due: Progress Report on Research, Including Preliminary Bibliography

Small Group Presentation 2

Thursday, February 8:

*Dona Barbara*, view in class

Thursday, February 15

Maria Luisa Bemberg, *Yo, La Peor de Todas/Il, The Worst of All*, 1990, view in class

Bruce Williams. "A Mirror of Desire: Looking Lesbian in Maria Luisa Bemberg's *I, The Worst of All*." Quarterly Review of Film and Video. 133-144. Course Reader

Week Eight:

Tuesday, February 20:

Texts:



Lecture and Discussion: *La Negra y La Peor* : *The Gender and Sexual Politics of Landeta and Bemberg*

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Unit 5:

Conceiving Locations, Capturing Flux: Photography, Modernity and/after Postmodernity

Thursday, February 22:

Texts:

- Nestor Garcia-Canclini. "Modernity after Postmodernity." Beyond the Fantastic. 20-53. Course Reader  
Works by Artist, TBA

Due: Reading Response to Nestor Garcia-Canclini, "Modernity after Postmodernity."

Due: Small Group Presentation 3

Lecture and Discussion: *Women Imaging Modernity and/after Postmodernity*

Week Nine:

Tuesday, February 27:

Texts:

- Paz Errazuriz. "Chilean Disguises." Desires and Disguises. 29-40.
- Francine Masiello. "From Museum to Street: Poetry of the New Millenium." The Art of Transition: Latin American Culture and Neoliberal Crisis. 219-286. Course Reader
- Nelly Richard. "Chile, Women and Dissidence." 137-144. Beyond the Fantastic. Course Reader

Due: Progress Report on Research, Including Expanded Bibliography and Outline of Paper

Lecture and Discussion: *Image as Dissidence and Disguise: Chile*

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Unit 6:

Documenting Transgressions: Death, Disappearance, and the Visual Production of Memory

Thursday, March 1:

Texts:

- Evening Screening, Portillo and Susana Munoz, *Las Madres: The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo*, 1985, Location and time TBA
- Diana Taylor, "Performing Gender: Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo." Negotiating Performance: Gender, Sexuality, and Theatricality in Latin/o America. Eds. Diana Taylor and Juan Villegas. Duke University Press, 1994. 275-305. Course Reader
- Marjorie Agosin. Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: The Arpillera Movement in Chile, 1974-1994. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996. Chapters 1-3, xi-90. (Available electronically, OSCAR)

Lecture and Discussion: *Tapestries of Memory: Crafting Women's Resistance*

Due: Small Group Presentation 4

Week Ten:

Tuesday, March 6:

Texts:

- Marjorie Agosin. Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: The Arpillera Movement in Chile, 1974-1994. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996. Chapters 4-5, 91-136. (Available electronically, OSCAR)
- Lourdes Portillo, *Senorita Extraviada*, 2002, view in class.

Due: Reading Response on Agosin, Tapestries of Hope.

Unit 7:

Performance: Writing Corpuses, Narrating Stages

Thursday, March 8:

Coco Fusco, "The Bodies That Were Not Ours." The Bodies That Were Not Ours. New York: Routledge, 2002. 8-18.

Coco Fusco. Latin American Performance and the *Reconquista* of Civil Space." Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas. Ed. Coco Fusco. New York: Routledge, 1999. 1-22. Course Reader

Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gomez-Pena, *The Couple in the Cage*, view in class.

Texts:

Finals Week:

Friday, March 15

Due: html file on CD and Final Papers

