

**Global Seminar Title: People, Politics, and Power in Puerto Rico  
(Site: San Juan, Puerto Rico)**

**Course #1**

**SOCI 189GS: Making of a Modern Colony: Puerto Rico in the Twentieth  
Century**

**Professor: Vanesa Ribas**

**Course Description**

This course presents an overview of the US-PR colonial relationship since 1898, focusing on key elements of its political and economic history. Special attention is given to the sugar cane era, the major social transformations of the mid-twentieth century, the expansion of U.S. military installations, the collapse of the “Operation Bootstrap” development model, and the formation of a Puerto Rican diaspora. The course is an important foundation for understanding the context of the economic, political, and environmental crises that have devastated Puerto Rico in the past decade. Students will learn about a variety of laws and conditions - from the 1917 Jones Act to 2016’s PROMESA - that affect Puerto Rico, and which reflect its colonial political status.

**Course Format**

Our class will be structured as a seminar. Students will prepare short notes or memos on readings and discussion questions before each class. Active participation in seminar discussions will be important. We will also make several excursions to sites of interest related to our course topics and readings. Finally, guest speakers will enrich our class discussions on several occasions.

**Course Objectives**

- To develop an understanding of the main features of the US-PR colonial relationship during the 20th century.
- To comprehend a variety of perspectives on the political status of Puerto Rico.
- To foster a critical perspective on U.S. colonialisms beyond the case of PR.
- To summarize and highlight main points of historical, theoretical, and empirical scholarship.
- To articulate a critical analysis of the contemporary challenges faced by Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans in connection with its history.

**Course Evaluation and Grading Scale**

At the end of the seminar term, you will receive a letter grade, based on the following assignments and grading scale:

Participation (20%): Attendance is mandatory. One unexcused absence is allowed; each additional absence will cost 10 points.

Midterm Notes (15%): Students will submit a 500 word midterm memo that summarizes their notes on the readings.

Discussion Questions (15%): Students will submit one discussion question related to the topics and readings per class.

Tell Us More (20%): Students will choose a subject on which they will conduct further exploration and share their findings with the class.

Final essay (30%): Students will submit a 5 page essay in which they summarize what they have learned about the U.S.-P.R. colonial history.

A	=	93-100
A-	=	90-92
B+	=	87-89
B	=	83-86
B-	=	80-82
C+	=	77-79
C	=	73-76
C-	=	70-72
D	=	60-69
F	=	Below 60

### **Required Readings**

The following book is required for this class. Additional readings listed below will be provided electronically to the class.

Cesar Ayala and Rafael Bernabe. 2007. *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History Since 1898*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Selections from Sidney Mintz. 1974. *Worker in the Cane: A Puerto Rican Life History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Selections from Arlene Davila. 1997. *Sponsored Identities: Cultural Politics in Puerto Rico*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Selections from Jorge Duany. 2002. *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States*. University of North Carolina Press.

### **Guest speakers**

To be determined

### **Excursions**

Viejo San Juan day tour

Central Aguirre day tour of sugar mill ruins and lunch in Salinas at La Via del Chicharrón

Day tour of the Caguana Indigenous Ceremonial Park in Utuado

El Yunque Rainforest and Luquillo Beach and kiosks day tour

Piñones kiosks and beach day tour

### **Class Guidelines**

1. Attend class and excursions and be ready to start on time.
2. Read all materials for the assigned day and turn in assignments on schedule.
3. Contribute to class discussions.
4. Check your email account daily.
5. Check the course Canvas site regularly.

### **Contacts**

You can reach me by email at [vribas@ucsd.edu](mailto:vribas@ucsd.edu). This is especially convenient if you have a quick question. If you'd like to talk to me outside of class, I encourage you to stop by during my office hours.

### **Office Hours**

I have office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 12:00 to 1:00 pm. If you can't make these hours, please let me know and we'll arrange another time. You might come to my office hours if you have a question about a reading you don't understand, want to review a concept we've talked about in class, or would like to discuss how you're doing in the class. Regardless of your particular question or concern, I encourage you to stop by.

### **Policies and Procedures**

UCSD's policy on academic integrity will be in effect throughout this course for all assignments. As an academic community, none of us can afford to tolerate academic dishonesty of any sort, including plagiarism or otherwise cheating. Let me be clear, I take academic integrity very seriously. Please talk to me or visit the University's website if you have any questions about what constitutes academic integrity: <http://www.ucsd.edu/current-students/academics/academic-integrity/index.html>

### **Class Schedule**

To be determined