

WELCOME TO

THE LATCRIT CYBER CLASSROOM PROJECT



WWW.LATCRIT.ORG

LATCRIT@LAW.MIAMI.EDU

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The LatCrit Cyber Classroom Project provides a venue for students across the country, hemisphere and globe to engage authors and other faculty on the issues and reactions raised by the readings contained in the LatCrit Primer and other LatCrit publications (for a complete List of LatCrit Publications, please visit the LatCrit website at www.latcrit.org). This venue takes the form of a closed listserv, to which students may post comments or questions based on the Primer or other LatCrit publications so that authors and other scholars may respond, and thus engage in interactive discussions designed to supplement the formal curriculum of legal education. This Introduction therefore aims to explain briefly how the Cyber Classroom operates, and how it relates to other projects in the LatCrit Portfolio of Projects (for a complete listing of the LatCrit Portfolio of Projects, please visit the LatCrit website).

Listserv Purposes: This Cyber Classroom listserv responds to repeated complaints from students about the absence of law courses on race, ethnicity and other forms of identity – and also about the absence of LatCrit scholarship specifically from law school courses on critical theory and/or on race relations. We hope this listserv will help us rectify that gap. In addition, this listserv provides a venue for LatCrit student alumni to stay in touch with each other and with the LatCrit community, and to follow up on their experiences with us in substantive and enduring ways: this project and listserv provides a ready means for students who are currently enrolled in, or have graduated from, LatCrit programs like the

Student Scholar Program, the Critical Global Classroom, or the LatCrit Seminar to build on those experiences, and thereby to become increasingly active members of the LatCrit community over the longer term (see below for more on LatCrit community-building and this project). Therefore, the initial purpose of this listserv is to provide a core group of interested students from schools in every region of the country with a convenient and “safe” vehicle through which to communicate directly with each other and with interested faculty about these and similar issues.

However, by providing this form of direct access between students and faculty who are interested in these issues, we also hope the listserv will serve as a platform both for immediate exchanges of ideas as well as a way of developing longer-term projects. In particular, we hope students will be in a better position to prod their schools and faculties into curricular reforms that make sense from a local perspective, helping in this way to ensure the inclusion of marginalized identities and texts in their formal law school curriculum. Our aim, in short, is to enable and support student efforts at critical self-education as the first step toward student self-empowerment and curricular reform, while at the same time nurturing student participation in the planning and programming of LatCrit events both for the short and long term.

Along the way, we also aim to cultivate a sense of community based on shared antistatist principles and practices (see also below).

Listserv Subscribers: The Cyber Classroom listserv is “closed,” meaning that only the persons subscribed by the moderator (Pedro Malavet, University of Florida) can post comments to the list. However, the messages are not “moderated,” meaning that postings do not have to be screened or approved by anyone in advance. If you are interested in joining this listserv, or know of anyone that may be interested in doing so, please ask her or him to contact Professor Malavet directly via email (malavet@law.ufl.edu).

Professor Malavet adds subscribers periodically, and each new subscriber receives a Welcome Message to help them become oriented. To unsubscribe from this listserv at any time, or to change email addresses, please contact professor Malavet at the email address provided above. Please send all such requests, and other administrative messages, directly or “privately” to the above address, rather than via the listserv, to avoid burdening the list.

The LatCrit Primer: To help introduce and disseminate LatCrit scholarship, LatCrit scholars have prepared a “LatCrit Primer” that collects articles from the LatCrit symposia or other LatCrit publications. Because LatCrit theory is perpetually under construction, the Primer selections should be treated as an introductory overview, not a canonical encapsulation, of LatCrit theory. Students are encouraged to follow up with further LatCrit scholarship in the symposia, which oftentimes cited in the Primer selections.

By definition, the Primer cannot include a complete reproduction of all LatCrit texts or publications; Rather, and as explained in more detail below, selections for the LatCrit Primer are based on four flexible criteria designed to provide a balanced yet comprehensive introduction to LatCrit theory, its origins, aims, methods.

The LatCrit Primer is updated and expanded periodically, as new LatCrit symposia are published, and each new volume is posted to the LatCrit website for easy access and downloading. In addition, the LatCrit website sets forth a complete List of LatCrit Publications, which oftentimes tend to be available on-line via services like Westlaw and Lexis. The entire

contents of the symposium published by the Harvard Latino Law Review based on the papers and proceedings of the First Annual LatCrit Conference (LatCrit I) also may be found at (and downloaded from) the LatCrit website. These combined resources should enable any interested student or other reader to become acquainted with LatCrit scholarship relatively easily.

The Local Reading-and-Discussion Groups:

Based on the comments we have heard from various students and others across the country, it appears that a good starting point for interested students (or others) might be the organization of local “reading-and-discussion groups” (however, as discussed immediately below, everyone should feel free to use the Primer and Cyber Classroom individually, or to form alternative means of coming together for discussion purposes). These local groups are geared primarily to helping bring interested students and other readers “up to speed” regarding LatCrit theory based on early as well as recent writings. Ideally, these local groups consist of at least three persons each, who make a reciprocal commitment to meet about once every 4-6 weeks to exchange thoughts about the readings that the group decides from time to time it wants to read and discuss, and also to select additional readings for the subsequent group meetings/discussions (see “Suggested Readings” below).

Although these local groups meet autonomously at different schools or localities, the Cyber Classroom listserv is designed to permit members of various local reading-and-discussion groups to share thoughts with other students and faculty around the country, thereby beginning a cross-school, inter/national dialog on LatCrit theory, its record, its trajectories, and its relevance to law and society. This dialog, we hope, will provide the basis for student follow-up actions at their respective schools to seek inclusion of marginalized views and scholarship in the formal curriculum, as well as the basis for ideas on student-oriented events or programming at LatCrit conferences.

In sum, we hope the LatCrit Primer, the local reading-and-discussion groups and the Cyber Classroom listserv will work synergistically to accomplish the main purposes of this project.

Suggested (and Forthcoming) Readings: To facilitate the start-up and operation of the local reading-and-discussion groups, we have prepared an Outline of Suggested Readings drawn from Volume I of the Primer, which spans up to five group meetings (or, roughly, about the duration of a semester). These suggestions are just that: each individual or local group, of course, is free to devise her/his/their own monthly readings, *but we suggest that all persons and/or groups read at least the first set of suggested readings so that everyone will have read and discussed some basic introductory pieces as a common point of reference.* The Outline of Suggested Readings is provided below, and also is posted to the LatCrit website; updates of the Outline accompany the periodic updates of the Primer based on the publication of new LatCrit texts.

Developing Alternatives to the Local Reading-and-Discussion Groups: If the suggested local group format is not suitable or attractive to students or other persons at a particular site, we hope you/they will share alternatives with the rest of us via the Cyber Classroom listserv. The important point is to create points of connection and knowledge.

Whether through local reading-and-discussion groups or otherwise, the objective is to take concrete steps toward informed student participation in LatCrit, and to provide a greater substantive foundation for students to petition/lobby their deans and faculties for curricular reform that responds to Latina/o and other “outsider” communities. Each of us can (and should) learn from the local experiments and experiences of the others as we work toward these basic goals, so please share your thoughts about process as well as substance.

The Cyber Classroom, LatCrit Theory and Community-Building: We close this overview with some important points underscoring collectivity, commitment and continuity – all three have been essential to the success of LatCrit theory and praxis generally, and will be to this outreach initiative specifically. Even though the LatCrit Cyber Classroom project and everything

associated with it are not limited to law students, they are in great measure a response to student requests; we therefore expect and encourage students – both newcomers and LatCrit alumni – to take the lead locally in forming the reading-and-discussion groups and in ensuring timely and productive group meetings. In particular, we also will take our cue from students and others in these local groups about the specific types of conference programming and other possible follow-up projects that might grow from the reading group discussions and listserv exchanges. *Therefore, the success of this initiative rests equally with the students and with our collective engagement via this listserv.*

But, in keeping with LatCrit’s aspirations, this process of learning and exchange should be enjoyable as well as productive: from its inception, LatCrit has sought both to cultivate community and to spur the production of knowledge about Latina/o communities locally and globally. This community-building ethos is integral to this project and listserv, and to the larger effort toward student-oriented initiatives. We hope through the Cyber Classroom project and listserv to develop professional relationships as well as substantive insights that will contribute to the ongoing evolution of critical outsider studies in law (and other disciplines) both within and beyond the United States.

Getting Started – Introduce Yourself! We Want to Get to Know Who You Are: To become familiar with the Cyber Classroom listserv community, we request that all new subscribers post a brief self-introduction as a first step. This informal self-introduction should be short and simple, describing yourself vis a vis LatCrit, explaining your connection or interest in LatCrit theory, and perhaps reflecting on the status of Latinas/os and other marginalized groups at your law school and/or within your local or regional communities. These individual self-introductions are part of creating a genuine sense of critical community, and helps to provide us all with a better understanding of the educational landscape, so we hope to receive these informal self-introductions from all project participants.

! Welcome to the Cyber Classroom Project, and thank you for your interest in LatCrit theory!