Black *AND* Latino/a?

Understanding and Teaching the African Diaspora in Latin America

Presenter Information

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The Three ‘I’s

- Investment
  - Knowledge, education
  - Personal and social transformation
  - Our Students…what do you hope to bring back?

The Three 'I's

- Invisibility of Afro-Latin Americans
  - Historical Touch Points
  - Why Invisibility?
  - Contemporary Presence and Activism
  - Media Exposure
    - A Rising Voice: Afro-Latin Americans (Miami Herald)
    - Black in Latin America (PBS, Henry Louis Gates, Jr.)

The Three 'I's

- Identity
  - Terminology
    - U.S.: Hispanic, Latino/a, Black
    - Latin America: blanco, negro, mulatto, pardo, negra tinta, mulatto avanzado, etc.
  - Race, Ethnicity, Nation
    - Race as socially constructed category
    - Ethnicity refers to language, geographic origin, beliefs
    - National identity supersedes racial and ethnic identities
  - Processes of Social Categorization

Three 'I's

- Cuban Roots/Bronx Stories: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbxGDLLrWG8
  - Speaks to issues of identity, invisibility…and the 4th 'I': immigration
  - Journey of the first and second generations to discover and reconnect with their past
  - Window into U.S. and Cuban history from perspective of this particular immigrant family

Assignment

- Freewriting exercise (3 minutes)
  - Share reactions to film clip
- How would you use this film in your classroom?
  - Family Oral History Project
  - Social Activism and Movements in the U.S.
  - Caribbean-Latin American Migrations
  - Popular Ideas of Blackness in Music and Literature (soundtrack, poem 'Y Tú Abuela Dónde Está?)

Teaching History, Challenging Invisibility

- African Diaspora in Latin America
  - Historical Touch Points
    - Early African Presence
    - Invisibility: How and Why?
  - Contemporary Populations of African Descent
    - Distributions
    - Key Issues

“No Longer Invisible”: Ubiquitous Presence of Africans

- African presence in Spain pre-conquest
  - Muslim Northern Africans invaded the Iberian peninsula in 711 and controlled it to varying degrees until 1492 (almost 800 YEARS)
  - African influence over language, culture, architecture, technology, education
- Africans in Americas
  - Came from the Iberian kingdom in early part of Spanish conquest (early-mid 1500s) then directly from Africa and/or the Caribbean
  - Centrality of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Amistad

- Amistad: 1839 Rebellion aboard a schooner
  - From Africa to Havana to Puerto Principe, Cuba
  - Aim to return Africa but steered to U.S.
  - Illegality of the Slave Trade
- Amistad clip: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vo-JejTp7O4
- How would you use this story in your classroom?
  - Middle Passage
  - Abolition Movement
  - Americas linked through slavery

Historical Touch Points

- Estimated Africans enslaved in Latin America: 5.7 million with 2 million to Brazil
- Some estimates between 10-15 million destined for Latin America
- Discrepancies
  - Can only have rough estimates: questionable reliability of ship ledgers, number of people who died en route to the coast and on the ships, people who escaped immediately, etc.

Historical Touch Points

- Abolition of the Atlantic slave trade: 1807/1835
  - Illegal Trade continued into 1860s (Cuba and Brazil)
- Period of Abolition of Slavery: 1822-1888
  - Brazil was last to abolish in 1888, preceded by Cuba in 1886
- Independence from Spain: by 1825 (except Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1898)
- Brazilian Independence from Portugal: 1825

Early African Presence

- African participation in the conquest and colonization of the Americas
  - Disproportionate number of enslaved Africans had military experience as many were war captives
  - Military participation was a route to manumission
  - *Pardo* militias, consolidated by 18th century, play important role in colonial defense

Early African Presence

- Black Spanish Militia

African/Latin American Diversity

- Origins:
  - African-born (West, Central Africa)
    - Ethnic group (language, geographic area, belief systems, physical characteristics, skills, etc)
  - Iberian-born
    - Time period, arrival in Europe
    - Mixed ancestry
  - American-born
    - Caribbean, Mainland
    - Generation
    - Mixed ancestry

African Diversity

- Status
  - Free, enslaved
    - Caste Laws: constraints on free people of color
- Occupations
  - Presence of skilled laborers (carpenters, blacksmiths, artisans, etc.)
  - Military and militias
  - Agricultural Laborers: sugar, tobacco, coffee, indigo
  - Domestics and laborers in cattle, wine and other industries

African Diversity

- Occupational Diversity
  - Rural—50 to 60% of enslaved performed agricultural labor, the rest labored in processing, transport, domestic sphere
  - Urban—enslaved labor used in cities to perform a wide variety of tasks
    - Domestic Workers
    - Dock Workers at Port Cities: loading and unloading cargo
    - Transporting goods throughout city
    - Selling products for local consumption
    - Ganadores in Brazil: capoeira, link to social and cultural life

Forms of Resistance

- Practicing Cultural Traditions in Hostile Environment
- Armed opposition at sea
- Work Stoppages, Illness, Theft
- Formation of Maroon Communities
  - Quilombos in Brazil…http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3T2_zFAD9s0 (clip from Quilombo Country)
  - Palenques in Spanish colonies
- Revolts: individual and collective acts of armed revolt constituting violent resistance

Haitian Revolution (1791-1804)

- In the **mid-1700s**, Saint Domingue became **largest single supplier of sugar** to the world (source of 1/2 to 2/3 of ALL sugar in the world)
- Imported about **800K Africans** in a 40 year period, which was about one third of the ENTIRE slave trade during this period
- 1789: Slave population of nearly **500K with 32K whites and about 25K gens de couleur**

The Haitian Revolution

- Overthrew both colonialism and slavery
- Resulted in the second independent republic in the Americas (U.S. being the first) and first Black republic in the world
- Tremendous impact on the region and the world
  - Economic: sugar & coffee shifts to Cuba and Brazil
  - Demographic
    - 6-700K Africans to Cuba, 1.7M to Brazil
    - Migrations out of San Domingue to Cuba and New Orleans
  - Cultural: Strengthening of African institutions and identities
  - Ideological: 'The Spectre of Haiti' vs. 'Ultimate Promised Land'
    - Latin American Liberator Simón Bolívar exiled in Haiti, Haitians soldiers accompany him back to LA and fight Spain

North Atlantic Ocean
CUBA
Windward Passage
Tortue I.
Port-de-Paix
Les Trois
Cap-Haïtien
Anse Rouge
Ft.-Liberté
Gonaïves
Gonâve Gulf
HAITI
St.-Marc
Hinche
Péligre Lake
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Gonâve I.
Artibonite
Saumâtre Lake
Grande Cayemite I.
Jérémie
PORT-AU-PRINCE
Navassa I. (U.S.A.)
Les Cayes
Aquin
Pic la Selle
Jacmel
Belle-Anse
Chardonnière
Jamaica Channel
Vache I.
Caribbean Sea

Race and Nation-Building

- Barbados or Canada?…What will the destiny of these post-colonial nations be?
- National Fate -- National identity –Racial and Cultural Identity
- Progress = European Identity
- Backwardness = African and Indigenous Identity
- African and Indigenous Populations = Eliminate or Assimilate

Demographic Presence 1800

COUNTRY	Afro-Latin Am. pop	Total Population
Brazil	1,305,000 (67%)	1,942,000
Mexico	635,000 (10%)	6,122,000
Venezuela	552,000 (62%)	898,000
Cuba	326,000 (54%)	600,000
Colombia	306,000 (39%)	787,000
Puerto Rico	90,000 (56%)	162,000
Peru	81,000 (6%)	1,232,000
Argentina	69,000 (37%)	187,000
Santo Domingo	68,000 (66%)	103,000
Panama	41,000 (66%)	62,000
Ecuador	33,000 (8%)	429,000
Chile	31,000 (8%)	383,000

Demographic Presence 2000

COUNTRY	Afro-Latin Pop	Total Pop
Brazil	76,419,000 (45%)	169,799,000
Cuba	3,808,000 (34%)	11,199,000
Puerto Rico	416,000 (11%)	3,809,000
Uruguay	200,000 (6%)	3,337,000
Estimates		
Venezuela	10,514,000 (44%)	24,169,000
Colombia	8,887,000 (21%)	43,320,000
Dominican Republic	7,053,000 (84%)	8,396,000
Panama	1,314,000 (46%)	2,856,000
Ecuador	632,000 (5%)	12,645,000

A Rising Voice

- Great Resource for Demographic Data
- http://www.miamiherald.com/multimedia/news/afrolatin/index.html
- Assignments
  - Census: Debate, Create Census, Poll Community
  - Investigation of data on each country
  - Research project on Latin American hip hop

Contraction in Population after 1800

- End of importation of Africans
- High mortality rates, Low reproduction
- European immigration: national policy of whitening the population
- Biases on part of census takers—desire to project a modern nation where blackness is directly opposed to modernity and progress
- Self-reported identity
- Mestizaje/Mulataje as national identity

Mestizaje

- Mestizaje translates as “mixture” and refers to racial and cultural mixture but is also an example of a racial ideology.
- It is a Latin American response to scientific racism, which refers to the use of pseudo-science to justify of the racial hierarchy and was at its height in the late 1800s/early 1900s.
- Promotes racial mixture and identity of nation as racially mixed
- Complex system of categorization coexists with a racial hierarchy in which blackness is stigmatized and whiteness is elevated

Identity: Latin American Racial Terminology

- Negro, Negrón, Negro fino, Negra tinta, Negro teléfono
- Mulatto, Mulatto claro, Mulatto avanzado/atrasado,
- Jabao/a,
- Blanco, Rubio, Trigueño
- Pardo
- Mestizo
- Zambo
- Etc.

Racial Democracy (Equality)

- Term most often associated with Brazil
- There are no distinct races in Latin America because everyone is mixed. Without race, there can be no racism.
- National identity unifies people of different races and everyone is equal as citizens of the nation. Those who complain about racial discrimination are acknowledging racial difference and challenging national unity.
- Class, not race or color, are the primary mechanisms of social stratification

Faces of Afro-Latin America

Afro-Latin America: Contemporary Realities

- 150 million people of African descent in Latin America (28-40 million indigenous)
- 30% of the population, >50% of poorest inhabitants
- Colombia Example
  - 26% of population, 75% of poor
  - Earn 34% less than non-black counterparts
  - Crisis of forced displacement
- Brazil
  - Black and mulatto unemployment is twice that of whites, employed blacks earn half
  - 78% below poverty line compared to 20% of whites

Afro-Latin America: Contemporary Realities

- Experience of blackness is heterogenous, stigma of blackness is similar.
  - Higher rates of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, mortality
  - Land Rights—Displacement—Colombia http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NI48VjO1yFM
  - State-sponsored violence
  - Employment Discrimination
  - Social Discrimination—attitudes and beliefs about blackness (pelo bueno/malo, adelantar la raza, cosa de negros, cuentos de negros)
  - Lack of Political Power

Afro-Latin America: Contemporary Realities

- La Lucha Continua…Afro-Latin American Social Movements
  - Regional Levels
    - Alianza Estratégica de Afro-Latinoamericanos
    - Organización Negra Centroamericana
  - National Level
    - Movimento Negro in Brazil (beginning in early 20th c), Afro-Venezuelan Network, Mundo-Afro (Uruguay), others in Panama, Colombia
  - Addressing different forms of race and gender oppression such as in employment, political representation, and land rights

Afro-Latin Diaspora: Identities

- **Contrasting Systems of Racialization**
  - US: two-tiered. Rather than Black and White, one drop makes a person non-white rather than black
  - **Puerto Rico**: pheonotype and status tend to define racial identity, thus people in the same family can be of different "races"…yet the poles remain
  - **DR**: key difference is the role of Haitians as defining blackness, thus their racial identity is defined through their national identity
  - **Honduras and other Central American countries**: blackness is defined through region and/or ethnicity ie: Garifuna or Creoles are the blacks

Identity: Terminology (US)

- Hispanic
  - Hispania: Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal)
  - Spain as primary referent
- Latino/a
  - Latin American origins
- Chicano/a
  - Mexican ancestry
- Black
  - African ancestry—"one drop" rule

Identity: U.S. Census

- Students research census categories over time
  - What are the most notable changes in racial and ethnic categorization?
  - When did ‘Hispanic’ appear
  - What are the different options for ‘Black’?
  - Who is included and excluded?
  - Census as an instrument and reflection of the social construction of race

Online Resources

- http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/chronicle/cache/bypass/home/archive/issues2007/thesolidarityofpeoples/pid/4886?print=1
- www.afrocubaweb.com
- http://www.miamiherald.com/multimedia/news/afrolatin/multimedia/map.html
- http://www.pbs.org/wnet/black-in-latin-america/

Selected Readings

- No Longer Invisible: Afro-Latin Americans Today, Minority Rights Group
- Afro-Latin America 1800-2000, George Reid Andrews
- Beyond Slavery: The Multi-layered Legacy of Africans in Latin America and the Caribbean, Darien Davis
- Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos, Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanne Oboler, eds.
- Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean: Social Dynamics and Cultural Transformations, Norman Whitten and Arlene Torres, eds.
- The Atlantic Slave Trade, Herbert Klein
- Avengers of the New World: the Story of the Haitian Revolution, Laurent DuBois
- The Farming of Bones, Edwidge Danticat