Reyita is the personal life story of María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno as recounted to her daughter. Spanning most of twentieth-century Cuba, the book narrates Reyita’s continuing struggles against the barriers of class, race, and gender (in other words, she’s poor, Afro-Cuban, and a woman). Your essay will explain what you believe was the central obstacle that Reyita faced during her lifetime. Your choices are either 1) class; 2) race; or 3) gender. Remember to be sure that your introduction contains a clear thesis statement indicating which of the three themes that you have selected! However, keep in mind, all of the themes are closely interrelated—the selection of one does not mean that you should (or can) disregard the other two. But rather, your paper should convince the reader why your choice of themes is more crucial than the others in understanding Reyita’s life in Cuba during this time.

Some technical issues for the paper:

First: Your essay must be at least four (4) but no more than five (5) pages long (double-spaced & in a normal-sized font, o.k.)? It will be due on Tuesday, Nov. 27th (in lecture).

Second: The essay will be based on Reyita and any relevant material from the lectures and readings. Do not bring in outside materials!

Third: Well-chosen quotes enhance a paper’s argument and should be used. When quoting directly from Reyita, the passage must be in quotation marks and the page number cited following the quote in parentheses. For example, “I would say almost all of them were victims of the system prevalent in our country” (71). The proper citation must also be given to paraphrased material (i.e., restating a passage but in different words)—no exceptions! Material from lectures, however, does not need to be cited. Bear in mind, quotes are used to support your argument and therefore need explanation—quotes do not take the place for your ideas.

Fourth: Remember that the conclusion of a paper summarizes your argument and is not the place to bring up new evidence.