

## Shortlisted Book for the 2024-2025

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Héctor Tobar

# *Our Migrant Souls: A Meditation on Race and the Meanings and Myths of “Latino”*

**Date:** 2023

**List price:** \$27 hardback (paperback release Sept 2024)

**Publisher website:** <https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780374609917/ourmigrantsouls>

### **Publisher description:**

In *Our Migrant Souls*, the Pulitzer Prize–winner Héctor Tobar delivers a definitive and personal exploration of what it means to be Latino in the United States right now. “Latino” is the most open-ended and loosely defined of the major race categories in the United States, and also one of the most rapidly growing. Composed as a direct address to the young people who identify or have been classified as “Latino,” *Our Migrant Souls* is the first account of the historical and social forces that define Latino identity. Taking on the impacts of colonialism, public policy, immigration, media, and pop culture, *Our Migrant Souls* decodes the meaning of “Latino” as a racial and ethnic identity in the modern United States, and gives voice to the anger and the hopes of young Latino people who have seen *Latinidad* transformed into hateful tropes and who have faced insult and division—a story as old as this country itself. Tobar translates his experience as not only a journalist and novelist but also a mentor, leader, and educator. He interweaves his own story, and that of his parents’ migration to the United States from Guatemala, into his account of his journey across the country to uncover something expansive, inspiring, true, and alive about the meaning of “Latino” in the 21st century.

### **This book is shortlisted for the 2024-2025 Book in Common because**

- *It is engaging to students and to a broad audience.* 36% of Chico State students and 39% of California residents identify as Latinx. Tobar is an award-winning author and educator who offers a deeply personal entry point to a much larger national conversation. The book would offer students an accessible way into that conversation as well. *It has broad appeal across disciplines.* This book will have particular interest to the disciplines within the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences; the College of Communication and Education; and the College of Humanities and Fine Arts.
- *It is relevant and timely.* The last three books in common have focused on the experiences of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. 2024-25 will be the fourth year of the Ethnic Studies requirement (launched in 2021-22), and it would be fitting and meaningful for Chico State’s Books in Common to have focused on all four Ethnic Studies areas during the first four years of the new General Education area.
- *It relates to the university mission.* Chico State is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), aspiring to the Seal of Excelencia, a national recognition that indicates commitment to the success of Latinx students in higher education. This book would meaningfully align with our Strategic Priority of “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion” by “honor[ing] the distinct values, beliefs, identities, and cultures of our students, faculty, staff, and community,” and centering the work of the Latinx Equity and Success team.