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## Melting pot: Author addresses Hispanic influence in America

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America is a melting pot of many different cultures.

To explain just how much the Hispanic culture in particular has influenced the U.S., Argentinian-American author, poet and scholar Luis Alberto Ambroggio gave a lecture on "The Hispanic threads in the tapestry of the United States" at Hodges University Tuesday.

"In the U.S. we have to promote the culture of the 'We.' We have to appreciate all our cultures. The beautiful Anglo-Saxon culture, the beautiful Afro-American culture, the Chinese culture. All the cultures that make our country so rich," Ambroggio said.

His latest book, "Estados Unidos Hispano" (United States Hispanic), touches on the influences of the Hispanic culture early on in America's history.

"In writing the book, I felt the need to share the amazing discoveries of this element of our American nationality. There are fascinating historical facts, as well as information on how and why our creator Thomas Jefferson learned Spanish and even forced his daughters and other acquaintances to learn the Spanish language," he said.

The lecture was a partnership between Hodges' Frances Pew Hayes Center for Lifelong Learning and the Hispanic Institute.



"I thought it was a great topic, and one that our members have been asking for; something more global," said Barbara Hawkes, director of Hodges' community outreach and of the Frances Pew Hayes Center.

Jesse Purdon, who served as deputy district director for Florida's 19th congressional district, also spoke during the lecture about Ambroggio's novel. As a first generation American, Purdon said he understands the contributions made by the Hispanic population in the U.S.

"A component of (Estados Unidos Hispano) deals directly with Latinos and Hispanic-Americans within the political culture of the United States. I've been very blessed in my ability to participate in that process," Purdon said.



He's just one of the many U.S. public servants of Hispanic descent. He named names such as Sen. Ted Cruz, Sen. Marco Rubio and Associate

Justice to the Supreme Court Sonia Sotomayor, among others.

Besides serving many roles in the U.S. government, the Hispanic population makes up a large part of the overall population in the U.S.

More than 200,000 people of Hispanic descent live in Lee and Collier counties alone, according to Hodges Hispanic Institute.

Ambroggio said that number is only growing not just locally but on a national scale.

"In the year 2030, (Hispanics) will be the most numerous ethnic group in the country," he added.

Which is why, he said, bilingualism is an important tool to possess.

"In the U.S., the second language that they taught the most is Spanish. In my 50 years here (in the U.S.), I have noticed a great development in being more open, multi-cultural and multi-lingual. I think this is the best way to really be open as a country. When you learn and are sensitive to many cultures, and cultures in a sense that we don't even have to go out of the country because we have them here, the more open we're going to be," Ambroggio said.

Many audience members were taking advantage of the Spanish-language classes offered at Hodges.





"I go to a Spanish conversation group here, and I heard this was happening afterwards and I thought it was an interesting topic," said Darcy Cox, a part-time Naples resident.

