Introduction to Latin American Literature and Culture
Spanish 940:208 (Fall 2019)
Rutgers University-Newark, Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies

Prof. Elena Lahr-Vivaz, Ph.D. 
M/W 10-11:20 a.m. 
Hahne 322 
E-mail: el431@newark.rutgers.edu 
Office: Conklin 406 
Office Hours: M 11:30-12:30 (and by appointment)

Course Description
In this course, we will examine works of literature produced by some of the most prominent writers of Latin America, at the same time that we will learn about the development of Latin American culture and history. Over the semester, we will consider the writings of Christopher Columbus and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz; discuss the artwork of Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, and Wilfredo Lam; and engage with the fiction of Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, and Isabel Allende, among others. We will also work to improve our ability to think and write critically, and to approach writing as both a process and a skill that can be learned. This writing-intensive course is taught in Spanish and meets the core curriculum History and Literature OR Other Liberal Arts requirement.

Learning Objectives
As a General Requirement course, Introduction to Latin American Literature and Culture is designed to help you develop and improve the reading, writing, oral communication, and critical analysis skills that you need to successfully complete your university education.

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. identify a minimum of five different types (or genres) of literary texts, and describe the key characteristics of each;
2. summarize and analyze the plots of a minimum of ten texts from Latin America, and explain their historical importance and cultural context;
3. compose a clear and coherent argument about a literary, filmic, or cultural text, and develop this argument orally and in writing;
4. assess and critique the merit of scholarly journal articles and books written on Latin American literature, film, and culture, and defend your own argument in relation to these;
5. correctly use MLA citation;
6. create an digital humanities project on a topic discussed in class, and present this work to your classmates;
7. evaluate your own strengths and learning skills, and determine the areas in which you need to improve to achieve course objectives.
**Required Texts**

Most texts are available on Blackboard: https://blackboard.newark.rutgers.edu. *Students should download all readings from Bb when they register for the course, to be prepared in the event of a service disruption.*

Students should purchase the following text, which is available at the Bookstore and may also be purchased from online vendors such as Amazon (please refer to the ISBN number when ordering):


*To receive full credit for class participation, students must bring copies of all readings to class. E-readers such as iPads are fine; cell phones or similar mobile devices are not considered e-readers for the purposes of this class.*

**Recommended Text**

The following text is recommended (but not required). It is available on reserve in the Dana Library, and is also available for purchase from online vendors such as Amazon:


**Evaluation & Expectations**

**Homework (10%) and Participation (10%)**

Students are expected to participate actively and constructively in class discussions, and to pay attention during lectures. Students should complete all required readings and assignments before class; participate in class-wide and small-group discussions; and demonstrate respect for the ideas of others. Students must bring all required materials (readings, homework assignments, essays, etc.) to class. *Cell phone use is not permitted in class and laptop use is permitted for note-taking only; students who violate this policy will be asked to leave the class, and will not receive credit for in-class participation for that day.*

Homework and Participation grades will be based on the following:

- **Homework.** In addition to completing the assigned readings, students will be required to complete brief homework assignments (as detailed in the Class Schedule). Assignments will be designed to strengthen critical writing and thinking skills, and should require no more than 20 minutes to complete. Assignments must be posted to the Blackboard Discussion Board by 9 a.m. the day they are due. *Each homework assignment is worth a total of 20 points, based on the criteria established in the grading rubric on Blackboard; late homework will be awarded no more than half credit.*

- **Participation** in class discussions is considered key to comprehension of course material and acquisition of writing skills. *Students will receive three participation grades, based on the criteria established in the grading scale on Blackboard.*

- **Quizzes** will be given at the beginning of class, and will count toward the participation grade; the lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Quizzes must be taken on the date listed on the syllabus.

Students are responsible for checking their homework and participation grades on Blackboard, where they will be posted on a regular basis. Students should contact the professor with any questions or concerns regarding these grades.
Midterm (10%) and Final Exam (20%)
Exams are designed to ensure that students are reading and understanding course materials for meaning and informed analysis, and that they are paying attention during lectures and presentations. Exams must be taken on the date listed on the syllabus (and/or determined by the university) unless there is an academic reason approved by the Dean or a justified medical reason.

Hojas (15%) and Final Essay (20%)
Students will write three short (1- to 2-page) essays, or hojas, in this course; they will also write a final (7-page) essay and complete a peer review, or informe del lector, to give a peer feedback on his/her final essay.

- **Hojas** are designed to allow students to practice writing skills and get feedback on their ideas. Hojas must be posted to Blackboard by 9 a.m. the day they are due; students are asked to bring printouts to class for their peers, and to present a brief summary of their ideas as a starting point for class discussion. Hojas should be one (1) single-spaced page.  

  *Students may choose to revise and resubmit their hojas based on the professor’s feedback.* Students who opt to do so will have one week to resubmit an hoja after they receive the (graded) draft back from the professor, and will receive the average of the two grades as their final grade on the hoja.

- **Final Essay.** In keeping with the course’s emphasis on writing as a process, students will be required to submit a thesis and abstract for approval before writing their final essay; to complete pre-writing exercises; and to revise their work based on feedback from peers and the professor. The final essay should be 7 double-spaced pages, not including Works Cited.

- **Informe del lector.** Students will read a draft of a classmate’s final essay and complete a peer review, or informe del lector, to provide feedback. Informes will be graded on a 1-20 scale, and will count toward students’ participation grade.

- **All essay assignments must be completed for students to pass the course.**

- **All essay assignments must follow the MLA format** ([http://www.mla.org/style](http://www.mla.org/style)) **and be submitted in print and on Blackboard.**

- **All writing assignments must be submitted by the deadline for full credit unless students receive the explicit advance permission of the professor.** Essays/hojas turned in after the deadline will be reduced by 2 percentage points per day that they are late, up to a maximum of 10 points. For example, if a student receives a grade of 87 on a paper (B) but turns in the paper four days late, a total of 8 points will be deducted, for a final grade of 79 (C+).

- **All work submitted by a student must be his or her own.** Students are encouraged to discuss their ideas with classmates, the professor, and the Writing Center’s peer tutors ([http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter](http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter)), but plagiarism is not allowed and will result, at minimum, in a 0 on the assignment.

Further details on essay requirements, including criteria for grading and guidelines for informes, will be posted on Blackboard.
Presentations (10%)

Students will work in groups to make a brief (20-minute) presentation to the class.

- In their presentations, students will introduce their classmates to a topic to be covered in class (i.e., an author or artist, or an important literary or cultural movement). A sign-up sheet for presentations will be circulated during the first weeks of the term. No make-up presentations are allowed without the explicit advance permission of the professor.

- As a group, students will be responsible for preparing PowerPoint (or Prezi) slides, as well as a one-page handout summarizing the information they include in their presentations. Students should email the professor their slides and handout no later than 9 a.m. the day of their presentation and should bring copies of their handout to class.

Final Digital Humanities Project (5%)

Students will complete a final digital humanities project related to a key text or theme discussed in the course. Projects will then be presented to the class. Further details on project requirements, including criteria for grading, will be posted on Blackboard.

Grading

All grades will be posted to Blackboard. The final average will determine the final grade, with letter grades corresponding to the following levels of achievement (as stated in the college-wide policy determined by the University’s Faculty Senate):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-87 (88-89 B+)</td>
<td>achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-77 (78-79 C+)</td>
<td>achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/N</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either: (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit; or (2) was not completed and there was not agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (incomplete).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance

Attendance in this class is mandatory. Two (2) unexcused absences are permitted without penalty—save these absences for when you really need them, as there will almost certainly be a day or two when you can’t find parking, need to study for an exam in another class, or have an appointment. More than two unexcused absences will affect your final grade, which will be dropped by 2 percentage points per additional absence. If you miss three classes, that is, and have a final grade of 90%, you will receive an 88%; if you miss four classes, your grade will be an 86%. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes late to class will receive at most half credit for participation for that day; three late arrivals will count as one absence.
Please note: attendance and participation are taken very seriously. If you miss more than 10 hours of class, you will not pass the course unless I agree that there are extenuating circumstances and unless appropriate documentation is obtained from Academic Services (315 Hill Hall). If you are facing a situation that is making it difficult for you to attend class, please come to see me as soon as possible so that we may discuss how to address it.

Resources

The many resources available to students include the following:

- Rutgers Learning Center (http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/rlc). Services offered by the Learning Center include tutoring and academic coaching.
- Rutgers Writing Center (http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter). “The Writing Center offers writing tutoring and writing workshops to all undergraduate students currently enrolled in classes on the Rutgers, Newark campus.”
- Office of Disability Services for Students (http://disabilityservices-uw.rutgers.edu/). Students who require accommodations for a disability should let the professor know. Students will need a letter from the Office of Disability Services outlining accommodations.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is of the utmost importance in this class, as it is at the University (http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/). In a writing course, it is particularly important to remember that plagiarism is not allowed. Rutgers University defines plagiarism as follows:

“The representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic work. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks, or by appropriate indentation, and must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline. Acknowledgment is also required when material from any source is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. […] Information that is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc, need not be cited; however, the sources of all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, other materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography” (http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/plagiarism).

Any student who turns in a work that has been plagiarized in part or in totality will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs, and students guilty of plagiarism will jeopardize their academic careers. Any student who turns in work that is plagiarized in part or in totality will receive, at minimum, a 0 on the assignment; depending on the extent of plagiarism, he or she may receive an F in the class, a note in his or her academic record, or expulsion from the university.
Programa de estudios

☐ Reading (to be completed before class, for discussion on date listed on syllabus)
☞ Film (to be screened in class, unless otherwise noted)
☞ Visual culture or artwork (to be viewed in class, unless otherwise noted)
☐ Writing topic or strategy to be discussed in class
☐ Homework assignment (to be posted to Blackboard Tablero de discusión by 9 a.m. on date listed on syllabus, unless otherwise indicated; worth points toward homework grade, as detailed on Tablero de discusión)
☞ Essay pre-writing assignment (to be posted to Blackboard Tablero de discusión by 9 a.m. on date listed on syllabus, unless otherwise indicated; worth points toward Essay grade, as outlined on Essay Assignment sheet)

4/9 Presentación del curso

Presentaciones (escribir una presentación en Bb, para el 4/9; y responder a dos compañeros de clase, para el 6/9)
Preparación (leer ¡Empieza aquí! en Bb y descargar todas las lecturas del semestre de Bb)

La ficción de América

9/9 ☐ Cristóbal Colón, Diario (selecciones)
Comentario y respuestas: Cristóbal Colón

11/9 ☐ Popul Vuh (pp. 16-17)²
☐ Margarita Zamora, “Reading Columbus” (de Reading Columbus, pp. 39-62)³
☐ La tesis y la evidencia
☐ Estrategia de escritura: dos razones
☐ Academic Integrity y Turnitin: Cómo y por qué evitar el plagio

16/9 ☐ Bartolomé de las Casas, “Historia de las Indias” (pp. 28-36)
☐ El resumen

18/9 ☐ Bernal Díaz del Castillo, “Historia verdadera de la conquista” (pp. 37-47)
☐ La introducción / La conclusión
Prueba #1

23/9 ☐ El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Comentarios reales de los incas (pp. 61-69)
☐ Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno (selecciones)
Comentario y respuestas: El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega

25/9 ☐ Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, “Respuesta de la poetisa” (pp. 75-80)
☐ Estrategia de escritura: argumentos en contra/hombre de paja

30/9 ☞ Yo, la peor de todas (María Luisa Bemberg, 1990)
Hoja #1

La idea de América

2/10 ☐ Esteban Echeverría, “El matadero” (pp. 120-136)
☐ Estrategia de escritura: la concesión
☐ Citas y atribuciones: el formato MLA / La bibliografía anotada
Prueba #2

---

1 Any changes to the class schedule will be communicated on Blackboard and by e-mail. Students are responsible for checking the course Blackboard site and their email at least twice a week during the semester for this class.

2 Unless otherwise indicated, page numbers refer to selections from Voces de Hispanoamérica (3rd ed.) posted on Blackboard.

3 10 Sept.: Last day for students to drop a class without a “W” grade. 11 Sept: Last day to add classes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fecha</th>
<th>Actividad / Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 7/10   | **Sesión de orientación: Biblioteca Dana**  
|        | “La realidad americana y la renovación literaria (1882-1910)” (pp. 198-206)  
|        | Bibliografía anotada: José Martí (en clase)                                        |
| 9/10   | José Martí, selecciones (pp. 207-220)                                               |
| 14/10  | Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, “La mañana de San Juan” (pp. 222-231)                      |
| 16/10  | Rubén Darío, selecciones (pp. 240-254)                                               |
| 21/10  | Miguel Angel Asturias, Leyendas de Guatemala, selecciones                            |
| 23/10  | **EXAMEN**                                                                           |

**La expresión americana**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fecha</th>
<th>Actividad / Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28/10</td>
<td>“Continuidad y ruptura: hacia una nueva expresión” (280-292)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horacio Quiroga, “El hijo” (pp. 293-298)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/10</td>
<td>Gabriela Mistral y Alfonsina Storni, selecciones (pp. 319-326 y 327-331)⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cómo escribir un primer borrador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Hoja #3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>César Vallejo, selecciones (pp. 332-337)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo (selecciones: en clase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cómo expandir un ensayo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/11</td>
<td>Pablo Neruda, “Poema 20”, “Walking around” y “Oda a los calcetines” (pp. 392-401)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nicolás Guillén, “La canción del bongó”, “Mujer nueva”, “Canto negro”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilfredo Lam (en clase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cómo pulir la escritura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Prueba #4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>Jorge Luis Borges, “El sur” (pp. 354-363)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Xul Solar (en clase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cómo usar los marcadores textuales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tesis/Abstract: Ensayo final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/11</td>
<td>Gabriel García Márquez, El coronel no tiene quien le escriba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/11</td>
<td><strong>El coronel no tiene quien le escriba</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preguntas de discusión: Gabriel García Márquez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bibliografía anotada: Ensayo final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/11</td>
<td>Gabriel García Márquez, El coronel no tiene quien le escriba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/11</td>
<td>Isabel Allende, Cuentos de Eva Luna (selecciones)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrador: Ensayo final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/11</td>
<td><strong>NO HAY CLASE: ¡FELIZ ACCION DE GRACIAS!</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴ 4 Nov.: Last day students may drop courses ("W" grade assigned).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fecha</th>
<th>Evento</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2/12  | Taller de las humanidades digitales  
Informe del lector |
| 4/12  | *Liberador* (film, 2015), dir. Alberto Arvelo |
| 9/12  | Presentación de proyectos finales |
| 11/12 | Conclusiones  
**Entrega de ensayo final** |

**EXAMEN FINAL** (fecha determinada por la universidad)