LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE
IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH
AND PORTUGUESE STUDIES

Professor: Patricio Ferrari
Course number: Spanish 21:940:250
Classroom: Conklin 455
Class time: TH 2:30-5:20PM
Office: Conklin 426
Office Hours: T 1PM (or by appointment via zoom)

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Course Description

In this introductory literature course, we will focus on a wide range of works by some of the most prominent Latin American voices (from pre-colonial Spanish times to the present day). We will explore the aesthetic trends and social concerns during major literary periods in Latin America (e.g., Hispanic Baroque and Hispanic Romanticism) as well as literary movements such as Modernismo—the first one to emerge on this side of the Atlantic.

Given that literary works are not produced in a vacuum, we will examine the theoretical currents and historical events under which they took place, and review the significant incidents some of these works allude to or memorialize. Our literary journey will take us through various genres, traditions, and themes (e.g., identity, the motherland/the mother tongue, displacement/borders, love, memory, bilingualism/biculturalism, the city/the natural world).

This course includes poets and fiction writers from the following Latin American countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay. Latin American U.S.-based writers (Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico) will also integrate our program. Since our readings and discussions will stem from texts in English translation, we will also address the art of translation—from both a practical and a theoretical point of view—as we compare and contrast different translation strategies, particularly in poetry. We will also explore and generate in-class material for creative writing purposes.

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The course is designed for students who do not read Spanish, Portuguese or French and meets the new core curriculum history and literature requirement but cannot be used to satisfy requirements for the Spanish Major or Minor.

7 Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to

- Outline and compare main periods and movements in Latin American Literature from pre-colonial Spanish times to the present day
- Identify and discuss ten (10) key literary figures (expanding from the Neo Baroque to Modernismo) from ten (10) different Latin American countries
- Identify and discuss formal elements in poetry (e.g., diction, imagery, figures of speech, syntax, sound, rhythm and meter)
- Generate a translation from Spanish, Portuguese or French to English (whether they are familiar with the source language or not; and without the use of Google translate).
- Choose what kind of Latin American poetry and fiction interest you
- Construct one possible definition of modern-day Latin American literature and Latin American identity
- Write creative texts (poetry and/or fiction) and assemble them into single chapbook
MODULES

MODULE 1 [POETRY] [WEEKS 1-7]

Week 1 = Course introduction
Week 2 = Indigenous poetry from the Americas [Mexico & Guatemala]
Week 3 = Sor Juana [Mexico]
Week 4 = Martín Fierro [Argentina]
Week 5 = Rubén Darío [Nicaragua]
Week 6 = César Vallejo [Peru]
Week 7 = Pablo Neruda [Chile]

WEEK 8 --- MIDTERM
IN-CLASS READINGS & FEEDBACK OPEN DISCUSSIONS

MODULE 2 [FICTION] [WEEKS 9-12]

MODULE 3 [ART OF POETRY TRANSLATION] [WEEK 13]

MODULE 4 [TBD] [WEEK 14-15]

[FINAL PROJECT ON DECEMBER 17 @ 11.59]
Bibliography (Required Texts)


Further/Recommended Readings


Smith, Carmen Giménez and John M. Chávez, editors. *Angels of the americlypse: an anthology of new Latin@ writing.* Denver [Co.]: Counterpath, 2014.

Note: for literary criticism purposes, please refer to JSTOR. https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/indexes/jstor

JSTOR provides electronic access to back runs of more than 2,000 important scholarly journals. Journals that do not include full-text may be requested using the Article Delivery Service at Rutgers University.

ASSESSMENT

- **Attendance, class participation, and in-class/out-of-class writing assignments/student responses [40%]**

Students are expected to **participate actively and constructively** in class / out-of-class discussions, and be attentive during lectures and students’ midterm readings. **Students should complete all required readings before class**; complete brief check-in reading experience, as assigned; and demonstrate respect for the ideas/comments of peers. Students must bring the required reading materials to each class.

Students are responsible for checking assignments and readings on a weekly basis, and are encouraged to contact the professor during office hours with any questions or concerns regarding homework and participation performance.

To budget your time and to enrich everyone’s classroom experience, read the material and take reading notes prior to class discussion.

**Attendance**

Attendance in this class is mandatory. Since our class meets only once a week, **ONLY One (1) unexcused absence is permitted without penalty**. More than two absences will affect your final grade, which will be dropped by 2% 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%. Our class will start on time with a 5-minute grace period. After that, students who arrive more than 10 minutes late to class will be counted as absent.

**Please note: attendance and participation are taken very seriously.** If you miss more than 8 classes 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 contact me as soon as possible.
- **Check-in Reading Experience** [15%]

To ensure the quality of our class participation and class overall reading engagement/participation, some modules will have a check-in reading experience and/or reading/writing assignments.

- **Mid-term** [15%]

Please choose A, B or C.

**Option A:** You will write 7 original poems in English. There is no length requirement and no specific theme.

**Option B:** You will write 7 original poems in Spanish. There is no length requirement and no specific theme.

**Option C:** You will write 7 original poems in English or Spanish adding words and/or lines in any of these other languages: Portuguese, Spanish, and/or French. There is no length requirement and no specific theme. In other words, you will write bilingual or multilingual poems.

Note: For the midterm each student will do a **5-minute in-class reading**. Since this is a class presentation (for class feedback) no make-up presentations are allowed without the explicit advance permission of the professor. This will take place during class in Week 8. In order to receive feedback, students are encouraged to upload/show the texts during the reading. **The written work is due on Sunday October 24th by 11.59PM. To be uploaded on Canvas.**

Note: we will be generating poems, prose pieces, and translations during the semester.
Final assignment [30%]

The final assignment due on December 17th by 11.59PM. (To be uploaded on Canvas). We will discuss the final assignment in detail after Thanksgiving Break.

Option A: You will write 25 original poems in English. There is no length requirement for each poem. The theme of your chapbook should be around one of the themes covered during the semester: identity, the motherland/the mother tongue, displacement/borders, love, memory, bilingualism/biculturalism, the city/the natural world.

Option B: You will write 25 original poems in Spanish. There is no length requirement for each poem. The theme of your chapbook should be around one of the themes covered during the semester: identity, the motherland/the mother tongue, displacement/borders, love, memory, bilingualism/biculturalism, the city/the natural world.

Option C: You will write 25 original poems mixing English and Spanish or Portuguese or French. There is no length requirement for each poem. The theme of your chapbook should be around one of the themes covered during the semester: identity, the motherland/the mother tongue, displacement/borders, love, memory, bilingualism/biculturalism, the city/the natural world.

Option D: You will write 12 original poems in English with your own translation into Spanish, Portuguese or French. The theme of your chapbook should be around one of the themes covered during the semester: identity, the motherland/the mother tongue, displacement/borders, love, memory, bilingualism/biculturalism, the city/the natural world.

Option E: You will write 2 short stories in English or Spanish or one in each. (Each short story should have a minimum of 500 words). The theme of your chapbook should be around one of the themes covered during the semester: identity, the motherland/the mother tongue, displacement/borders, love, memory, bilingualism/biculturalism, the city/the natural world.
All writing assignments must be submitted by the deadline for full credit. **Writing assignments turned in after the deadline will be reduced by 3% per day that they are late.** 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 10.44 points (12%) will be deducted from 87 for a final grade of 77 (C+).

**All work submitted by a student must be his/he/their 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). **Plagiarism is not allowed and will result, at minimum, in a 0 on the assignment.**

- Extra credit writing activities will be announced weekly.

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Grading

Grades will be posted to Canvas. 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):

**A 90-100**
Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

**B 80-86 (87-89 B+)**
Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

**C 70-76 (77-79 C+)**
Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.

**D 60-69**
Achievement that is worth of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements

**F/N 0-59**
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) Not completed and there was not agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (Incomplete).
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 needing 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. Students guilty of plagiarism will jeopardize their academic careers. Please note: 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.
**Attendance:** Students are expected to arrive on time. Should you miss or need to miss more than two classes, please arrange a meeting with me to discuss the best way to proceed.

**E-mail:** Please be as clear and detailed as possible when writing an email to the professor. Include as much information regarding your question and make sure to identify yourself (name/course; relevant subject heading, etc.) Students are responsible for Canvas and their Rutgers email address on a regular basis. You can expect the professor to respond to student emails within 24-48 hours during the week.

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WEEK 1

TH  September 2\textsuperscript{nd}

1. Introduction & course expectations.

2. Brief Course overview.

3. Why should we read literature today? What makes good literature? How should we define good? And literature?

4. Discussion.
MODULE 1
POETRY

Learning Objectives

- Recognize main figures of speech (i.e., metaphor, simile, anaphora, hyperbole)

- Recognize basic rhythmical patterns in poetry

- Employ figures of speech and rhythmical patterns in your own creative texts

Assessment

Class participation (see Class Participation Rubric under Course Essentials in Canvas), in-out of class writing assignments, discussions on canvas, reading experience check-in on canvas

Learning Activities

Questions to all, in-pair questions, creative writing drills, literature through the lens of your major,
WEEK 2

TH September 9th

1. Full course overview.

2. Brainstorm: What is Poetry? What about Latin America?

3. Introduction to our first topic of the semester: Latin America before the European contact.

I. ANONYMOUS VOICES FROM MESOAMERICA (MEXICO & GUATEMALA)

What is indigenous literature? What themes and aesthetic features define the works during this time? Who authored the works? Where do they stand today?

READ:

* Preface by the editors; “An Introduction to Mestizo Poetics” by Cecilia Vicuña,” and “A Historical Introduction to Latin American Poetry” by Ernesto Livon-Grossman.

* Two anonymous works: sixteenth century, Aztec Nahuatl, Mexico.

* One anonymous work: sixteenth century, Maya K’iche, Mesoamerica.

Texts from The Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry (required texts in bibliography). The three introductory texts and three poems are found in Week 2 (Reading Materials).

IN-CLASS WRITING:

* Creative writing drill.
II. THE BAROQUE IN MEXICO

What themes and aesthetic features define these two periods in Latin American poetry? What female writers stood out during these male-centered periods? Which European authors (male and/or female) exerted a significant influence on Latin American female writers between c. 1600 and c. 1900? And how?

READ:

* **Hispanic Baroque.** An Introduction to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and her poetry during the colonial period. Influence and inheritance of European major themes/aesthetic features.

Texts from *The Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry* (required texts in bibliography). The poems are found in Week 3 (Reading Materials). Also read from *Sor Juana: Or the Traps of Faith* by Octavio Paz (for pages of the latter book see link in further/recommended readings above).

IN-CLASS WRITING:

* **Creative writing drill.**
WEEK 4

TH  September 23rd

III. ROMANTICISM IN LATIN AMERICA: THE EXAMPLE OF GAUCHO LITERATURE

What aesthetic features define the narrative poem? And El Gaucho Martin Fierro, in particular?

READ:

* El Gaucho Martín Fierro by José Hernández. Towards national development and independence from Spain. (Read introduction by the translator and the narrative poem (Part I in full, pages 32-99). We will also read parts of Walt Whitman’s “Leaves of Grass” (1855) and compare the two works.

* Discussion and in-class audio of poem by Juan José Güiraldes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-YkjJhlECQ

Reading material found in Week 4 (Reading Materials).

IN-CLASS WRITING:

* Creative writing drill.
WEEK 5

TH September 30th

IV. **MODERNISMO, THE FIRST LATIN AMERICAN MOVEMENT (NICARAGUA & PERU)**

*What themes and aesthetic features define Latin American modernismo? What European poets excerpted influence on these poets? And how?*

**READ:**


Posted on Canvas.

* Introduction to Rubén Darío. Selected poems including a few texts from *Azul* (1888), one of the pillars of Latin American *modernismo*.

Readings from *The Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry* (required texts in bibliography) and selected texts from *Azul* found in Week 5 (Reading Materials).

* Video on Rubén Darío and class discussion.

* In-class creative writing drill
WEEK 6

TH October 7th

READ:

* Introduction to César Vallejo’s *Trilce* published in 1922 and other poems.

Readings from *The Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry* (required texts in bibliography) and other supplementary materials found in Week 6 (Reading Materials).

* In-class creative writing drill.
WEEK 7

TH October 14th

V. LOVE POETRY AND THE MOTHERLAND: SONNETS AND OTHER POEMS BY PABLO NERUDA

A wide selection of poetry by Pablo Neruda. (Texts will be uploaded on Canvas shortly).
WEEK 8

TH October 21st

* **MID-TERM:** Students 5-minute readings & feedback open discussions.

* Anonymous class evaluation questionnaire.

NOTE:

PROGRAM & MATERIALS FOR WEEKS 9-15 WILL BE UPLOADED SHORTLY
DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

MID-TERM READING ON THURSDAY OCTOBER 21\textsuperscript{ST} [CLASS PERIOD]; MID-TERM DUE ON SUNDAY 24\textsuperscript{TH} BY 11.59PM.

ANNONYMOUS MID-SEMESTER CLASS QUESTIONNAIRE
WEEK 8 OCTOBER 21\textsuperscript{ST}

FINAL PROJECT DUE DECEMBER 17\textsuperscript{TH} BY 11.59PM
Disclaimer

Some of the work we will be reading and discussing throughout the semester may have elements with which you are uncomfortable. Should this occur, please feel free to leave the room at any time and discuss with me after class, during office hours or through email. In your interactions with one another as well as in your oral critiques, please abstain entirely from oppressive or offensive language.

Communication

Should there be a problem of any sort regarding this course, please talk to me about it after class, during office hours or through email. This can include problems with another peer, with syllabus requirements, departmental issues, or external issues that you are undergoing due to covid-19 or other matters. If you are having a problem that I cannot assist with, or if you do not feel comfortable speaking with me about it, I will try to help you find someone in the University who may provide assistance.

Final Note

The most important goal of this course is your appreciation and understanding of canonical texts (prose and poetry) in Latin American literature as well as your writing (both critical and, for some of you, creative). Part of this syllabus is subject to change in order to best support this goal.