LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE STUDIES

Professor: Patricio Ferrari
Course number: Spanish 940:250:01
**Classroom:** CLASSES TAUGHT VIA BLACKBOARD
Class time: TH 2:30-5:20PM
**Office:** REMOTE VIA BLACKBOARD OR ZOOM
**Office Hours:** TH 1-2PM (or by appointment)

Contact: [patricio.ferrari@rutgers.edu](mailto:patricio.ferrari@rutgers.edu)

**Course Description**

In this introductory literature course, we will focus on a wide range of works by some of the most prominent Latin American authors (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) and movements such as *Modernismo*—the first one to come out of Latin America.

Given that literary works are not produced in a vacuum, we will examine the theoretical and historical backgrounds in which they emerged, and review the significant events some of these works allude to or memorialize. Our literary journey will take us through various genres, traditions, and themes (e.g., identity, displacement, memory, bilingualism/biculturalism, politics).

This course includes poets and fiction writers from the following Latin American countries: **Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Nicaragua, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay.** *Latin American U.S.-based* writers (**Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico**) will also integrate our syllabus. Since our readings and discussions will stem from texts in English translation, we will also address the role 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 an archive’s writer and generate in-class material for creative writing purposes.
The course is designed for students who do not read Spanish or Portuguese and meets the new core curriculum history and literature requirement but cannot be used to satisfy requirements for the Spanish Major or Minor. Although the course readings are in English, some texts will be made available in Spanish/Portuguese as well.

7 Course Goals

- To enjoy literature;
- To become better readers of literature;
- To gain knowledge and appreciation of Latin American literature (in English translation) through a diverse range of literary texts (poetry and prose) produced by authors dating from pre-colonial Spanish times to the present day;
- To understand key theoretical and critical concepts in order to critically discuss (orally and in writing) the major Latin American literary periods and movements from the second half of the seventeenth-century to the present day;
- To offer possible definitions of modern-day Latin American literature and Latin American identity;
- To better understand the art of translation strategies in poetry;
- To produce creative texts (either in poetry and/or fiction).
Bibliography (Required Texts)


Pizarnik, Alejandra. *Diana’s Tree*. Translated by Anna Deeny. Swindon: Shearsman, 2020. [To be purchased or borrowed through interlibrary loan at Dana Library].


Further/Recommended Readings


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1 Excerpts of some of these works will be made available on Blackboard. For availability, please refer to class schedule.


https://books.google.com/books?id=8rFnC88v-S8C&pg=PA1&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=true


https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/07/25/where-the-voice-of-alejandra-pizarnik-was-queen/

*Further notes to the edition found here:*


Note: for research 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.

Evaluation & Expectations

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

Students are expected to participate actively and constructively in class discussions, and be attentive during lectures and student presentations. Students should complete all required readings before class; complete brief homework exercises (or responses), 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 homework 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. **Two (2) unexcused absences are 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.

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**- Pop-up Quizzes [10%]**

To ensure the quality of our class participation and class overall reading engagement/participation there will be pop-up quizzes throughout the semester. Should no quizzes be necessary this 10% will count towards class participation, in which case it will be 50%.

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

Each student will do a **5-minute reading through blackboard on October 29th** of 5 original poems (written by him/her/them) and/or the translation of 5 poems originally written by a Latin American author (English > Spanish). Note: the will be generating both poems and translations during the semester. (the translations cannot be of poems discussed in class).

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**- Final assignment [30%]**

The **final assignment (due Friday December 18th by midnight ET)** will be discussed during office hours between Weeks 9 and 12 (no later than Week 13, before Thanksgiving Break). The assignment can be ONE of the following: (1) analyze a given poem or short story by any Latin American author through your field of study (e.g., phycology, biology, nursing, business, mathematics, etc.); (2) Creative writing (either poetry or fiction); (3) Translation from 20 poems originally written in Spanish and/or Portuguese. An in-class translation and creative writing workshop will take place.
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 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). Plagiarism is not allowed and will result, at minimum, in a 0 on the assignment.

Final: Student FINAL Presentation [5% towards the final]

Each student is expected to do a 5-minute class presentation of their final assignment on Thursday December 17th. (This date will be confirmed later in the semester). 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 our last class.

- Extra credit writing activities will be announced weekly.

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Grading

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):

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:** You can expect the professor to respond to student emails between Tuesday (after 10am) and Thursday (until 3.45pm). 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 checking Blackboard and their Rutgers email address on a regular basis.

**The Department of Spanish & Portuguese Studies will host a series of academic lectures and events as part of their 2019-2020 Colloquium Series.** Students are welcome to attend all of them. I will post dates and information as they become available.
OUTLINE OF COURSE

WEEK 1

TH September 3rd

1. Introduction & course expectations. Literature & Latin American Literature brainstorm – some poetry & fiction lexicon

2. Brief course overview.

WEEK 2

TH September 10th

1. Full course overview.
2. Introduction to our first topic of the semester: Latin America before the European contact.

I. AMERINDIAN VOICES: ANONYMOUS WRITERS FROM MEXICO & PERU

What is indigenous literature? What themes and aesthetic features define the works during this time? And who authored them?

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: c. Seventeenth-eighteenth century, Quechua, Peru.

Texts from The Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry (required texts in bibliography). The two introductory texts and three poems are posted on blackboard.
WEEK 3

TH September 17th

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) excerpted 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.

Readings from The Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry (required texts in bibliography; poems posted on blackboard) and 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 creative writing drill.

WEEK 4

TH September 24th

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

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

READ:


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

Reading material posted on blackboard.
WEEK 5

TH October 1st

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 blackboard.

* Introduction to Rubén Dario. 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. On blackboard.

* Video on Rubén Dario and class discussion.

WEEK 6

TH October 8th

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. Uploaded on blackboard.

* In-class creative writing drill.
WEEK 7

TH October 15th

V. FANTASTIC LITERATURE THROUGH SHORT STORIES IN THE RIO DE LA PLATA [ARGENTINA & URUGUAY]

What themes and aesthetic features define the Latin American fantastic short story? Where did the fantastic originate and who pioneered it?

READ:

Introduction to the theme of the eternal recurrence of all things (Jorge Luis Borges’ “The Circular Ruins,” originally published in 1940), and memory (“Funes the Memorious,” from 1942). Both short stories were included in Ficciones.


During this session, we will watch a series of interviews with Borges and discuss the major influence by other fiction writers such as Felisberto Henández from Montevideo (Uruguay).


Reading material as well as other supplementary materials uploaded on blackboard.

WEEK 8

TH October 22nd

READ:

* Selected short stories by Julio Cortázar from Blow-up and Other Stories translated from the Spanish by Paul Blackburn.

Reading materials posted on blackboard.

* Film “Blow Up” (1966) by Michelangelo Antonioni based on Cortázar’s short story “Las babas del diablo” [“Blow Up”].

* Discussion of texts and film.
WEEK 9

TH  October 29th

* Class evaluation questionnaire.

* MID-TERM: Students 5-minute readings. (For guideline see description of midterm above).

WEEK 10

TH  November 5th

VI. MAGICAL REALISM: THE EXAMPLE OF GABRIEL GARCIA MÁRQUEZ [COLOMBIA]

What themes/aesthetic features best define Magical Realism? Where did it originate and who are its main authors? Does it differ from the Fantastic? If so, how?

READ:

* Introduction to “Magic Realism” and Gabriel García Márquez:

“The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World” [El ahogado más hermoso del mundo] (1968) and other short stories to be announced.

* Theory: “Lo barroco y lo real maravilloso” [The Baroque and the real marvelous], as Carpentier called magical realism. (Conference held in 1975).

Reading materials posted on blackboard.
WEEK 11

TH  November 12th

VII. TRANSLATION: THE CASE OF ALEJANDRA PIZANRIK [ARGENTINA]

What is an author’s archive? Why is it relevant? What are the distinctive roles of editors and translators?

READ:


* Pizarnik’s writings through her papers held at Princeton University since 2002. A creative process between languages: reading, writing, self-translating, and transcreating.

Reading materials including a selection of Pizarnik’s French poems (with an English translation) available on blackboard.

* In-class translation discussions and exercises.
WEEK 12

TH November 19th

VIII. CREATIVE WRITING

* In-class creative writing: reading, writing, self-translating, and transcreating.

A selection of a wide variety of reading materials (e.g., Chile, Mexico, Puerto Rico, etc.) posted on blackboard.

WEEK 13 [No class]

THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEKS 14

TH December 3rd

IX. BRAZILIAN PROSE POETRY [BRAZIL]

What is prose poetry? What does it share with poetry? Where did it originate?

* Água Viva by Clarice Lispector; originally published in 1973.

Book posted on blackboard. (Reading of the introduction by Benjamin Moser is optional).

Short story posted on blackboard.

* During this session, we will also watch an Interview with the author (with English subtitles) conducted in 1977. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1zwGLBpULs
WEEK 15

TH December 10th

X. TWO LATIN AMERICAN WRITERS IN THE U.S. [PUERTO RICO & DOMINICAN REPUBLIC]


* Various poetry and prose readings to be announced.

Reading materials will be posted on blackboard.

WEEK 16

TH December 17th [Reading period]

Students’ final reading.

DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

- CLASS QUESTIONNAIRE: October 29th
- MID-TERM: October 29th
- FINAL READING: December 17th
- FINAL PROJECT: December 20th
Note: Should class participation decrease during the semester, sporadic in-class quizzes will be given during the semester.

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.