21:350:308: Q1 Foundations of Literary Study

Instructor, Dr. Laura Lomas
Tuesday and Thursdays, 10-11:20 am
Office Hours, Hill 519: TTh 1:30-2:30 pm and by appointment (zoom, phone are possible)
Phone: (973) 353-5203
Email: llomas@newark.rutgers.edu

In Lak’ech
Tú eres mi otro yo / You are my other me
Si te hago daño a ti, / If I do harm to you,
Me hago daño a mi mismo / I do harm to myself.
Si te amo y respeto, / If I love and respect you,
Me amo y respeto yo / I love and respect myself

—Mayan precept quoted by poet Luís Valdez, from a poem banned from public schools in Arizona in 2015

"Students are the present-future."
--Curtis Acosta quoted in Roque Planas, "Arizona Education Officials Say it is Illegal to Recite this Poem in School." The Huffington Post (01/13/2015)

Course Description:
Literature ignites the imagination, enabling the reader to see and feel with intensity from inside another "I," or point of view. An ancient art and classical discipline, the forms, genres and study of which extend across centuries, literature remains a pillar of the humanities and of any liberal arts education. Criticism involves the cultivating of criteria for the exercise of judgment (κριτικός (kritikós, “of or for judging, able to discern”), from κρίνω (krínō, “I judge”). Careful study of literary texts equips students in asking and answering aesthetic and ethical questions, and in forming and making arguments based on discernment or close reading. Whereas creative writing involves creating literary texts, the study of literature engages students in reading and writing about them, as part of a long history of readers, interpreters and thinkers, from many places. How we read and think depends on where we sit, or what we can see or understand. In this class we read literature from several centuries and from a wider than US framework to catalyze a critical self-understanding of our historical moment and respective cultural locations.

This required course for English majors and minors provides a firm foundation in the terms, concepts, and practice of literary criticism and analysis. Reading includes representative texts from the major genres (drama, prose fiction, poetry, along with mechanically reproduced/visual forms including film and graphic narrative) and introduces students to a range of critical approaches. Writing assignments introduce students to the methods of literary research, including developing bibliography and weighing critical scholarship, and the use of library research tools. This writing-intensive course will deepen students' mastery of the art of reading and writing about literature. Students write two short essays, one wikipedia contribution (approximately 800 words, via a process we will learn together through an online training and with support from wikiedu.org), and a multi-stage final essay. Students will contribute ten short (100-to-150-word minimum) comments on our discussion board each week.
Course Goals and Objectives:
- To understand how to analyze literary texts and representations from a range of genres, media, time periods and cultural contexts
- To understand key concepts, genres and histories relevant to the study of literary and cultural expression
- To gain experience and confidence in academic writing, including the creation of effective thesis statements, the incorporation and citation of textual evidence, knowledge of appropriate organization, format, tone and style.
- To share your knowledge of literature in objective, readable format in a wikipedia entry.
- To practice close reading and critical analysis of literary texts in formal and informal, written and oral formats
- To gain experience with interdisciplinary methods that encourage students to make connections between the text and what is happening outside the classroom
- To imagine a more beautiful and just world

Required texts:


All other readings are available digitally. I expect you to print out the day's readings and bring them to class with you, as having the text at hand for immediate reference, citation and annotation greatly improves your ability to assimilate the text and engage deeply in class discussion.

Course Requirements and Grading:

• Class participation: (10%) 

Good participation requires reading assigned texts and being prepared to discuss, argue and raise questions. Active, informed participation and engagement will enrich your experience and that of everyone in the course. Try out new ideas, new words, new theories. You need not be certain of the "right" answer before you speak up. In fact, you may bring to light a new interpretation, that neither the author nor the existing critical scholarship has acknowledged. You will not be able to make this important contribution unless you show up and unleash your voice. Do not let the vociferous have the last word.

• Discussion Board Posts (20%) 

Each week students will write a short post (approximately 150 words) in response to the reading, class discussion or as answers to questions posed by the Instructor in class or on Canvas. These
Posts may also raise new questions, respond to others' posts about the material. You may post these before class and no later than Saturday 11:59 pm, at the end of the week. Of our fourteen weeks of class, you need to post ten responses (each will be worth 2 points). If you post more often, they will count as extra credit. Certain responses are required as indicated in the syllabus.

• **Oral Presentation (10%)**: Your assignment is to read a piece of literary criticism and make connections between the criticism and the assigned reading for that day. Topics for reports appear as "archival" or "criticism" on the syllabus (e.g. Sundquist, Hartman, Wasserman or a piece you want to bring into our discussion). Sign up sheet will be distributed 1/19.(For your presentation you should paraphrase the thesis of your essay or artifact and give your opinion of it. End with a few questions to generate class discussion and relate it to the assigned reading. Plan to present for 5 minutes and co-lead class discussion for 10 min. You will receive feedback from the instructor and classmates, which you can incorporate into a 250-word written version of your presentation, to be posted on line) (5 pts for oral presentation, 5 points per write up).

• **One Wikipedia Contribution (20%)** related to any topic covered in our course. Your contribution should include at least three printed sources. In groups of two, this assignment involves attending a training on line and generating an encyclopedia entry (or a portion of an entry) that may be read by millions. Students are encouraged to use university librarians and the instructor when locating sources to cite in your entry.

• **Final Paper---10 pages minimum (20%**: abstract and bibliography 5, peer review 5, first draft 5, final draft 15). Peer reviewed, final version due on the last day of class. No work will be accepted after that date. You must cite at least 3 peer-reviewed secondary sources which you should locate on the MLA international database.

• **Short Writing Assignments (10 x 2 = 20%)**

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

Jan. 17 Rethinking Origins:

- Phillis Wheatley "On being brought from Africa to America" (1768)

Jan 19, 24, Reimagining the Classics


- Presentation sign-up distributed

Extra Credit Opportunities: January 25: Lecture by Barbara Ransby 2:30-4 pm and Lecture by Rutgers English alum, Fremio Joseph Sepulveda Ortiz, February 1, 2:30-4
Make an entry on canvas about these talks (worth 2 points).

Jan 26, 31 Reimagining the Classics (continued)

Luis Alfaro, *Mojada*. (ALL STUDENTS SHALL ACT OUT A SCENE)
Criticism:

➢ ESSAY 1 DUE Feb 7 (10 pts)

Feb 2, 7: Rewriting the Canon
Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

• Archival context: Ovid, Isaiah XXIX, Michel de Montaigne, "Of the Cannibals" (excerpt), 85-86, 91-92, 107-109
• Criticism: George Lamming, "A Monster, A Child, a Slave"
• Criticism: Peter Hulme, "Prospero and Caliban" 233-249
• Criticism: Peter Greenaway, "Prospero's Books," 325-331

Feb 9, 14: Rewriting the Canon (continued)


• Archival: Casal, Lourdes. "Rereading: Calibán"
• Recommended: Wynter, Sylvia, "Beyond Miranda's Meanings" from Carolyn Boyce Davies and Elaine Fido, eds. *Out of the Kumbla*
• Archival: M. Nourbese Phillip, "How I Became a Spy" from Carolyn Boyce Davies and Elaine Fido, eds. *Out of the Kumbla*
• Archival: Suniti Namjoshi," Snapshots of Caliban," 342-343
• Archival: Lemuel Johnson, "Calypso for Caliban," 343-346

Feb 16, 21,23, Rereading the Archive
Melville, Herman. *Benito Cereno* (1855) (read 25 pages per meeting)

• Criticism: Eric Sundquist, "'Benito Cereno' and New World Slavery." *Reconstructing American Literary History*. (pdf)
• Criticism: Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts" (2008)

February 28, March 2, The Black (Woman) Artist and the Racial Mountain
Adrienne Kennedy, "Ohio State Murders" (montage of Audra McDonald playing in first Broadway Production of Kennedy's work).


March 7: Meet in Dana Library, first floor, with Natalie Borisovets

March 9: Complete wikipedia entry training in pairs and create a collaborative work plan with your partner during this class period.

- Essay 2 Due March 9 (on Kennedy, Hughes, Melville, Shakespeare or Cesaire)

SPRING BREAK March 14-16

March 21, 23, Transforming Form

- Entry on Basho: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/basho
- Masaoka Shiki, trans. Abby Ryder-Huth "Haiku on Falling #24240" https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/157098/8-haiku-on-falling
- Hisaye Yamamoto, Seventeen Syllables: "Seventeen Syllables"
- Frank Lima, "Haiku" from Incidents of Travel in Poetry (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2015)
- Etheridge Knight, "Haiku" from The Essential Etheridge Knight
- Sonya Sánchez, "Haiku and Tanka for Harriet Tubman"

March 28, Counternarratives, Quilombos

- John Keene, Counternarratives. New Directions".
- Archival: Isaac Julien's film, Looking for Langston
- Criticism: Antonio Bispo dos Santos, “We Belong To The Land.” Translated To English By C. Zigoni. AGITATE! Blog. Available online


April 4, Transculturated Origins

- Mario de Andrade poems, Macunaima, trans. by Katrina Dodson (New Directions 2023)

NO CLASS MEETING ON APRIL 6: Option: Attend Latinx Literary Theory and Criticism Conference at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City at discounted rate of $10.
April 11, 13, Class meets on 19 April, free period for guest lecture).

- Mario de Andrade poems, *Macunaima*, trans. by Katrina Dodson (New Directions 2023)(continued)
- Ciro Guerra, *Embrace of the Serpent*. We will discuss on April 13, so watch film before that.

**April 18:** NO CLASS MEETING as a GROUP, but use this time to schedule a meeting with the instructor. All students should meet individually with the Instructor to discuss your final essay and wikipedia assignments: Abstracts and bibliography DUE. Bring the abstract printed out to your meeting in addition to submitting it online.

**April 19, 2:30-4:** Prof. Gustavo Fortes Said, Universidade Federal de Piauí

**April 20-25:** Marjan Satrapi, *Persepolis*.

First Draft of Essay DUE

**April-27:** Class presentations on your wikipedia entry and the thesis of your final paper. Peer Review DUE

Final Draft of Final Essay DUE May 4
Pristine, revised version should be stapled on top of Earlier Draft (to your Peer Reviewer's Comments on it) Due in my Office. THESE SHOULD ALL BE SUBMITTED TOGETHER, which may mean you have to print out the comments provided to you by your peer reviewer

**Elaboration on Course Requirements:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
<th>A: 93+</th>
<th>A-: 90-92</th>
<th>B+: 87-89</th>
<th>B: 83-86</th>
<th>B-: 80-82</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C+: 76-79</td>
<td>C: 70-76</td>
<td>D: 60-69</td>
<td>F: 59-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing:** I will suggest topics for essays. All students should meet with me in person, on zoom or by phone to discuss your topic before beginning to write. All papers should include:

Use a HEADING with the following elements in the left-hand corner:

<your name>
<date>
<my name>
<course name>
<Assignment #>

<a captivating title for your essay, centered at the top of the page>
All essays are due at the time of in-class writing or at the beginning of class on the day indicated on the syllabus. Late papers will be marked down half a grade (i.e. 2 pts) for each day the paper is late. It will be impossible for you to pass the class unless you complete all course requirements. Do not miss class in order to finish a paper. If you miss class the day that a paper is due, your paper will automatically be marked late. Students who wish to receive the final essay grade and comments in the mail after classes end must submit a self-addressed-stamped envelope along with the essay on the due date.

**Peer Review:** All students must turn in a hard copy of your final essay to the instructor on April 25. I will redistribute it to your Peer Reviewer in class. All students will write and comment on another student’s paper, and return the comments to the student author on April 27, in time for them to complete revisions and submit the final essay to the instructor on May 4. Turn in the final revised version stapled on top of the draft with your writing partner’s comments. Your peer review grade reflects your care and thoughtfulness in commenting on your writing partner’s paper and writing a paragraph in which you make suggestions for revision.

**Oral Presentations on a critical essay, a related literary artifact (such as an interview), film or archival document (10%):** A brief, 5-7 minute presentation (not read from a sheet) in which one student presents on an essay of criticism on the syllabus, or excavates and analyzes an artifact from the archives. Your task is to define the argument and its relevance to the primary texts under discussion on that day. If you are working with an archival document, your task is to explain the meaning and significance of the archival matter. Many historical documents including films are available digitally.

**Extra Credit:** For extra credit students may memorize assigned poetry or enact a dramatic scene with other students; you may complete additional entries for canvas discussion; attend on-campus lectures and earn up to 6 pts of extra credit (2 points per activity).  

**Attendance:** Everyone has to miss class for a compelling reason (illness, personal or family emergency, religious holiday observance) once in while. You do not need a note. After three absences I will send you a note. After four absences your total points will go down by 5 points for each additional day that you miss. Three late arrivals or early departures (of more than ten minutes) together will constitute an unexcused absence.

**Conferences:** In addition to meetings as needed, all students are required to meet with me or Esperanza in person, by zoom or by phone or in the office, to discuss the final essay or project. I will circulate a sign up sheet. We will use this meeting to discuss the thesis of your final essay, your critical sources and any questions about the reading. When you arrange to meet with one of us, bring all assignments and papers that I have returned to you. Be sure to cancel by phone and email if you will not be able to make your appointment.
**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism refers to work written by others (including computers) that you do not cite as such. I expect you to hand in original work only. Use AI to help you write a better paper (i.e. check for grammar or spelling), but do not turn in AI authored work. I will be using Turn-it-in to review for plagiarism for all assignments completed at home. Plagiarism in any form is one of the most serious offenses that a student can commit at Rutgers, mostly because it means you are undermining your own opportunity to learn to write and think. It will result in a failing grade and could lead to more serious charges such as dismissal from the University. If you have further questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me.

**Contacting the Instructor:**
I welcome your comments about the course and material. The best way to contact me is via email at llomas@rutgers.edu. Monday through Friday, I will respond within 24 hours (weekdays only). Messages from the over the weekend will receive a reply on Monday. You may also meet with myself our our TA during our respective office hours. It is always best to confirm that you are coming by via email. I am also available for meetings via zoom by appointment.

**Netiquette:** Please maintain a professional, civil demeanor when posting online. Even when expressing your difference of opinion, you can do so with respect. Treat others as you would like to be treated.

**Accessibility:**
I am committed to creating an inclusive course by design. If you encounter barriers, please let me know immediately so we can work to create a solution, as long as it does not compromise learning or the assignment goals.

If you have or think you may have a disability, please contact the RUN Office of Disability Services: https://studentaffairs.newark.rutgers.edu/health-wellness/disability-services, ODS@newark.rutgers.edu. Paul Robeson Campus Center, Room 219

---

Advice to students when they find themselves with writer's block, from Don Miguel de Cervantes:

Many times I took up my pen to write [the prologue, the paper, etc.], and many times I put it down, not knowing what to say. And once when I was in this quandary, with the paper before me, my pen in my ear, my elbow on the desk and my hand on my cheek, thinking what to write, a lively and very intelligent friend of mine came in unexpectedly and, seeing me so deep in thought, asked me the reason....You have only to see that your sentences shall come out plain, in expressive, sober and well-ordered language, harmonious and gay, expressing your purpose to the best of your ability, and setting out your ideas without intricacies and obscurities. Be careful too that the reading of your story makes the melancholy laugh and the merry laugh louder; that the simpleton is not confused; that the intelligent admire your invention, the serious do not despise it, nor the prudent withhold their praise.