

English 660
Latina/o Literature and U.S. Environmental Thinking
Fall 2013

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Office Hours: Monday, 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Friday, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
By appointment

Course Description:

Environmental studies has historically explored relationships between culture and the environment with the goal of creating an earth-centered scholarly vision. With the writing of Henry David Thoreau and Rachel Carson as touchstones, however, the U.S. environmental movement has often put ideologies of American exceptionalism to work for the movement's political goals of wilderness conservation, species protection, and land restoration. Moreover, certain strains of environmental thought have emphasized first-world, privileged perspectives over those of people of color, the poor, and the formerly colonized. This course will attempt to map parallel and countervailing traditions of environmental thought in contemporary Latina/o literature that question stylized pastoral visions of agriculture and speak powerfully to environmental justice frameworks. We will pay particular attention to the complex meanings of ecology, environmentalism, place, and agriculture in Latina/o literature.

Required Texts

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La frontera*
Sesshu Foster, *Atomik Aztex*
Salvador Plascencia, *The People of Paper*
John Rechy, *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez*
Hector Tobar, *The Tattooed Soldier*
Luis Alberto Urrea, *The Devil's Highway*
Helena Maria Viramontes, *Under the Feet of Jesus*
All other readings available on Blackboard

Requirements

1. Paper: There is one seminar paper required in this course. It will be a 15-20 page research paper due at the end of the term.
2. Presentation: One presentation on which you will base and lead the day's discussion.
3. A weekly one- to two-page response paper due at the beginning of each class. Each response paper should briefly summarize the author's argument and identify at least one generative contribution for the piece. Please note that **you should not use this paper as an opportunity to criticize** authors or their positions. Instead, use it to summarize and demonstrate how you understand the argument, perhaps placing the piece in relation to other work in the seminar.

Timeline

This syllabus is primarily a reading guide. As such, it may be subject to revision.

<u>Week 1</u>	<u>Ready by This Date:</u>
Friday 10/4	Introduction, Ramachandra Guha, from <i>Varieties of Environmentalism</i> , Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, from <i>Racism Without Racists: Colorblind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America</i> , Robert T. Hayashi. "Beyond Walden Pond: Asian American Literature and the Limits of Ecocriticism."
<u>Week 2</u>	
Friday 10/11	Rob Nixon, from <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i> , Laura Pulido, from <i>Environmentalism and Economic Justice: Two Chicano Struggles in the Southwest</i> , Mary Pat Brady from <i>Extinct Lands, Temporal Geography</i>
<u>Week 3</u>	
Friday 10/18	Gloria Anzaldúa, <i>Borderlands/La frontera</i> , Priscilla Solis Ybarra, "Borderlands as Bioregion"
<u>Week 4</u>	
Friday 10/25	John Rechy, <i>The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez</i> , Raul Homero Villa from <i>Barrio Logos</i>
<u>Week 5</u>	
Friday 11/1	Helena María Viramontes, <i>Under the Feet of Jesus</i> , Sarah Wald "Visible Farmers/Invisible Workers: Locating Immigrant Labor in Food Studies"
<u>Week 6</u>	
Friday 11/8	Luís Alberto Urrea, <i>The Devil's Highway</i> , Sarah Jaquette Ray, from <i>The Ecological Other: Environmental Exclusion in American Culture</i>
<u>Week 7</u>	
Friday 11/15	Héctor Tobar, <i>The Tattooed Soldier</i> , Ignacio López-Calvo, from <i>Latino Los Angeles in Film and Fiction: The Cultural Production of Social Anxiety</i>
<u>Week 8</u>	
Friday 11/22	Sesshu Foster <i>Atomik Aztex</i>
<u>Week 9</u>	
Friday 11/29	No Class--Thanksgiving Holiday
<u>Week 10</u>	
Friday 12/6	Salvador Plascencia, <i>The People of Paper</i> , Ramón Saldívar "Historical Fantasy, Speculative Realism, and Posttrace Aesthetics in Contemporary American Fiction"