

English 243 Introduction to Latina/o Literature Fall 2014

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Class time: M, W, F 9:00 - 9:50 am, 360 Condon
Office Hours:
Mondays, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm or by appointment

Course Description:

Latina/os have lived and worked in what is now the United States for at least 400 years. During our time here, Chicana/os and Latina/os have produced a number of literary texts and critical works designed to document our experiences as racialized subjects. In this course we will read a variety of literary and critical texts that seek to answer the following questions: Who are Chicana/os (Mexican Americans) and Latina/os (people with historical and cultural roots in Latin America)? What does it mean to be a Latina/o in the United States? What are the differences between Chicana/os and Latina/os? What are the similarities? What historical trajectories shape(d) our lives? How do Chicana/os and Latina/os continue to evolve and change as groups in the U.S.?

Course Goals:

1. Introduce the history, scope, and major critical trends in Latina/o literature and culture from the 1960s to the present.
2. Consider some of the ways in which Latina/o literature imagines questions of race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship.
3. Develop student understanding of the social construction of race, gender, sexuality, and class in literary and popular culture texts
4. Deepen student understanding of the complexity of Latina/o culture and experience in the United States.

Learning Outcomes

(Students will be able to...)

1. Provide working definitions of the terms Latina/o, Chicana/o, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality.
2. Comparatively analyze how Latina/os imagine resistance to race, gender, sexual, and class marginalization in novels, essays, films, and plays and to communicate these interpretations verbally and in prose formats.
3. Develop close reading and textual analysis skills.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the social construction of race, gender, sexuality, and class.

Required Texts

All texts available at the U of O Bookstore, unless otherwise noted

Muñoz, Manuel, *Zigzagger*

Murray, Yxta Maya, *Locas*

Quiñones, Ernesto, *Bodega Dreams*

Tobar, Héctor, *The Tattooed Soldier*

Valdez, Luís, *Zoot Suit and Other Plays*

Viramontes, Helena María, *Under the Feet of Jesus*

Other readings available on Blackboard

Requirements

1. **Read, Read, Read!** My main requirement is that you read. The reading for this course is both engaging and intensive. However, falling behind in the reading will spoil the endings and put you at a disadvantage during class discussions. If I feel that people are falling behind in the reading, I reserve the right to give reading quizzes. I would prefer to spend our time in class discussing these interesting and provocative texts. However, I will not hesitate to give reading quizzes.
2. **Papers:** Roughly every two weeks (see timetable below for specific due dates) you will turn in a two-page critical summary paper. This paper is a space for you to demonstrate that you have read, how you understand the reading, and how it might engage a with the larger questions we have taken up in our discussions. I will provide more detailed instructions at the beginning of week two. Your main goal in these papers is to provide a polished summary of the readings that demonstrates an understanding of the argument(s) an author presents. Please note that it is NOT your task to criticize the author(s). Instead, we will strive to understand each author on his/her terms.

In addition to the critical reflection papers, you will turn in a 3-5 page Final Paper due on Friday, November 28 at 5:00 pm via SafeAssign on Blackboard. Your task in the paper will be to provide an analysis and close reading of a topic related to the course in one or more of the texts. As a part of the drafting process, you will develop your paper by developing and turning in a paper proposal, two rough drafts, and a final version of your paper. Please note that while all of these benchmark assignments are “graded,” only your grade for the final draft will be recorded. In other words, you will have the opportunity to improve your grade if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your drafts.

3. **Two Exams:** One Midterm and one Final. The final will take place on Thursday, December 11 at 10:15 am.
4. **Discussion Questions:** All students will sign up for **two** discussion questions. Students will introduce each discussion question with a 3-5 minute presentation. While it should be brief, you should be prepared for a formal presentation. This means that you should be ready to get up in front of the class to explain your ideas and provide supporting cues for our discussion. While your participation grade is not solely dependent on a discussion question, you cannot receive full credit for participation if you do not present a question. If you are not in attendance to present your discussion question, you will not receive credit. All discussion questions **MUST** be posted to the discussion forum on Blackboard 24 hours **prior** to the next class meeting. Please plan your reading accordingly

Those NOT presenting on a given day are responsible for reading the discussion question prior to our class meeting. Please make sure to check the discussion question forum on Blackboard before you come to class.

Grading

Mid-Term: 25 percent

Final: 25 percent

Critical Summary Papers: 15 percent

Final Paper: 25 percent

Participation: 10 percent

Policies

- **Attendance and Participation are mandatory:** You may not miss more than two class meetings without a documented excuse. Absences may be excused in the case of illness, serious injury, or another emergency. Absences for missing the bus, oversleeping, or other preventable matters will not be excused.

- **Participation includes oral participation**, participating in group work, completing in-class assignments, coming to class prepared (and on time), AND presenting your discussion question. In order to receive full credit for participation, you should be prepared to speak at each class meeting. Participation also means that you will ALWAYS bring the text(s) with which we are currently working, always bring necessary writing materials, always bring your questions about the reading, and always bring a respectful and positive attitude.
- Tardiness: It is imperative that you get to class on time. I will also respect this aspect of our time. We all have tight schedules. Please respect me, your classmates, and most of all yourself by getting to class on time. If you are coming from someplace that consistently prevents you from arriving on time, please let me know ASAP so that we can make an arrangement.
- Paper Policies:
 - All written work must be typed, stapled, and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides.
 - Fonts should be 12 points.
 - All written work must include your name, the course, the instructor's name, and the name of the assignment in the upper left corner.
 - Page counts are vital. Final Papers shorter than **three full pages** will not be graded. Likewise, papers **longer than six pages** will be marked down 1/2 letter grade for each page that exceeds the limit. If you are having trouble with these limits, please see me ASAP so that we can work together on developing your paper.
 - Handwritten work will not be accepted.
 - Make sure to number your pages.
 - Please document citations using the MLA format. You can get the MLA style guidelines online at <http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/Library/workshop/citmla.htm> or you can check the reference desk at the library.
- You are responsible for keeping a backup copy of all of your work. Backups may take the form of computer copies, hard copies, cloud copies or some combination. In any event, make sure that you have a readily accessible copy of ALL of your work. Your computer crashing is not a valid excuse for missing an assignment. Additionally, there are a number of computing resources available on campus. If you have a problem with your home computer, or if you don't have access to a computer at home, please let me know so I can direct you to on-campus resources.
- **Please turn your off your cell phone.**
- **No laptops, tablets, smart phones, or other electronic devices will be allowed.** The only exception to this rule will be in the case of a documented accommodation.
- Bring the assigned text to class.
- How to address me: Please feel free to call me Professor Vázquez or Dr. Vázquez. Calling me by my first name is not acceptable. I don't care for Mr. Vázquez. My preference is for Professor Vázquez.

About Making Life Easier for Each Other

This course is not designed to be competitive. In fact, a competitive atmosphere will work against the activities of the class. Many of the activities are interactive, and each individual deserves the full cooperation of everyone else. **The one rule that is sacred in this classroom is to respect everyone**—each other, me, and the authors. Disagreements will happen and ideas will be challenged, but they must be controlled and expressed *academically*—which means in a civil, well-considered, and intelligent manner. Please note that we WILL be discussing the political ramifications of these texts. These may include discussions that may at first *seem* unrelated to the material at hand. My hope is that you will begin to understand that NO text emerges in a political or aesthetic vacuum. In fact, as we will soon see, these texts have important political and social implications for our everyday lives. For this reason, please bring an open mind and a patient attitude. It is much easier to learn from each other, about each other, and about ourselves when we are listening.

Timeline

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

<u>Week 1: Introduction/History</u>	<u>Ready by This Date:</u>
Monday 9/29	Introduction
Wednesday 10/1	Juan González, from <i>Harvest of Empire</i> (Blackboard)
Friday 10/3	George Lipsitz, from <i>The Possessive Investment in Whiteness</i> (Blackboard)
<u>Week 2: Race and Pan-Ethnic Identity</u>	
Monday 10/6	Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, from <i>Racism Without Racists: Colorblind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States</i> (Blackboard)
Wednesday 10/8	Marta Caminero-Santangelo, from <i>On Latinidad</i> (Blackboard)
Friday 10/10	Arlene Dávila, from <i>Latinos, Inc.</i> (Blackboard) Critical Summary 1 due
<u>Week 3: Urban Novel: New York</u>	
Monday 10/13	Ernesto Quiñones, <i>Bodega Dreams</i> pp. 1-117
Wednesday 10/15	<i>Bodega Dreams</i> pp. 118-157
Friday 10/17	<i>Bodega Dreams</i> pp 158-end
<u>Week 4: Urban Novel: Los Angeles</u>	
Monday 10/20	Yxta Maya Murray, <i>Locas</i> pp. 1-120
Wednesday 10/22	<i>Locas</i> pp. 121-198
Friday 10/24	<i>Locas</i> pp. 198-end Critical Summary 2 due
<u>Week 5: Mestizaje/Midterm</u>	
Monday 10/27	Gloria Anzaldúa from <i>Borderlands/La frontera</i>
Wednesday 10/29	Anzaldúa from <i>Borderlands</i>
Friday 10/31	Midterm
<u>Week 6: Teatro Campesino</u>	
Monday 11/3	Luís Valdez, <i>Zoot Suit</i> in <i>Zoot Suit and Other Plays</i> Final Paper Proposal due
Wednesday 11/5	Film screening: <i>Zoot Suit</i> (1981)
Friday 11/7	No class, study day. Critical Summary 3 due
<u>Week 7: Farmworkers and Environmental Justice</u>	
Monday 11/10	Helena María Viramontes, <i>Under the Feet of Jesus</i> pp. 1-90
Wednesday 11/12	<i>Under the Feet of Jesus</i> pp. 91-130
Friday 11/14	<i>Under the Feet of Jesus</i> pp. 131-end Rough Draft 1 of Final Paper due
<u>Week 8: Suppressed Histories</u>	
Monday 11/17	Héctor Tobar, <i>The Tattooed Soldier</i> pp. 1-120
Wednesday 11/19	<i>The Tattooed Soldier</i> pp. 120-184
Friday 11/21	<i>The Tattooed Soldier</i> pp. 185-239, Rough Draft 2 of Final Paper due
<u>Week 9: Suppressed Histories (cont.)</u>	
Monday 11/24	<i>The Tattooed Soldier</i> pp. 140-end
Wednesday 11/26	Paper Workshop
Friday 11/28	No class, Thanksgiving Holiday Submit Final Paper to SafeAssign on Blackboard by 5:00 pm

<u>Week 10: Queer Chicánidad</u>	
Monday 12/1	Manuel Muñoz, from <i>Zigzagger</i> : “Zigzagger,” “The Unimportant Lila Parr”
Wednesday 12/3	<i>Zigzagger</i> “Good as Yesterday” and “Everything the White Boy Told You”
Friday 12/5	<i>Zigzagger</i> , “Monkey <i>Sí</i> ,” Critical Summary 4 due