

# ENG 243: Intro to Latinx Literature

CRN 32041 | Spring 2021 | MWF 8:00-8:50am

Instructor: Megan Reynolds

Office Hours: Wednesday 10:30-1:30 and by appointment. Please use this Google Doc to sign up for appointments:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15PQaQvHgeWQoSEJEem1oROJ2qFvjVr1lOOP5F5yE sxI/edit#gid=0>

Office Location and Phone: PLC 241 but Remote for Spring 2021, 541-346-0531

Email: [mreynol2@uoregon.edu](mailto:mreynol2@uoregon.edu) (**This is the best way to reach me.** I check it regularly throughout the day but please be aware that emails sent at 2:00am, 5:00am, or other times when most people are asleep will not get a prompt response. I also encourage you to make sure you send emails with specific questions about assignments **at least 12 hours before the assignment is due**; otherwise this question will most likely go unanswered and we will both be stressed out).

- **Please do not use Canvas messaging/email.** I don't get those notifications so your email will probably go unanswered (and I want to answer your questions!).

## Course Description

This introductory course explores the forms, cultural resonances, aesthetics, and political exigency of Latinx literatures in the United States. From the Chicano Civil Rights Movement to current debates on citizenship, this course examines how Latinx literature from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries addresses what it means to be "Latinx." Through our examinations of short stories, novels, poetry, and other media, we will develop an understanding of the field of Latinx literature, including key themes of: Latinx literature's engagements with labor, race, and gender; its reflections on socio-political developments; and its dialogues about identity. Students will complete creative and analytic writing assignments and projects that engage with various course topics.

## Required Course Material

- *Under the Feet of Jesus* by Helena Maria Viramontes
- *The Tattooed Soldier* by Héctor Tobar
- *The Girl from H.O.P.P.E.R.S* by Jaime Hernandez

All items available through the Duck Store and other online retailers (if you can please consider checking local bookstores!)

All other readings will be available as PDFs on Canvas.

## Bring required materials to class.

**Content Warning:** The texts we will be working with in this course will include explicitly or implicitly violent and traumatic themes. This leads us to an important question:

## Why do we read difficult texts?

This is a question I bear in mind (and want you to as well) throughout this class. Reading in general allows us to experience other stories, ones that move us beyond our own realm of familiarity. As the famous George R.R. Martin wrote in a little known series called *Game of Thrones*, "a reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only one." Reading is important. We

know that. But why is reading violent and difficult texts important? The texts I've chosen push us to consider the marginalized lives of those often over-looked or considered disposable. Reading these texts shines a very needed light on these often "invisible" subjects. If you find you are struggling or want to discuss some of these themes further with me, I strongly encourage you to make an office hours appointment. The work we do here is important. But it's hard.

### **Discourse Community**

Our class represents our discourse community. Each member in our community will work together throughout the year. We respect every member of this community and strive to challenge each other productively. Our inquiry will never deny anyone from any walk of life the right to exist. Such inquiry is neither productive nor respectful and therefore does not meet our discourse community standards. Any such members who create a negative learning environment for our discourse community will be asked to leave and will not be invited back for the remainder of that class period. If asked to leave, this resultant absence will count towards that student's participation grade.

I will never tolerate the use of slurs or other hateful speech. If you are asking for clarification or explanation of a term in the text, please indicate that you are quoting the text and indicate the word you mean by say the first letter then "word". For example, the "n-word." Words have power; let's be careful how we wield it.

### **Course Assignments and Breakdown**

#### Participation: 15%

As this class is concerned with written and oral communication, your participation in class is essential to your success. I expect you to come to class having completed the reading for that day and prepared to discuss the material. While part of your participation depends on your contributions to class discussions, I also expect you to be ethical and generous listens and responders to your peers. To get full participation points for the day, your camera must be on for 80-90% of the class period. Class periods in which your computer is not on for this amount of time will result in grade deductions.

Given our circumstances during this ongoing pandemic, you will have assigned roles for each class period. You must do each role once per week. Please use the Google Sheet to sign up (included below). These roles include:

- The Questioners (Questioners post 3-4 questions they had about the texts to the class Google Doc no later than when class begins. Questioners will also use these questions to help structure our class discussions. At the end of class, Questioners will highlight any questions we didn't get to)
- The Responders (Responders will respond to the Questioners questions as we get to them.)
- The Note Takers (Note Takers will be responsible for tracking and transcribing the class discussions on our class Google Doc.)
- [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1\\_DJaSbhr6Y\\_0EY\\_Qwsm1vxuyLtMs1d664-JY-0Vjvr8/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_DJaSbhr6Y_0EY_Qwsm1vxuyLtMs1d664-JY-0Vjvr8/edit?usp=sharing)

#### Attendance: 15%

Attendance is crucial for not only enriching your own thinking about our topic but also that

of your fellow classmates. More than one week (three absences) will result in the lowering of your final course grade by one grade step (from a B to a B-, for example) per absence **regardless of the cause**. It will therefore be your responsibility to budget your absences in case of illness. Class will start promptly. If you arrive after class begins you will be recorded as late. Tardiness disrupts valuable class time. I consider four late appearances equivalent to one complete absence and it will count towards your two allotted absences. If you arrive more than fifteen minutes late or otherwise miss more than fifteen minutes of class time, you will be marked as absent. When you are late you must check in with me at the end of that same class session to make sure you have been noted as in attendance. If you miss a class or are late, it is **your responsibility to check in with classmates and/or myself to learn the highlights of the class session you have missed**.

Close Reading Papers: 20%

Over the course of the term you will write two Close Reading papers – one in the first five weeks and one in the second five weeks. These papers are 3-4 pages long (meaning at least one line of your original writing makes it to the first line of the 4<sup>th</sup> page). I will provide you will 3 passage options, of which you will choose one to write about using the skills we've practiced in class. These papers do not need to be argumentative, but you will need to offer some suggestions about the significance of the formal features you analyze. More details will be provided during class.

Midterm: Reading Analysis: 20%

At the end of week five you will turn in a Reading Analysis Paper. This paper is 4-5 pages (meaning at least one sentence of your original writing makes it to the first line of the 5<sup>th</sup> page). This is not a plot summary and it will not include any outside sources. You need to ground your analysis and response in specific examples from the text (so you need to quote the text directly!). More details will be provided during class.

Final Exam: 30%

We will have a final exam during our scheduled exam time. This exam will consist of short and long answer questions related to course content, including not only the literary information we covered but also any relevant social, historical, and political movements that impacted and shaped Latinx literature.

**Grading Scale**

94-100%	A	84-86%	B	74-76%	C	64-66%	D
90-93%	A-	80-83%	B-	70-73%	C-	60-63%	D-
87-89%	B+	77-79%	C+	67-69%	D +	<60%	F

**Course Policies**

Academic Honesty:

**All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course.** The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be

properly documented. Failure to properly cite any information used in assignments will result in a **failure in the course**.

### Late Work:

I do not accept late work because feedback on assignments is designed to help you with future assignments. Assignments are due on the date and time listed on the syllabus and on Canvas. I will deduct 1/3 of a letter grade for each day as assignment is late. This means that an assignment that would've earned a B that is turned in a day after the deadline would now be a B-. I will not accept work after three days. You may request an extension, but you must ask 24-hours in advance.

\*However, I will accept one late assignment per term; use this option wisely. Should you choose to hand an assignment in late you must inform me by the due date. "On time" means submitted, with the correct document, on Canvas by the start of class on the due date. If you have not informed me about using this late policy for your own allotted assignment, it will be counted as a late assignment with point deductions.

### Formatting Guidelines for Written Work:

All written work should be typed and double-spaced, using 12- point Times New Roman font and 1" margins. Use MLA format for quoting and citing sources. Failure to format and cite sources may significantly lower the assignment or essay grade.

Please see the "Format and Documentation" handout for complete instructions. Failure to follow any formatting guidelines will be reflected in your grade for the assignment by at least one grade step (from a B to a B-, for example).

### Access:

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).

## Schedule of Events

Link to class Google Doc:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vmIAp-m1-Aub-0OzDIz1K01IXzY-mNtjdAQstYhof28/edit?usp=sharing>

### *Week One*

#### *What is Latinx?*

Monday March 29<sup>th</sup>: Introductions, first-day survey, and syllabus overview

**To Do Before Next Class Meeting: Sign up for class roles (Google doc included here and in our module for week 1)**

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1 DJaSbhr6Y 0EY Qwsm1vxuyLtMs1d6 64-JY-0Vjvr8/edit?usp=sharing>

Wednesday March 31<sup>st</sup>: Reading Due – “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness” (Lipsitz) (Canvas)

Friday April 1<sup>st</sup>: Reading Due – Selection from *On Latinidad: U.S. Latino Literature and the Construction of Ethnicity* (Caminero-Santangelo) (Canvas)

Week Two

Mexican American Literature

Monday April 5<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – *Under the Feet of Jesus* (up to chapter 3)

Wednesday April 7<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – *Under the Feet of Jesus* (up to chapter 4)

Friday April 9<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – *Under the Feet of Jesus* (finish)

Week Three

Undoing Expectations

Monday April 12<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – Selections from *Latinx Literature Unbound* (Rodriquez) (Canvas)

Wednesday April 14<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – Selections from *Border Fictions* (Sadowski-Smith) (Canvas)

Friday April 16<sup>th</sup>: **Close Reading Paper 1 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm**

Finish Undoing Expectations Discussions

Week Four

Comics

Monday April 19<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – *The Girl from H.O.P.P.E.R.S* (TBD)

Wednesday April 21<sup>st</sup>: Reading Due – *The Girl from H.O.P.P.E.R.S* (TBD)

Friday April 23<sup>rd</sup>: Reading Due – *The Girl from H.O.P.P.E.R.S* (TBD)

Week Five

Feminisms

Monday April 26<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – Selections from *This Bridge Called My Back* (Canvas)

Wednesday April 28<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – Selected poems by Lorna Dee Cervantes (Canvas)  
Selected poems by Julia de Burgos (Canvas)

Friday April 30<sup>th</sup>: **Midterm Reading Analysis Paper Due on Canvas by 11:59pm**

Finish Feminisms Discussions

Week Six

Guatemalan American Literature

Monday May 3<sup>rd</sup>: Reading Due – *The Tattooed Soldier* (Part One)

Wednesday May 5<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – *The Tattooed Soldier* (Part Two)  
¡Feliz Cinco de Mayo!

Friday May 7<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – *The Tattooed Soldier* (Up to chapter 15)

Week Seven

Monday May 10<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – *The Tattooed Soldier* (finish)

Wednesday May 12<sup>th</sup>: Finish discussion of *The Tattooed Soldier*

Friday May 14<sup>th</sup>: **Close Reading Paper 2 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm**  
Finish *The Tattooed Soldier* Discussion

Week Eight

Afro-Latinidades

Monday May 17<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – Entry for “Afro-Latinas/os” by Tanya Kateri Hernández (you can find this through the library. Need to be logged in to your UO account to have access)

Material Due – Listen to “The Afro-Latinx Experience Is Essential To Our International Reckoning On Race”

(<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/02/886568058/the-afro-latinx-experience-black-lives-matter#:~:text=The%20Afro%20Latinx%20Experience%20Is%20Essential%20To%20Our%20International%20Reckoning%20On%20Race,-Listen%20B7%2044%3A53&text=via%20Getty%20Images-.In%20Tijuana%2C%20raised%20fists%20show%20solidarity,the%20Black%20Lives%20Matter%20movement.&text=%22There%20are%20Black%20Latinos%2C%20there,talking%20about%2C%22%20Laurent%20adds>)

Wednesday May 19<sup>th</sup>: Material Due - “Afro-Latina” by Elizabeth Acevedo  
(<https://youtu.be/tPx8cSGW4k8>)

Friday May 21<sup>st</sup>: Reading Due – “Dear White Girls in My Spanish Class” (Brown)  
(<https://www.acentosreview.com/august2019/dear-white-girls-in-my.html>)  
“How to be a Negro Without Really Trying” (Thomas) (Canvas)

Week Nine

Latinx and Genre

Monday May 24<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – “Especially Heinous” (Machado) (Canvas)

Wednesday May 26<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – “Inventory” (Machado) (Canvas)

Friday May 28<sup>th</sup>: Reading Due – “Real Women Have Bodies” (Machado) (Canvas)

Selections from *Real Women Have Curves* (Videos on Canvas)

Week Ten

Final Questions and Review

Monday May 31<sup>st</sup>: The Future of Latinx Studies

Wednesday June 2<sup>nd</sup>: Review for Final Exam

Friday June 4<sup>th</sup>: Extra Office Hours

Finals Week

**Final Exam**

Final exam will be available on Canvas and will take place during our scheduled final exam time as determined by the university. I will let you know when that is as soon as I do.