

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are meeting on the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, the ancestral name for what now is called North America. Further, we acknowledge we are meeting on the land of the Alabama-Coushatta, Caddo, Carrizo/Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, Tonkawa and Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, and the thousands of American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas.

E343E Latinx Short Story

Instructor: Sierra Mendez

Unique #: 35665

Semester: Spring 2023

Cross-lists: MAS 314, 40240; WGS 340.90, 45645

Flags: Cultural Diversity in the U.S.

Restrictions: None

Prerequisites. Nine semester hours of coursework in English or rhetoric and writing.

Description. Those who are called, or call themselves, Latinx comprise myriad communities with distinctive histories, languages, genealogies, political and social concerns, cultures, and lifeways. This course, then, is an exploration of Latinx short story as a significant site for conversations about Latinidad identity, memory, and plurality and for acknowledgement of underrepresented, excluded, and erased experiences within colonial Western paradigms. Short stories from Latinidad allow us to discuss cultural and personal hybridity in multiply-shaped borderlands, amongst subaltern(ed) communities, and allows us to address historical and ongoing coloniality. As we move through our selected stories, we will ask: Who are Latinx? What is Latinidad made of? What does it mean to self-name, to self-identify or disidentify? What does the identification “Latinx” do to or for experiences, histories, identities, and resistance? Methodologically, this course will engage intersectionalities of race, gender, class, and sexuality within Latinx communities to answer these questions while being attentive to Indigenous and Afro-Latino peoples who resist the category Latinx.

Cultural Diversity in the United States. This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. The purpose of the Cultural Diversity in the United States Flag is for students to explore in depth the shared practices and beliefs of one or more underrepresented cultural groups subject to persistent marginalization. In addition to learning about these diverse groups in relation to their specific contexts, students should engage in an active process of critical reflection. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one underrepresented cultural group in the U.S.

Course Objectives. To be determined by students.

Required books:

Tales from La Vida: A Latinx Comics Anthology by Frederick Luis Aldama (Ohio State University Press, 2018).

Barefoot Dogs: Stories by Antonio Ruiz-Camacho (Scribner, 2016)

Woman Hollering Creek by Sandra Cisneros (RH, 1992)

We will also read from:

Keywords for Latina/o Studies by Deborah R. Vargas, Nancy R. Mirabel, and Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes (New York University Press, 2017)

Wild Tongues Can't Be Tamed by Saracicia J. Fennell (2021)

The Oxford Book of Latin American Short Stories by Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria (1997)

No One Writes to the Colonial and Other Stories by Gabriel García Márquez (2005)

Los Cuentos de Eva Luna by Isabel Allende (Athenium 1991)

Requirements and Grading.

This course will make use of a labor contract grading system adapted to UT's requirements. A Labor Contract sets out specific, baseline expectations for participation and criteria for coursework. Meeting the criteria for each assignment will guarantee students a "Complete" for that assignment. Students seeking a higher grade will be expected to "do more" than what is stipulated in the contract. This form of grading is designed to acknowledge and respect student labor, meaning your work and effort is rewarded even if your product is not "perfect." Criteria will be explained in detail prior to each assignment.

Bi-Weekly Reading/Discussion Posts (15%)

Students will complete five of these during the semester. Conversation will require critical analysis and reflection over key texts. They will have a choice whether to participate in discussion in person or asynchronously via Canvas.

Bi-Weekly Author Quizzes (15%)

Students will complete five of these during the semester. Each quiz will have approximately three questions that address author biography and socio-historical context.

Thematic Short Essay #1 with peer review (25%)

For this assignment, students will be asked to craft an extraordinarily polished 500-word essay in which they will perform textual analysis of a particular theme across two texts. Papers must be peer reviewed. Papers can be revised for an A.

Thematic Short Essay #2 with peer review (25%)

For this assignment, students will be asked to craft an extraordinarily polished 500-word essay in which they will perform textual analysis of a particular theme across two texts. Papers must be peer reviewed. Papers can be revised for an A.

Project Latinidad Final (20%)

For their final, students will be asked to produce a creative project (a short story, comic, film, or photo series) that explores or tells a story about a particular experience of Latinidad.

Schedule

Please note this schedule *is subject to change*. I believe in responsive classrooms that adjust to student needs and interests. What follows is currently a tentative guide for the semester, but due dates and readings might shift as the course progresses. I promise you will receive timely notifications from me of changes as they occur.

WEEK 1

M 1/9: Syllabus Day

W 1/11: Christopher Columbus' Letter of Discovery: The Americas, Colonialism, and Latinidad

F 1/13: Reading/Discussion Post #1: Colonized/ing Selves with "Empire" by Lázaro Lima (pg 55-58 of *Keywords from Latina/o Studies*)

WEEK 2

M 1/16: NO CLASS

W 1/18: Introduction to Short Story as Literary Genre

F 1/20: Reading/Discussion Post #2: "The Short Story" by Isabel Allende; The Oxford Book of Latin American Short Stories *Introduction*

WEEK 3

M 1/23 Selections from *No One Writes to the Colonel* by Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia, "The Contemporary Period")

W 1/25 Selections from Márquez (Colombia, "The Contemporary Period")

F 1/27 Author Quiz #1 Márquez

WEEK 4

M 1/30 Selections from Borges (Argentina, "The Contemporary Period")

W 2/01 Miguel Ángel Asturias, "Weekend in Guatemala" (Guatemala, "The Contemporary Period")

F 2/03 Reading/Discussion Post #3: Borges/Asturias Reflection

WEEK 5

M 2/06 Selections from Isabel Allende, *The Stories of Eva Luna* (Chile)

W 2/08 Selections from Isabel Allende, *The Stories of Eva Luna* (Chile)

F 2/10 Author Quiz #2 Allende

WEEK 6

M 2/13 Writing day

W 2/15 Peer review

F 2/17 Short Essay #1 due

WEEK 7

M 2/20 *Woman Hollering Creek* by Sandra Cisneros (Texas & Mexico)

W 2/22 *Woman Hollering Creek* by Sandra Cisneros (Texas & Mexico)

F 2/24 Author Quiz #3

WEEK 9

M 2/27 *Barefoot Dogs* by Antonio Ruiz-Camacho

W 3/1 *Barefoot Dogs* by Antonio Ruiz-Camacho

F 3/3 Author Quiz #4

WEEK 10

M 3/06 Selections from *Wild Tongues Can't Be Tamed*

W 3/08 Selections from *Wild Tongues Can't Be Tamed*

F 3/10 NO HOMEWORK; ENJOY YOUR BREAK

SPRING BREAK

March 13-18

WEEK 11

M 3/20 Writing day

W 3/22 Peer review

F 3/24 Short Essay #2 Due

WEEK 12

M 3/27 *Tales from La Vida*

W 3/29 *Tales from La Vida*

F 3/31 Reading Post #5

WEEK 13

M 4/03 Juan Rolfo, Photographer Storyteller

W 4/05 Graciela Iturbide, Photographer Storyteller

F 4/07 Reading Post #6

WEEK 14

M 4/10 "La fiesta del chivo" (English subtitles). Based on a novel by the same title by Mario Vargas Llosa

W 4/12 "El muerto" (English subtitles). Based on a short story by the same title by Borges.

F 4/14 Author Quiz #5

WEEK 15

M 4/17 Project work week

W 4/19 Project work week

F 4/21 Project work week

WEEK 16

M 4/24 Last day of class

Any and all revisions due

FINAL PROJECT DUE

Friday, April 28

Class Policies (alphabetical order)

Accessibility. Your success in this class is important to me. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and course requirements.

I am committed to making all course materials as accessible as possible, and to working with students if any of these materials are inaccessible. We will all need some accommodations in this class, because we all learn differently. If you need specific accommodations, let me know. Any conversations we have about accommodations are confidential. I am happy to take extra steps to ensure accessibility for all students.

Attendance Policy. This is a MWF class. While attendance is not part of your grade, excessive absences will lead to failure. **If you miss more than 6 classes, you will automatically fail the course.** Please note that completing asynchronous Friday activities counts as your attendance for those days.

If you find that an unavoidable problem prevents you from attending class, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible, preferably ahead of time, to let them know.

- **Absences due to illness.** If you are ill, please do not come to class. Instead, communicate with your instructor as soon as possible. The instructor will provide an assignment that you can do to make up this absence. If you do not complete this assignment, your absence will count toward your total number of possible absences.
- **Absences due to University-organized or sponsored events.** If you are a student involved in a University-organized or sponsored event requiring you to travel, please present your instructor with an official list of possible travel days at the start of the semester. Your instructor may consider excusing up to 5 absences when such absences are related to University-organized or sponsored events. For each agreed-upon absence, the instructor will provide an assignment for you to complete to “make up” the absence. If you do not complete the assignment by the agreed-upon deadline, your absence will count toward your total number of possible absences.
- **Excused absences.** You will not be penalized for missing class on religious holy days. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor, in writing, at least one week before the absence, so that alternative arrangements can be made to complete work. If you know you will have to miss class(es) for this reason, provide your instructor with the date(s) as early as possible. Please note that the University specifies very few other excused absences (e.g., jury duty).

When you must miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments from a classmate. The instructor may, but is not obligated to, provide alternative arrangements such as attendance over Zoom or recordings of class sessions.

Re. Tardiness: There will be no penalty if you're a few minutes late once or twice during the semester. However, if you are consistently late, I will begin to count your tardies. Every three tardies at that point will equal an absence.

Inclusive Community Guidelines. Be respectful of your colleagues. There is zero tolerance for slurs or derogatory language. In general, don't discriminate based on race, gender presentation, marital status, religion, disability, age, or sexual orientation. Everyone in our class has the right to be addressed in accordance with their personal identity. The university provides me with a class roster containing each student's legal name and sex marker. I will gladly address you by the name and gender pronoun with which you identify. Please let me know your name and pronouns early in the semester, so your peers and I can address you appropriately.

If you find a reading or assignment triggering in any way, or suspect that you will be triggered, please contact me as soon as possible. I am happy to speak with you about the content of the material in advance and/or provide you with an alternative assignment. If you are troubled by or feel unsafe in any class discussion, please speak with me as soon as possible so that we can work to resolve the immediate problem and prevent future issues.

Late and Missed Work. *For Major Assignments:* Every student in this class is automatically granted ONE two-day extension for ONE major assignment. However, you must email me ahead of time and let me know you are using your allotted extension. This is intended to help you as you juggle courses and personal lives this semester. Please use your extension wisely. Beyond your single allotted extension, I will accept major assignments for TWO DAYS after the due date. A letter grade will be dropped for every day it is late. You do not need to email me if you are submitting late work, because Canvas tracks your submission time. If assignments are turned in more than three days late, they will be considered missing. Detailed guidelines and grading explanations will be given for each major assignment.

For Minor Assignments: You may miss ONE Reading/Discussion Post without penalty. Again, this is intended to help you manage your courses and lives. Please use your allotted misses wisely. *I will accept posts and quizzes one day late for one point off.* If assignments are turned in more than three days late, they will be considered missing.

Safe Space Policy and Discussion Guidelines. This class will always strive to be a safe space for learning and development; that is, a space where we can develop and refine the knowledge and skills necessary for culturally competent practice. Learning requires stretching beyond comfort zones, and yet feeling safe is a prerequisite for a good learning environment. As we all bring diverse experiences to our shared classroom, here are some general guidelines to help create the environment we want.

1. Make a commitment to understand unfamiliar positions from the perspective of text speakers/audience and also your peers.
2. Speak for yourself rather than for a group or by making universal statements; i.e. use "I"
3. Be present. Listen to your colleagues in this classroom. Be mindful of their power as speakers. Learn each other's names.
4. Never mock or belittle another person for their perspective. That is not what we are here to do. We are here to listen and figure out how to reach across divides, not create more.

