

Fall 2013  
Dr. Ramón Guerra  
Office: ASH 189E  
rguerra@unomaha.edu

English 2490 (section 001)  
Latino/a Literature  
10:00-11:15 T & R, Roskens Hall 304

*“Introduction to Latino/a Literature”*

#### TEXTS REQUIRED

*The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature*, ed. Ilan Stavans. 2011.

\*Please bring all assigned readings to class with you on the day they are assigned.

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The literature in this course will focus on Latino/a literature and the forms, traditions, and issues unique to this literature. As an approach to a small survey of Latino/a literature this course will explore important aspects of the works through a mostly historical approach but will draw from other components including: folklore, memory, social issues, and identity development. We will read fiction, non-fiction, poetry, testimonio and explore song lyrics of folk songs as well. We will also look at some critical pieces, some historical writing, and a few other readings that are non-fiction and instructional. This course has been designed to help to teach more about Latino/a culture and its representation in and through literature. It will explore Latino/a literature and culture and how they are important to determine identity and conflict in the world, particularly in a contemporary world that simultaneously is embracing and rejecting the “differences” in cultures. The course will also examine the ways in which Latino/a narratives have often been left out of history and that literature and art from marginalized minorities is one way to help resurrect these “absent histories.” It will be an introduction to contemporary literature by Latinos/as in the United States, and provide an overview of Mexican American, Chicano/a, and other Latino/a voices in American literature from early colonization to the present.

In the end, I hope and expect that you will learn a variety of things about Latino/a literature, culture, and history as well as some valuable approaches to addressing some specific, important themes both in discussions and in writing. This class should be exciting, interesting, and always open to discussion—all students should feel welcome and not afraid to raise honest questions or comments in our conversation.

#### COURSE STRUCTURE

The format that the class sessions will take will vary throughout the semester. **The majority of the atmosphere will be based on “all-class conversation.”** In this way, everyone should feel responsible for contributing to the subject matter of the class. We will also do small group work or work in pairs to create smaller areas of discussion before addressing specific topics as an entire class. There will also be some lectures, sharing of your writing, and question and answer sessions.

#### CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Reading: You should come to class prepared to talk about the readings that are listed on that day on the schedule at the back of this syllabus. Read actively—begin to formulate questions or discussion topics as you read. Write them down, underline or highlight them. Part of your responsibility is to come *prepared* to engage in our

conversation. **There will be several moments throughout the course where I will instruct a student or students to come prepared to start the class discussion for the next period.**

Critical Briefs: You will have 2 Critical Briefs of 4-5 pages each due throughout various points of the semester. We will discuss the projects individually when starting each new text. For now, the projects should be thought of as “Critical” analysis and should fulfill more requirements than a simple review, evaluation, or response that simply asks for your *feelings* about the reading. You should take a stand on some issue of importance in the reading and be prepared to cite specific examples from the text in support. Use your notes from class as well as any notes you keep while doing the reading as a point of development for these projects—something not necessarily “controversial” but something that gets beyond pointing out a difference or a comparison. Your project should go beyond that and into the area that examines *why* that difference or comparison is significant, etc. The projects are designed to help us learn to read actively and pose meaningful questions about what we have read, leading to more in depth discussion and examination of important topics.

\*\*Each submitted written assignment will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Times New Roman, 12-point font
2. One inch margins on all sides (the default is often 1.25, so be sure to change this)
3. Pages numbered in the top right corner (no number on the first page)
4. Double spaced (except for the heading, this should be single spaced)
5. Heading on the left should include: Name, Date, Course, Professor’s name
6. Title in the center (not underlined, *nor* in quotation marks, *nor* italicized)
7. MLA style in-text parenthetical citation (see *MLA Handbook*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition)
8. Strict observance of page requirements (e.g. “3-5 pages” means that the minimum is 3 *full* pages of typing)

\*\*Papers will be due at the beginning of class on the day listed on the schedule. Late papers will be penalized a half-letter grade per day.

Exams: You will have 2 Exams this semester, each worth 20% of your overall grade. Each Exam will cover one half of the course; *the Final Exam will NOT be comprehensive*. I will discuss each Exam as we approach them; we will also have time in class for review questions. The Exams will be essay based and contain questions that will ask about multiple authors, stories, themes, etc. You will need to bring an Exam Blue Book and a blue or black pen on the day of each exam.

Participation: This class should feel like an open exchange of students’ ideas and suggestions. I expect that you will each be an actively involved member of the small community that our class and small groups will represent. This means being prepared for all aspects of class including discussion of readings, small group work, and all other class activities. This class will depend on your participation; to earn your participation grade you should expect to do more than simply show up for class. Participation represents 20% of your final grade; if you are curious as to your contributions, please feel free to ask me about anything. **I will also give quizzes from time to time to encourage the daily reading.**

GRADING BREAKDOWN			
Critical Brief #1	20%	Critical Brief #2	20%
Midterm Exam	20%	Final Exam	20%
Attendance and Participation	20%		

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## CLASS POLICIES

**Attendance:** This class depends on the participation and involvement of students—***part of your workload for the class can only be done in the classroom*** (and in no way “made up;” therefore your attendance is vital to the success of our group. You should strive to come to this class every day. If you are not here you cannot contribute or receive guidance in the current discussion. Each absence AFTER TWO will result in the final grade being lowered a half letter. **If there are extenuating circumstances surrounding your absence(s), please visit with me as soon as possible—do not wait until it is time for me to determine grades.**

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated—it will result in automatic failure of the course and could lead to more serious consequences at the university. Don’t do it. I expect you will maintain an honored responsibility to yourself and others by turning in and taking credit for work that is your own original work written specifically for this class and nothing else.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements.

**Personal Portable Technology Policy:** Unless you have young children or are emergency personnel, ALL cell phones & pagers, etc., must be turned off when you enter the class. Use of laptops, sound and video recorders, etc., is strictly prohibited without clearance from the instructor.

*I do not plan on it but should it be necessary, I reserve the right to alter the syllabus and/or the course schedule at any time.*

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## **Class Schedule**

(All items and assignments are listed on the day that you should have them ready. For instance, on Thursday, August 29 you should come to class having read the “Preface” and “Introduction.”)

### **Tuesday 8/27**

Syllabus review and introductions. Overview of the course themes and goals.

### **Thursday 8/29**

Read: “Preface” (liii-lix) and “Introduction: The Search for Wholeness” (lxiii-lxxi) in *The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* (xi-xx)

**Due:** Letter to me (1 page) explaining why you’ve been drawn to this particular class, what you hope to get out of it, and what your past experience is with Latino/a literature.

**COLONIZATION****Tuesday 9/3**

Read: "Colonization: 1537-1810" (1-11) and Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca from *Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition* (20-37)

**Thursday 9/5**

Read: Juan de Castellanos "Revolt of the Borinqueños" (57-60) and Sebastián Vizcaíno from *Diary of Sebastián Vizcaíno* (70-76)

**Tuesday 9/10**

Read: Juan Bautista de Anza from *Diary of Governor de Anza's Expedition against the Comanche Nation, August 15-September 10, 1779* (147-58)

**ANNEXATIONS****Thursday 9/12**

Read: "Annexations: 1811-1898" (159-71) and Eulalia Pérez from "An Old Woman Remembers" (178-85)

**Tuesday 9/17**

Read: José Maria Heredia "Ode to Niagara" (203-205); "Frontier Memories" (206-08); and Juan Nepumuceno Seguín from *Personal Memoirs of John N. Seguín, 1834-42* (208-09)

**Thursday 9/19**

Read: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton *The Squatter and the Don* (235-48)

**Tuesday 9/24**

José Martí "Coney Island," "Love in the City," "Two Homelands," and "Our America" (265-73, 281-89)

**Thursday 9/26**

Read: Francisco Gonzalo "Pachín" Marín "New York from Within: One Aspect of Its Bohemian Life," (317-20) and Eusebio Chacon "The Calm After the Storm" (333-49)

**ACCULTURATIONS****Tuesday 10/1**

Read: "Acculturation: 1899-1945" (359-69) and Leonor Villegas de Magnón "The Rebel" (379-89)

**Thursday 10/3**

Read: William Carlos Williams "Libertad! Igualdad! Fraternidad!" "Apology," "Sub Terra," and "Chapter 4" from *Autobiography: "Pop and Mother"* (418-21, 425-28) and Bernardo Vega "Puerto Rican Migration to the United States" (429-30)

**Tuesday 10/8**

Read: Ernesto Galarza From *Barrio Boy* (530-51) and Luis Leal "In Search of Aztlán" (551-58)

**Thursday 10/10**

Read: Ramón Saldívar's "Race, Class, and Gender in the Southwest" on Blackboard  
**Review questions and discussion for Midterm Exam**

**Tuesday 10/15 MIDTERM EXAM (IN CLASS)****Thursday 10/17**

**Due:** Critical Brief #1

(Must be received in my office, ASH 189E by 2:00PM—*No exceptions!*)

**Tuesday 10/22 NO CLASS; FALL BREAK****UPHEAVAL****Thursday 10/24**

Read: "Upheaval: 1946-1979" (583-594) and Read: Américo Paredes *With His Pistol in his Hand* "Chapter 1" (603-621)

Begin Film: *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* (1982)

**Tuesday 10/29**

Finish Film: *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*

**Thursday 10/31 NO CLASS****Tuesday 11/5**

Read: José Antonio Villarreal *Pocho* (711-32) and Cesar Chavez "We Shall Overcome," "Jesus's Friendship," and "An Organizer's Tale" (760-74)

**Thursday 11/7**

Read: Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzáles "I am Joaquín" (787-799) and John Rechy *City of Night* (1023-38)

**Tuesday 11/12**

Read: Oscar "Zeta" Acosta *The Autobiography of Brown Buffalo*: "Chapter 6" (1039-1050) and Rudolfo Anaya From *Bless Me, Ultima* (1160-61, 1169-86)

**Thursday 11/14**

Read: Luis Valdez "Zoot Suit" (1244-1300) and scenes from film *Zoot Suit* (1981)

**INTO THE MAINSTREAM****Tuesday 11/19**

Read: "Into the Mainstream: 1980 to the Present" (1461-69) and Gloria Anzaldúa From *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1490-1507)

**Thursday 11/21**

Read: Richard Rodriguez From *Hunger for Memory* (1574-91)

**Tuesday 11/26**

Read: Esmeralda Santiago From *When I Was Puerto Rican* (1700-14) and Julia Alvarez From *How the García Girls Lost their Accent* (1738-47)

**Thursday 11/28**      **NO CLASS; THANKSGIVING**

**Tuesday 12/3**

Read: Cherrie Moraga *Giving up the Ghost* (1860-95); and Lorna Dee Cervantes "Refugee Ship" and "Beneath the Shadow of the Freeway" (2011-14)

**Thursday 12/5**

Read: Luis J. Rodríguez From *Always Running: La Vida Loca* (2047-61) and Guillermo Gómez-Peña "Documented/Undocumented" (2081-86)

**Tuesday 12/10**

Read: Cristina Garcia From *Dreaming in Cuban* (2233-50) and Junot Diaz "Ysrael" (2351-61)

**Thursday 12/12**

**Due:** Critical Brief #2 (In class submission)

Course wrap up, **Questions and Review for Final Exam**, Course evaluations

***Scheduled Final Exam is Tuesday, December 17 at 10:00 a.m.***