

English 4230/8236 (sections 001)
 Latino Literature
 2:30-3:45 p.m., T & R, Arts & Sciences Hall 390
 Instructor: Dr. Ramón Guerra
 Office Hours: 9:00-10:00 a.m., T & R and 2:00-2:30 p.m., T
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Spring 2014

“Latino Literature”

TEXTS REQUIRED

The Squatter and the Don (1885) by Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton
George Washington Gomez

(Américo Paredes wrote this novel in the 1930s and 1940s but it wasn't published until 1990)

And the earth did not devour him (1971) by Tomas Rivera
The Autobiography of Brown Buffalo (1972) by Oscar Zeta Acosta
The Rain God (1984) by Arturo Islas
Borderlands/La Frontera (1987) by Gloria Anzaldúa
So Far from God (1993) by Ana Castillo
Caramelo (2002) Sandra Cisneros

*Various articles posted on Blackboard

SUGGESTED TEXTS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL READING

Acuña, Rudolfo: *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*
 Aranda Jr., Jose: *When We Arrive: A New Literary History of Mexican America Extinct Lands*,
 Brady, Mary Pat: *Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space*
 Paredes, Américo: *Folklore and Culture on the Texas Mexican Border*
 Paz, Octavio: *The Labyrinth of Solitude*
 Saldívar, Ramón: *Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference*
 Torres, Eden: *Chicana without Apology*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will put Latino and Latina literature at the center of our developed space—both in the classroom and in our discussion. We 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 mostly fictional pieces beginning with the 1885 novel *The Squatter and the Don* and ending with *Caramelo*, which was just published in 2002. 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 you learn more about Latina/o culture and its representation in and through literature. To engage with this material you must be willing to allow for new ways of thinking about issues in the world and to recognize power, privilege and cultural perspectives. We will learn about Latina/o 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. Not only will we study these literary texts in comparison to one another but also in relation to their specific theme or contribution to the overall world of Latina/o literature.

In the end, I hope and expect that you will learn a variety of things about Latino cultures and history as well as some valuable approaches to addressing some specific, important themes about a resistance narrative 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

Please review the requirements and policies listed on this syllabus; you are responsible for all the information listed herein (chances are good that the answers to many of your future questions are addressed within this document).

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.**

Author Essays (Undergraduates ONLY): (4-5 pages) This short project should be thought of as “Critical” and “Exploratory” analysis of a one of the authors from our list (either required or supplemental). You are expected to do some research into the lives (biographical information) and the writing careers (production, contributions, criticism, etc.) of your selected author. Your essay should examine *more than* the biographical highlights of the author’s life but should review other writers’ and critics’ portrayals of their life and work as well as begin to develop your own perspective as to the significance of the writer’s life as it is connected to their work. Pose meaningful questions about what you find. You can (and might find it useful to) use these shorter essays to look forward to the longer researched essays. ***These essays will be due at the beginning of class on the first day of discussion of each author.*** You will have an opportunity to sign up for an author of your choosing during our second class session.

Short Essays (Graduates ONLY): (6-8 pages) This project should be thought of as “Critical” analysis of a significant theme, theory, or movement within the literature. You are expected to take a stand on some issue of importance in the literature and classroom discussions and be prepared to cite specific examples from the texts in support. Your essay should examine *more than* differences or comparisons and open questions about the *whys* of that difference or comparison is significant, etc. Begin to pose meaningful questions about what we’ve read, leading to more in depth discussion and examination of important topics; you can (and should) use these shorter essays to look forward to the longer researched essays. I recommend meeting with me to discuss selection of an issue, theory, question, etc. that you would like to investigate in this critical short essay. ***These essays will be due Thursday, March 20.***

Research Essays: (10-12 pages for Undergraduates; 15-20 pages for Graduates) This project is the primary component of the course and should engage the works on the list in a distinctly unique manner as well as incorporating a variety of cultural theory perspectives from within the course and in your research. This project should take shape throughout the semester and could take a variety of forms, from combining multiple texts to a focus on one or two of the authors, etc. You should have a clear method of analysis laid out in the project and credible, appropriate research components that add to your own approach. We will reference this longer essay throughout the semester and you will be given direction towards ideas and approaches beginning with the Suggested Readings list at the beginning of the syllabus. ******Research Essays Due***Friday, May 2 by 2:30pm***

Research Presentations (Graduate Students only):

15-20 minutes for Graduates: Students will make a presentation on their semester-long research project. Visual aids are required (handouts, pictures, power point slides, etc.). You should use the library’s various sources to find good, critical, peer reviewed essays: JSTOR, MLA Bibliography, WorldCAT, Project Muse, etc. The approach should be instructional as well as a representation of your final essay—not just a *reading of your essay*. You should envision the presentation as an opportunity to demonstrate to undergraduate

students the depth and process of research and you should integrate them into the presentation in some (Q&A, project handouts, small in-class assignment, etc.).

The final presentations for Graduate Students will be on Tuesday, April 29. All students will be in attendance on this day.

Blackboard Postings: Every Tuesday there will be 3 or 4 Blackboard postings from students meant to jumpstart the class discussion for that week. I will create a forum every week for the assigned students to post their contributions **by noon on the preceding Monday**, which should allow everyone else time to read them before the next day's class. Each posting should strive to be about the equivalent of two double spaced pages. You should critically analyze the reading for that section (as opposed to "summarize" or "review") and pose meaningful interpretations, connections and questions. Everyone else should fully read their peers' postings and come ready to discuss them in class. Each student will write one posting during the semester. The rest of the class should respond and react to other postings, on Blackboard or during class discussion.

There will be an opportunity to sign up for a date at the beginning of the second-class meeting.

****Undergraduates should choose a different author than the subject of their Author Essay for their Blackboard posting assignment.**

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 the final grade for Undergraduates; if you are curious as to your contributions, please feel free to ask me about anything.

GRADING BREAKDOWN			
<i>Undergraduates</i>		<i>Graduates</i>	
Blackboard Posting	15%	Blackboard Posting	10%
Participation	20%	Research Presentation	15%
Author Essay	30%	Short Essay	30%
Research Essay	35%	Research Essay	45%

CLASS POLICIES

****Attendance**:** **[Please review this policy carefully as to avoid any discrepancies later in the semester.]** 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: In this course, if you will submit written work in which you make use of information and ideas found in print or online sources, you must be aware of plagiarism. Whenever you use material from another writer, it is important that you quote or paraphrase appropriately and *cite the source*.

Never let it appear that ideas and information gleaned from other sources are your own. The UNO Academic Integrity policy defines plagiarism as "presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e. without proper acknowledgement of the source) and submitting...academic work in whole or in part as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person."

Failure to cite sources appropriately is plagiarism, a serious academic offense. Plagiarized work will not be accepted. Consequences for plagiarism are up to the discretion of the instructor; they may range, for example, from rewriting all or part of a paper to a grade of F for the course. Students who plagiarize more than once are subject to disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the university.

If you have a question about using or citing another writer's work, DO NOT GUESS. Check with your instructor or a consultant at the UNO Writing Center. Bring a printout of the original source and your paper to the consultation. For more information:

<http://www.unomaha.edu/aandsaffairs/tabs/student/aiundergrad.php>

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.

UNO Writing Center: The Writing Center is a tremendous resource for all UNO students and faculty. It is located in Arts & Sciences Hall 150 and is staffed by English Department faculty and graduate students. You may want to consider seeking an appointment for their help with any written assignment; they will carefully work with you to make revisions and help you craft your best work. This service is free to UNO students and faculty. For more information: <http://www.unomaha.edu/writingcenter/>

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

Course Schedule

Tuesday 1/14

Syllabus review and introductions. Overview of the course authors, themes, and goals. Discussion of history as a means of looking at Latino and Chicano Literature. Discussion of some common terms, labels, and beliefs. Film: "Latinos in Nebraska"

Thursday 1/16

Read: Read Saldívar's "Race, Class, and Gender in the Southwest" available under the Course Documents of our Blackboard site.

Discussion: "What is foundation of Mexican American or Chicano literature?" History, folklore—what do we know? Look at Saldívar's focus on the history of Mexico and the U.S. and its creation of a "resistant" form of art/literature, etc.

Due: A brief introduction (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 Chicano or Latino literature.

Sign up for Blackboard Posting Dates

Sign up for Author Essay assignments (undergraduates only)

Tuesday 1/21

Read: *The Squatter and the Don* 55-133

Student Blackboard Posts

Thursday 1/23

Read: *The Squatter and the Don* 134-204

Tuesday 1/28

Read: *The Squatter and the Don* 205-280

Student Blackboard Posts

Thursday 1/30

Read: *The Squatter and the Don* 280-336

Tuesday 2/4

Read: *George Washington Gomez* 9-93

Student Blackboard Posts**Thursday 2/6**

Read: *George Washington Gomez* 94-163

Student Blackboard Posts**Tuesday 2/11**

Read: *George Washington Gomez* 163-238

Student Blackboard Posts**Thursday 2/13**

Read: *George Washington Gomez* 239-302

Tuesday 2/18

Read: *And the earth did not devour him* 83-119

Student Blackboard Posts**Thursday 2/20**

Read: *And the earth did not devour him* 120-152

Tuesday 2/25

Read: *The Autobiography of Brown Buffalo* 5-83

Student Blackboard Posts**Thursday 2/27**

Read: *The Autobiography of Brown Buffalo* 84-141

Tuesday 3/4

NO CLASS; PROFESSOR'S PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Thursday 3/6

Read: *The Autobiography of Brown Buffalo* 143-204

Tuesday 3/11

Read: *The Rain God* 3-84

Student Blackboard Posts**Thursday 3/13**

Read: *The Rain God* 84-126

Tuesday 3/18

Read: *The Rain God* 126-180

Student Blackboard Posts**Thursday 3/20**

Due: Graduate Short Essays; NO CLASS

March 23-30

SPRING BREAK

Tuesday 4/1

Read: *Borderlands/La Frontera* 19-61

Student Blackboard Posts

Thursday 4/3

Read: *Borderlands/La Frontera* 62-113

Tuesday 4/8

Read: *So Far from God* 19-169

Thursday 4/10

Read: *So Far from God* 170-252

Tuesday 4/15

Read: *Caramelo* 3-110

Student Blackboard Posts**Thursday 4/17**

Read: *Caramelo* 111-221

Tuesday 4/22

Read: *Caramelo* 222-330

Student Blackboard Posts**Thursday 4/24**

Read: *Caramelo* 331-434

Tuesday 4/29

1. Course wrap-up and final discussion/questions about Research Essays
2. Course Evaluations
3. Graduate Student Research Presentations

Thursday 5/1 Research/Writing Release Day

*****Research Essays Due*****

Friday, May 2 by 2:30pm through Blackboard Assignment Tab