

DISCOVERING LATIN AMERICA: LITERATURE, CULTURE AND CINEMA

Course Code: PEL - 2019

Hours: 3hs

Language of Instruction: English

Instructor: Clara M. Albertengo, PhD

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Classes: Thursdays from 10am to 12:15pm

Room: TBA

Course Description:

This seminar aims to explore the identity of Latin America through its own literary production and cinema. Our point of departure would be the popular image of Latin America in permanent state of crisis. We will analyze how this extended condition has determined a resilient search for original survival strategies. We will take these artistic forms as the space of resistance against social, historical, economic, and cultural impositions. We will particularly study the literary and cultural tradition within Latin America and its main contributions to the self-exploration process. We will concentrate on issues such as the confrontation between nature/environment and man, tradition vs. change, the economic struggle and the social exclusion/inclusion, the urban movement and the realist portrait, the fantastic exploration and the power of the unconsciousness, the Latin American boom and the new directions, the strategies of humor and transgression, the female voice and its personal challenges, the modern city and its codes, and the continuous labyrinth of time and space.

In turn, we will discuss a selection of films that depict the diverse range of Latin American realities in connection with specific scenarios of crisis –the literary crisis (the fantastic representation, the magical realist answer, the neo-baroque turning point, the postmodern (dis)continuity, the political crisis (dictatorships, revolutions, wars, national mythologies, exile, censorship), the social/cultural crisis (identity quest, mainstream traditions, imperialism, language and origins, gender issues, hybridity, poverty, injustice, margins).

The course consists of the critical reading/watching and formal literary/visual analysis of the texts and films included. The main goal is to open an engaging dialogue among participants to better understand what we call Latin America, and also to learn to think critically when it comes to tradition, identity and self-discovery paths.

Course Objectives:

This seminar will offer the socio-historical and aesthetic context necessary to critically read/watch the Latin American literary texts and films. Also, students will be trained in the techniques and theories of textual/film analysis, as well as encouraged to elaborate personal opinions and comments. The ultimate goal will be to guide students through the learning process of how to read in depth and how to develop a broader and original thought/point of view.

Class Methodology:

This seminar will be conducted in English. All classes will have a theoretical and practical focus. We will discuss the stories, the movies and the topics assigned from a critical and analytical point of view. Different didactic strategies will be used –debates, questionnaires, study guides, games, lectures, discussions, creative workshops, screenings, etc. The approach will be student-centered, interactive and communicative.

Grading Criteria:

Attendance and Participation in Class	35%
Creative Project and Peer Review	15%
Oral Presentation and Leadership	20%
Final Exam (written)	30%

***The local grading system goes from 1 through 10 points. Being 10 the highest grade, and 1 the lowest. The passing grade is 4.

Requirements:

1. **Participation in Class:** Attendance doesn't mean participation. In order to get a participation-in-class grade, you need to **participate actively** in all class discussions.
2. **Preparation and Homework:** In order to participate, you need to read/reflect upon the assigned texts **before** coming to class.
3. **Material:** You need to have your reading material for each class and bring it to class. You are responsible for your own copies.
4. **Creative Project / "Elastic City":** It is your opportunity to be **a writer, a photographer, and/or a film director**, and a **critic**. The project consists of the application of the studied short story/narrative and film techniques, and the criticism/peer review of our own production. The "Elastic City" participatory walking tour involves a sensory-based experience of the city of Buenos Aires through which the individual intends to discover the surroundings (a specific hood) and tries to intervene in the daily life of its people. This first-hand and interactive city exchange should translate into a creative project – video production, photo narration, and/or short story. All projects will be presented at the Creative Workshop scheduled for the last day of classes. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE GRADED.**
5. **Oral Presentation and Leadership:** The oral presentation includes **a 10/15-minute introduction** on the socio-historical context and the corresponding aesthetic/literary movement; a brief biographical reference, and any relevant information about the text/writer presenting on. **Also**, the presenter would **lead the discussion** about the readings during the whole class following any methodology he/she might consider appropriate.
6. **Final Written Exam:** The final exam will be given on the second to last day of class in class, and it will include all topics covered/discussed throughout the semester. **NO LATE EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN.**

Assessment Criteria for Class Participation	Grade
You make important and original contributions that enrich the discussions, offering both critical and analytical comments that are based on the readings, your personal experience and research. You demonstrate enthusiasm and contribute to create a good learning atmosphere.	Outstanding - Excellent 10 - 9
You make contributions that show both perception and knowledge of all mandatory readings and independent research.	Very good 8
You participate voluntarily and make some contributions that are generally based on your personal thoughts and insights.	Good 7
You make only a few comments and often, don't refer back to the basic points of the assigned readings. You participate enthusiastically only at the beginning of the class, but you don't keep it up throughout the class.	Fair good 6
You make limited comments only when requested. You do not initiate any debate or show clear knowledge of the importance of the readings. You show little interest.	Fair 5
You rarely make comments, And you tend to not participate in the discussions. You attend class with little or no preparation at all.	Pass 4
You make irrelevant comments that disrupt the class discussion. Frequent absences. Late arrivals. You leave before the end of the class. Lack of preparation and interest. Behavioral problems. You pay more attention to your cellphone or laptop.	Failed 0 - 1 - 2 - 3

Late Arrivals: (after the first 10 minutes)

Being late to class is disruptive and disrespectful to the teacher and to the other students. All late arrivals will affect your participation-in-class grade.

IMPORTANT:

Any doubts regarding the grades must be resolved with the teacher before the end of the course.

UCA Attendance Requirements:

Class attendance is required (75%) and will be considered also as part of your participation-in-class grade. However, just showing up to class does not guarantee a passing grade. All students must also be prepared for the assigned activities for each day. In accordance with UCA requirements, PEL teachers record attendance at the beginning and at the end of each class. Each 16-week course can accumulate a maximum of 3 absences without justifiable cause. If the student has 4 absences, he/she automatically fails the course. In case of illness, it is necessary to present a medical certificate at DRICA'S office before the following class. Certificates will not be accepted in the last month of classes. If you have any questions, please contact the PEL coordinator.

IMPORTANT:

PEL exams will not be rescheduled and there are no make-up instances. Absence to a review session on the assigned calendar week implies a fail. Any emergency situation must be informed of and resolved with the PEL coordinator.

Bibliography:

BOOKS¹: (we will only read a selection of stories or some excerpts from these books.)

Aira, César. *The Hare*. London: Serpent's Tail, 1998.

Arlt, Roberto. *The Seven Madmen*. London: Serpent's Tail, 1998.

Borges, Jorge Luis. *Collected Fictions*. Trans. Andrew Hurley. New York: Penguin Books, 1998.

Cortázar, Julio. *Blow-Up and Other Stories*. Trans. Paul Blackburn. New York: Pantheon Books, 1967.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. (6th ed.) New York:

The Modern Language Association of America, 2003. (also online at www.mla.org, 7th ed., 2009).

Quiroga, Horacio. *The Decapitated Chicken and Other Stories*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004.

The Vintage Book of Latin American Stories. Eds. Carlos Fuentes and Julio Ortega. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.

Valenzuela, Luisa. *The Censors*. Connecticut: Princeton University Press, 1988.

¹Bookstores: KEL Ediciones S.A. – Marcelo T. de Alvear 1369 (and Libertad) – 4814-3788 + Books in English – Estados Unidos 600 (between Perú and Chacabuco Streets)

MOVIES:

Mandatory

Blow-up. Dir. Michelangelo Antonioni. Prod. Carlo Ponti. MGM/UA Home Video, 1991.

The Oxford Murders (Los crímenes de Oxford). Dir. Alex de la Iglesia, 2008.

City of God (Ciudad de Dios). Dir. Fernando Meirelles, 2002.

A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings (Un señor muy viejo con unas alas enormes). Dir. Fernando Birri. Screenplay by Fernando Birri in collaboration with G. García Márquez. Fox Lorber Home Video, 1991.

Before Night Falls (Antes que anochezca). Dir. Julian Schnabel. Screenplay by J. Schnabel and Cunningham O'Keefe. Jon Kilik/Grandview Pictures Production, 2000.

The Official Story (La historia oficial). Dir. Luis Puenzo. Screenplay by Aída Bortnik and Luis Puenzo, 1985.

Kamchatka. Dir. Marcelo Piñeyro, 2004.

Nine Queens (Nueve Reinas). Dir. Fabián Bielinsky, 2000.

The Secret in Their Eyes (El secreto de sus ojos). Dir. Juan José Campanella, 2009.

Recommended

“CUBA”

Strawberry and Chocolate (Fresa y chocolate). Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío. Screenplay by Senel Paz. Cuba-España-México Co-Production, 1993.

The Lost City (La ciudad perdida). Dir. Andy García. Screenplay by G. Cabrera Infante. Crescent Drive Pictures, 2005.

Honey for Oshun (Miel para Oshún). Dir. Humberto Solás. Screenplay by Sergio Benvenuto and Elia Solás. Cuba-España Co-Production, 2001.

I am Cuba (Soy Cuba). Dir. Mikhail Kalatozov. Screenplay by Yevgeni Yevtushenko and Enrique Pineda Barnet. Cuba-URSS Co-Production, 1964.

Soy Cuba, O Mamute Siberiano. Dir. Vicente Ferraz. Screenplay by Vicente Ferraz. Brasil, 2005.

The Motorcycle Diaries (Diarios de Motocicleta). Dir. Walter Salles, Jr. Screenplay by José Rivera. Universal Studios Home Video, 2004.

“COLOMBIA”

Eréndira. Dir. Ruy Guerra, 1983.

Love in the Time of Cholera (El amor en los tiempos del cólera). Dir. Mike Newell. Screenplay by

Ronald Harwood. New Line Cinema/Stone Village Pictures, 2007.

“MEXICO”

Like Water for Chocolate (Como agua para chocolate). Dir. Alfonso Arau. Screenplay by Laura Esquivel, 1992.

“CHILE”

Of Love and Shadows (De amor y de sombra). Dir. Betty Kaplan. Warner Home Video, 1994.

“ARGENTINA”

Made-Up Memories (Mentiras piadosas). Dir. Diego Sabanés. Screenplay by Diego Sabanés, 2007.

Wild Tales (Relatos Salvajes). Dir. Damián Sziffrón. 2014.

CALENDAR

Session	Topics	Class Readings
#1 - 14/03	UNIT 1: “SHORT STORY THEORIES AND TECHNIQUES” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Short Story in Latin America: Introduction / General Characteristics The Realist Approach: Horacio Quiroga The Fantastic Short Story: Julio Cortázar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horacio Quiroga. “The Decalogue of the Perfect Short-Story Writer” (online / copies) Julio Cortázar. “Axolotl” (<i>Blow-up and Other Stories</i>)



<p>#2 - 21/03</p>	<p>The Fantastic Short Story</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julio Cortázar. “Axolotl” / “Blow-up” (<i>Blow-up and Other Stories</i>)
<p>#3 - 28/03</p>	<p>The Fantastic Short Story and Its Literary Adaptation to the Screen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julio Cortázar. “Blow-up” (<i>Blow-up and Other Stories</i>) • Michelangelo Antonioni. Film: <i>Blow-up</i> – SCREENING
<p>#4 - 04/04</p>	<p>The Fantastic-Detective Short Story</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jorge Luis Borges. “Borges and I” / “The Secret Miracle” / “Death and the Compass” (<i>Collected Fictions</i>)
<p>#5 - 11/04</p>	<p>Mystery and the Labyrinth of Truth (I)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jorge Luis Borges. “Death and the Compass” (<i>Collected Fictions</i>)



<p>#6 - 18/04</p>	<p>HOLIDAY -- NO CLASSES</p>	<p>FIELDTRIP #1 + CREATIVE PROJECT “<i>Elastic City Walking Tour</i>” + Personal Production (video, photos, story)</p>
<p>#7 - 25/04</p>	<p>Mystery and the Labyrinth of Truth (II)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jorge Luis Borges. “Death and the Compass” (<i>Collected Fictions</i>) • Alex De la Iglesia. Film: <i>The Oxford Murders</i> – SCREENING
<p>#8 - 02/05</p>	<p>Magical Realism: Boundaries of Reality?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gabriel García Márquez. “The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World” (<i>The Vintage Book</i>) / “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” (copies) • Fernando Birri. Film: <i>A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings</i> - SCREENING



<p>#9 - 09/05</p>	<p><u>UNIT 2: “TRADITION AND HISTORY”</u></p> <p>Social and Urban Maps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juan Rulfo. “Luvina” (<i>The Vintage Book</i>) • Juan Villoro. “Coyote” (<i>The Vintage Book</i>) • José Donoso. “Ana María” (<i>The Vintage Book</i>) • Fernando Meirelles. Film: <i>City of God</i>- SCREENING
<p>#10 - 16/05</p>	<p>Cultural and Political Dreams of Change (Cuba)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virgilio Piñera. “The One Who Came to Save Me” (<i>The Vintage Book</i> /online) • Antonio Benítez Rojo. “The Scissors” (<i>The Vintage Book</i>) • Julian Schnabel. Film: <i>Before Night Falls</i> – SCREENING



<p>#11 - 23/05</p>	<p>The Dictatorship in Argentina</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luisa Valenzuela. “The Best Shod” / “The Censors” / “The Place of its Quietude” (<i>The Censors</i>) • Luis Puenzo. Film: <i>The Official Story</i> OR Marcelo Piñeyro. Film: <i>Kamchatka</i> – SCREENING
<p>#12 - 30/05</p>	<p>City Violence and Modern Worlds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roberto Arlt. <i>The Seven Madmen</i> (excerpts/copies) • Fabián Bielinsky. Film: <i>Nine Queens</i> – SCREENING
<p>#13 - 06/06</p>	<p>Identity Search and Postmodernism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • César Aira. <i>The Hare</i> – chapters 1-7 (copies) • Juan José Campanella. Film: <i>The Secret in Their Eyes</i> – SCREENING
<p>#14 - 13/06</p>	<p>Final Written Exam</p>	<p>Classes #1 through #13</p>



#15 - 20/06	HOLIDAY -- NO CLASSES	FIELDTRIP #2 + CREATIVE PROJECT <i>“Elastic City Walking Tour”</i> + Personal Production (video, photos, story)
#16 - 27/06	CREATIVE WORKSHOP <i>“Elastic City”</i> (Individual Presentations) + Conclusions / Final Remarks	