

Chc/Lat

Special Topics 129

F/04

105

**Latino Literature
English 105**

Professor Rodrigo Lazo
Fall 2004, MWF 2 –2:50 a.m.
Office: HIB 412
Office Hours: Wed 11-12, Fri 12-1 p.m. and by Appt.
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Required Texts:

Alvarez, Julia. *The Other Side / El Otro Lado*
García, Cristina. *The Agüero Sisters*
Goldman, Francisco. *The Ordinary Seaman*
Rivera, Tomás. *...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*
Rodriguez, Richard. *Brown*

Readings on Electronic Reserves
Film: *Real Women Have Curves*

Course Description:

The course title "Latino Literature" raises several questions. Does it refer to literary pieces by Latinos, writing about Latinos, or literature that encompasses a set of themes? What makes something "Latino," a word that has been debated since it became widely used in the 1980s? What tensions emerge when we consider the experiences and conditions of a specific community (for example, Chicano literary traditions) in relation to the pan-ethnic notion of "Latino"? We will begin our course with these types of discussions and then move toward an exploration of fiction, poetry, and essays that raise questions about labor, immigration, racism, identity formation, U.S. imperialism, and bilingualism, among other topics. We will focus particularly on the ways that our readings present experiences of living (economically, socially, conceptually, etc.) in more than one country. The poet Judith Ortiz Cofer prompts us to think outside of the nation when she writes,

I left my home behind me
but my past clings to my fingers
so that every word I write hears
the mark like a cancelled postage stamp
of my birthplace.

Just as the speaker's writing is marked by a birthplace left behind, many of the texts this semester will grapple with what it means to live in the United States without severing connections to another country in Latin America. We will explore

the effects of such experiences on literary form.

The class will consist not only of lectures but also group assignments and discussions. You are required to attend the group discussions.

Requirements:

Midterm and Final Exams: These exams might involve some combination of take-home writing, in-class short definitions, and/or an in-class essay.

Paper: One paper, 4-5 pages.

Group Participation/Writing: At various points during the semester, you will work in small groups to discuss our readings and related questions. You will turn in either a group report or individual responses to the discussions. I will take attendance on discussion days.

Grading:

Your grade will be determined using the following percentages.

Midterm	25 %
Final	30 %
Paper	25 %
Participation, responses	20 %

If you fail to turn in an assignment or miss an exam, you will receive a zero (not a Fail) for that portion of the grade. Please note that a zero could lower your grade substantially or jeopardize your chances of passing the class.

Discussion:

You are required to be active in group discussions. Please present your points in an intelligent manner, without resorting to insults or rudeness. Feel free to question the instructor's perspective on an issue. I welcome the opportunity to engage in a dialogue.

Attendance:

Because group participation is a part of your grade, I will take attendance on group discussion days.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to understand and abide by the university's policies on academic honesty. Cases of plagiarism or cheating could result in severe penalties.

Classroom Behavior

E105 is a large class. Please do not disrupt lectures and discussions by arriving late. Remember to turn off your cell phone inside the classroom.

E Reserves

Some required readings are available on E Reserves. You can have access to these from a computer by going to the UC Irvine Libraries home page (lib.uci.edu) and hitting "Course Reserves" under the listed services. You can then find our course readings under instructor name or course title. You will need to have an active library card with a pin number to use E Reserves. I recommend that you print your readings.

Special Requests: If you want to request special consideration or if a problem occurs, please write a memo that provides me the information necessary to make a good decision. You can contact me via e-mail or call my office.

If you need accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me privately at the beginning of the term. Also contact the Disability Services Center at (949) 824-7494 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

The instructor reserves the right to change, add or delete items from the syllabus, including the schedule of assignments and readings.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

September

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| F | 24 | Introduction to the Course
Jimmy Santiago Baca, from <i>Martin</i> (handout) |
| M | 27 | Ethnic labels and community
(Hispanic/Latino/Chicano)
Reading: Richard Rodriguez, "Hispanic" (<i>Brown</i> pp. 103-123) |
| W | 29 | Critical Latino Literature
Sandra Cisneros, from <i>The House on Mango Street</i> (E Reserves)
Edgardo Vega Yunque, "Eight Morenos" (E Reserves) |

October

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| F | 1 | Group Discussion #1 (writing due Monday, Oct. 4)
Discuss questions about Yunque's story and write a response. |
| M | 4 | "Ties of Singular Intimacy" (Lecture on Cuba and the US)
Begin reading García, <i>The Agüero Sisters</i> |

- W 6 "Our House in Havana" (in-class video showing)
- F 8 Cristina García, *The Agüero Sisters* (finish first half)
- M 11 *The Agüero Sisters* (finish book)
- W 13 Group Discussion #2
Discuss questions about García's novel and turn in group answers at the end of class.
- F 15 Latino Literary History
Reading: Selections by José Martí (E Reserves)
- M 18 Reading: Selections from 19th Century newspapers (TBA)
- W 20 Julia Alvarez, "Bilingual Sestina" in *The Other Side* (pp. 3-4)
- F 22 Transnationalism I
Alvarez, *The Other Side* (pp. 25-58)
- M 25 Alvarez, *The Other Side* (pp. 109-150)
Group Discussion (writing due Wed., Nov. 27)
- W 27 Finish Discussing Alvarez
- F 29 Prepare for Midterm Exam
- November
- M 1 In-class Midterm Exam
- W 3 Watch *Real Women Have Curves*
- F 5 Discuss *Real Women Have Curves*
- M 8 Labor and Latino/a writers
Francisco Goldman, *The Ordinary Seaman* (read first half)
Paper Assignment
- W 10 *The Ordinary Seaman* continued
- F 12 Group Discussion of *The Ordinary Seaman*
(writing due Monday, Nov. 15) Discuss group answers as a class.
- M 15 Ruben Martínez, from *Crossing Over* (E reserves)
- W 17 Chicano/a Literature

Tomás Rivera, *...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*

- F 19 *...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*
- M 22 Group Discussion *...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*
- W 24 Last day to turn in paper.
Selections by Chicano/a Poets: Ricardo Sánchez, "Barrios of the World," Bernice Zamora, "Notes from a Chicana 'Coed'"
- F 26 Thanksgiving Break
- M 29 Richard Rodriguez, *Brown* "The Prince and I" and "Poor Richard" (pp. 47-101)
- W 1 *Brown*, "In the Brown Study" and "The Third Man" (pp. 33-46, 125-143)
- F 3 Finish debating Rodriguez, prepare for exam.

FINAL EXAM scheduled for Friday, Dec. 10, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.