

Augustana College
World Literature-2 19 [L]



**Tales from McOndo.
Latin American Literature and
Popular Culture**

Winter Term 2001-02

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of contemporary Latin American literature and its interactions with mass media, popular culture, and politics in the region. These interactions offer various perspectives on what Latin America means today. The reading materials and assignments follow two goals: (a) to represent Latin America, through literature, as a site of cultural hybridity, that is, the blending and mixing of styles, traditions, values, and identities; and (b) to challenge traditional notions of "otherness" between people, nations, and cultures. The reading of fictional texts will be complemented with discussion on four films, to be viewed outside of class time.

Required texts

Carlos Fuentes. *The Crystal Frontier*.

Reinaldo Arenas. *Mona and Other Tales*.

Gabriel García Márquez. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.

Luisa Valenzuela. *Bedside Manners*.

Rosario Ferré. *The Youngest Doll*.

Martha Cerda. *Señora Rodríguez and Other Worlds*.

Cristina García. *Dreaming in Cuban. A Novel*.

Additional readings (photocopies):

Mónica Levín. *Points of Departure. New Stories from Mexico*.

Regina Swain. *Señorita Superman and the Instant Soup Generation (Selections)*.

Suggested readings on Latin American History and Culture (Close Reserve)

John Charles Chasteen. *Born in Blood and Fire. A Concise History of Latin America.* New York: W.W. Norton, 2001.

Duncan Green. *Faces of Latin America.* London: Latin American Bureau, 1997.

Alma Guillermoprieto, *The Heart that Bleeds.* New York: Vintage, 1994.

William Rowe and Vivian Schelling. *Memory and Modernity. Popular Culture in Latin America.* London: Verso, 1996.

Course Objectives

- To learn how contemporary Latin American writers bridge the gap between people, countries, and cultures.
 - What major social, economic, political issues do these writers highlight in their narratives?
 - What are some common narrative strategies among these writers?
 - How do these writers link Western and non-Western cultures; modern and traditional values?

- To increase our knowledge of and appreciation for Latin American literature.
 - What social experiences and cultural concerns are being communicated through literature?
 - What alternative views on popular culture do these texts offer in spite of commodity-oriented global markets?
 - Why study Latin American literature?

- To become active learners and readers, willing and capable of taking responsibility for our own intellectual growth.
 - How can I draw comparisons between my culture(s) and others?
 - How can I form my own opinion and consider that of others?
 - How can I demonstrate to others the value of my acquired knowledge?

Evaluation

Class attendance and participation	10%
Oral Presentation	10%
Short Papers (3)	40%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Take-Home Exam	20%

Grading Scale

A	=	93% - 100	C+	=	78-79
A-	=	90-92	C	=	73-77
B+	=	88-89	C-	=	70-72
B	=	83-87	D+	=	68-69
B-	=	80-82	D	=	63-67

Class participation

Active class participation and attendance are required. Students should read all assigned texts and view all films. You will be expected to participate in class discussions in a way that reflects a close and attentive reading of the texts. You will be asked to participate individually and in small group activities. Class discussions depend, in part, on your participation and willingness to express and listen to diverse and sometimes opposing perspectives on various issues. The success of our class depends on your commitment to these discussions. More than one unexcused absence will adversely affect your final grade.

Short Papers and Exams

Course requirements include three short writing assignments (3-4 pages) an in-class mid-term exam and a final take-home exam. The 3 short papers should be comparative in nature, exploring two or more books and/or book(s) and a film discussed in class. Each writing assignment must have a clear thesis, supported by textual evidence and analysis. Although you are not expected to consult critical secondary sources, any use of outside sources must be clearly documented. Using sources without proper documentation constitutes plagiarism. As you develop a thesis and write each paper, I highly encourage each of you to seek my assistance and/or that of the Augustana Library and the Reading/Writing Center staff. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** The mid-term exam will be an in-class activity discussing texts from the first half of the term; the final will be a typed, take-home exam about the materials from the second half of the term.

Oral Presentations

Throughout the term, a team of 2-3 students (chosen by the instructor) will give an oral presentation based on the team's critical discussion of a particular reading assignment. Every team will be responsible to provide at least 2-3 interpretations to a fragment of a particular text and to relate it to other texts discussed in class. Teams are also expected to generate discussion from the rest of the class.

Films

The films included in this course will offer good audio-visual components to the themes covered in the readings. On the first day of classes we will decide on the best time (outside of class) to view the films together.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Tue. Nov. 27	Introduction
Thur. No. 29	<i>The Crystal Frontier</i>

Week 2

	Film: <i>Lone Star</i> (John Sayles, 1994)
Tue. Dec. 4	<i>The Crystal Frontier</i>
Thur. Dec. 6	<i>The Crystal Frontier</i>

Week 3

Tue. Dec. 11	<i>The Crystal Frontier</i>
	Selections from <i>Points of Departure</i>
Thur. Dec. 13	<i>Dreaming in Cuban</i>

Week 4

	Film: <i>Bitter Sugar</i> (León Ichaso, 1996)
Tue. Dec. 18	<i>Dreaming in Cuban</i>
Thur. Dec. 20	<i>Dreaming in Cuban</i>
	Writing Assignment I

Christmas Break

Week 5

Tue. Jan. 8	<i>The Youngest Doll</i>
Thur. Jan. 10	<i>The Youngest Doll</i>

Week 6

	Film: <i>Amores perros</i> (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2000)
Tue. Jan. 15	Midterm Exam
Thur. Jan. 17	<i>Chronicle of a Death Foretold</i>

Week 7

Tue. Jan. 22	<i>Chronicle of a Death Foretold</i>
Thur. Jan. 24	<i>Señora Rodríguez and Other Worlds</i>

Week 8

	Film: <i>Hour of the Star</i> (Suzana Amaral, 1985)
Tue. Jan. 29	Writing Assignment II
	<i>Señora Rodríguez and Other Worlds</i>
Thur. Jan. 31	<i>Señora Rodríguez and Other Worlds</i>
	"Señorita Superman and the Instant Soup Generation"

Week 9

Tue. Feb. 5

| *Bedside Manners*

Thur. Feb. 7

| *Bedside Manners*

Week 10

Tue. Feb. 12

| *Mona and Other Tales*

Thur. Feb. 14

| *Mona and Other Tales*

| **Writing Assignment III**

| Course review

Final Exam due: Thursday, Feb. 21, 2002, 12:00 pm in DK-128