Comparative Latin American Literature

Class code: SPAN-UA 9766 - 4 points

Instructor Details:
Paola Cortes-Rocca
paolacortesrocca@gmail.com
Cell phone (11 2450 1970 - only emergency calls; otherwise, please text me)
Office Hours by appointment

Class Details:
Comparative Latin American Literature
Mondays and Wednesdays from 17.15 to 18.45
Location to be confirmed.

Prerequisites:
None.

Class Description:
This course explores Latin American fiction from a comparative perspective. By analyzing works from Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, Chile, Brazil and the US from the 1960s to the present, students are taught to approach the manifold versions of Latin America fiction through the ways literature has imagined communities beyond national boundaries.

Desired Outcomes:
Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. be familiar with contemporary Latin American Literature and its historical, political and aesthetic dimensions,
2. engage in cultural analysis considering the relations between historical, cultural and literary productions,
3. develop critical thinking by examining the way in which literature not only participates in but also produces specific debates and questions,
4. produce a critical essay on one of the course themes using the the critical tools taught throughout the course.

Assessment Components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in class discussions and other activities*</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written commentaries (4-5 pages)***</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation (10-12 minutes)**</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm paper (5-7 pages)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper (10-12 pages)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Effective class participation is only possible if you read and prepare the material in advance for each class.

** As indicated in the syllabus (SOP)

*** Students should prepare two written comments/questions that will be used in the class
Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

Assessment Expectations

**Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays / exam questions and his/her work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

**Grade B:** The student shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

**Grade C:** Work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

**Grade D:** The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

**Grade F:** The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade conversion</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>C+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-93</td>
<td>92-90</td>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>86-83</td>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>79-77</td>
<td>76-73</td>
<td>72-70</td>
<td>69-67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exams and Submission of work

Final Exam dates cannot be changed under any circumstance.

Mid term exam dates will be scheduled with each professor and it must be before the break. Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from examination (with authorization, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.).

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

**Final essays must be submitted to the professor in print and electronic copy.** If the student is not in Buenos Aires, he / she must send a printed copy via express postal mail (i.e. FedEx, DHL, UPS, etc) to the NYU Center in Buenos Aires – Anchorena 1314 - (C1425ELF) Argentina. This copy must arrive before or on the date of established deadline.
NYU Buenos Aires has a **strict policy about course attendance.**

- Students should contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work but should **NOT** approach them for excused absences.
- Absences due to illness must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs, María Pirovano Peña **within one week** of your return to class.
- A doctor note excusing your absence is mandatory.
- **The date on the doctor's note must be the date of the missed class or exam**
- Absence requests for non-illness purposes must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs, María Pirovano Peña prior to the date(s) in question.
- If students have more than two unexcused absences they will be penalized by deducting 50% of the class participation grade. Please be aware that in most of the courses the class participation grade is 20% of the final grade. So the 50% of the class participation grade would mean 10% of the final grade.
- If students have more than four unexcused absences they will fail the course.
- Intensive Languages Courses: students who have more than three unexcused absences will be penalized by deducting 50% of the class participation grade. Please be aware that in most of the courses the class participation grade is 20% of the final grade. So the 50% of the class participation grade would mean 10% of the final grade. Those students who have more than five unexcused absences will fail the course.
- Each class has a duration of one hour and half or two hours. **Missing one class represents one absence. For those courses that meet once a week (three hours block), missing one class represents two absences.**
- Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.
- NYU BA also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. Three late arrivals or earlier departures (10 minutes after the starting time or before the ending time) will be considered one absence.
- Please note that for classes involving a **field trip or other external visit**, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.
- **Make up classes for holidays are mandatory as regular scheduled classes.**

Late work should be submitted **in person** to the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs **during office hours** (Mon – Fri, 9.30 am to 5 pm), who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff can accept the work, in person, in the absence of the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted after 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

**Please note** end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor.
It is expected that the student follow the rules on academic honesty and intellectual integrity established by NYU University.

### Required Text(s)

1. **Reading packet [RP]** Includes all the theoretical readings. Available at Copies: centro de copiado, Av. Santa Fe 2653, loc. 3, Cap. Fed., tel. 4821 2127, mascopies@iplanmail.com.ar

2. **Books:**
   - Bellatin, Mario. *Beauty Salon*. San Francisco: City Lights, 2009
   - Eltit, Diamela. *Custody of the Eyes*. Santa Fe, N.M.: Lumen, 2005

### Supplemental Material(s)

3. **Movies:**
   - *Duck Season*, directed by Fernando Eimbcke
   - *The Motorcycle Diaries*, directed by Walter Salles
   - *Our Lady of the Assassins*, directed by Barbet Schroeder

### Week 1

**Introduction**

Aug 26
   - Alfonso Reyes, “Thoughts on the American Mind” [RP]
Aug 28
   - Alejo Carpentier, “On the Marvelous Real in America” [RP]

### Week 2

**Real and Imaginary Ancestors**

Sep 2
   - Alejo Carpentier, *The Lost Steps*
Sep 4
   - Alejo Carpentier, *The Lost Steps*

### Week 3

Sep 9
   - César Augusto Salgado, “Hybridity in New World Baroque Theory” [RP] - SOP
Sep 11
   - Juan José Saer. *The Witness*
   - Juan José Saer. *The Witness*

### Week 4

Sep 16
   - Juan José Saer. *The Witness*
Sep 18
   - Rita de Grandis, “The first Colonial Encounter” [RP] - SOP

### Week 5

**Coming of Age Narratives**

Sep 23
   - Marta Peixoto. *Passionate Fictions* (selection) [RP]
Sep 25
   - Clarice Lispector. *The Hour of the Star*
Week 6
Sep 30 Clarice Linspector. *The Hour of the Star* - SOP
Oct 2 Duck Season, directed by Fernando Eimbcke (*)

Midterm Paper is due on Wednesday 11 before 7 PM

Week 7
Semester Break (Oct 7 - 13)

Week 8
Utopias
Oct 14 Nestor Perlongher, Evita Lives
Oct 16 Holiday: no class
Oct 18 Make-up Day: The Motorcycle Diaries, directed by Walter Salles (*)
John Beverley, Rethinking the Armed Struggle in Latin America (selection)

Week 9
Dictatorship, Surveillance and Trauma
Oct 21 Michael Lazzara, Chile in Transition (selection) [RP] - SOP
Diamela Eltit, Custody of the Eyes
Oct 23 Diamela Eltit, Custody of the Eyes

Week 10
Visit to Parque de la memoria (**)
Oct 28 Idelber Avelar, The Untimely Present (selection) [RP] - SOP
Oct 30

Week 11
Violence and the Collapse of Civil Society
Nov 4 María Fernanda Lander, “The Intellectual’s Criminal Discourse in Our Lady of the Assassins by Fernando Vallejo” [RP]
Nov 6 Fernando Vallejo, Our Lady of the Assassins
Fernando Vallejo, Our Lady of the Assassins

Week 12
Other Communities: Destitute Subjects
Nov 11 Our Lady of the Assassins, directed by Barbet Schroeder (*) - SOP
Nov 13 Mario Bellatin, Beauty Salon

Week 13
Mario Bellatin, Beauty Salon
Nov 18  Mario Bellatin, *Beauty Salon* - SOP  
Nov 20  Alicia Vaggione, “Literature/sickness: The body as waste. A lecture of *Beauty Salon* by Mario Bellatin” [RP]

**Week 14**  
**Images of Latin America**

Nov 25  Visit to MALBA (***)  
Nov 27  Holiday: no class  
Nov 29  Make-up Day: Andreas Huyssen, “The Museum as Mass media” [RP]

**Week 15**  
**Conclusions**

Dec 2  Final Remarks  
Dec 4  Final Paper’s Guidelines

Final Paper is due on Wednesday 11 before 7 PM - Please send it by email and wait for a confirmation

**Classroom Etiquette**

The use of Blackberrys, phones and IPods in class are forbidden

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

(*) Screening will be held (place and time to be announced). Attending to this screening is optional. Students can also watch the movie individually as far as they do so before the class in which the film will be discussed.

(**) Visit to the Parque de la Memoria and MALBA.

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**

**Your Instructor**

Paola Cortes-Rocca (Licenciada en Letras, UBA 1995 and Ph.D., Princeton 2005) is a cultural and visual critic. She has published essays on literature and photography, citizenship and monstrosity, ghosts and political imagination, zombies and racial conflicts. Her work appeared on academic journals (*October, Mosaic, and Iberoamericana* among others) as well as on electronic and mass media publications. She is the coauthor of a book on the visual and literary representation of Eva Perón titled *Imágenes de vida, relatos de muerte* and the co-editor of *Políticas del sentimiento*, a collection of essays on Personismo. She is also the author of *El tiempo de la máquina. Retratos, paisajes y otras imágenes de la nación*, a book on the impact of photography in the Latin American cultural field at the end of the XIX century. She has taught at the University of Buenos Aires,
University of Southern California and San Francisco State University. She currently holds a research position at the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET).