

The University of Western Ontario
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
Hispanic Studies

Spanish/CLC 2903A

Woman by Women: Themes of Femininity in Latin American Women's Fiction

(Please note: this course outline is subject to change)

Instructor: Ayelet Ishai

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Class Schedule: Monday 4:30-6:30pm, Wednesday 4:30-5:30pm (Fall 2017)

Class Location: TC-202

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to Latin American Women's Literature, covering a selection of female writers and examples of their fictional prose works from the 17th century to the present day. Students will analyze each work within the socio-historical context in which it was written, with a focus on how the writer approaches the subject of women's roles in society.

Course Objectives:

The objectives of this course are to:

- Examine the lives and works of a selection of women authors in Latin America from the 17th century onward
- Familiarize students with concepts and theories related to Latin American women's writing
- Develop students' ability to analyze literary works by authors studied in the course
- Provide students with critical tools for analyzing women's writing in its socio-historical contexts
- Connect themes and ideas learned in the course to related discussions on current issues

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the roles and functions of these fictional texts in wider historical and feminist contexts

- Critically analyze and discuss, both orally and in writing, women's literature in a socio-historical context
- Determine central themes or ideas in a literary work and be able to compare themes within and between works
- Demonstrate an understanding of the contexts and lives of the authors covered in the course, as well as the ideas and themes presented in their selected works
- Critically engage with the literary works, able to extract significant ideas for analysis
- Connect the ideas and themes in women's writing to related discussions on present day issues

Text:

All readings will be available through OWL/Sakai.

Evaluation:

Attendance and Participation (20%): Students are expected to attend class regularly unless medical circumstances prevent them from doing so (please see section below on department policies). The success of the course depends on the quality of the participation of its members. Assigned readings should be done prior to class in order to be discussed in class. If absent, it is the student's responsibility to complete and turn in coursework on time and catch up on the material covered in class. Students must inform their instructor by email of any absence as soon as possible and alternate assignments will need to be completed to make up for missed class time.

Online Gamified Component

Pre-Class Assignments (1% each = 25%)

Before each class, students must complete a small assignment as part of the reading for the upcoming class, requiring the students to answer basic questions about the text and demonstrate their preliminary understanding of the reading. There will be 25 of these in total.

Response Assignments (5% each = 15%)

A total of three response assignments will be chosen from a selection of possibilities designed by the instructor. Possible assignments to choose from will include critical readings and complementary activities on authors introduced in the course, activities on additional authors not covered in the main section of the course but thematically relevant and of interest to the student, videos and student responses and, specifically for students in the Spanish section of the course, activities related to authors or works in the original Spanish. Ideally, response assignments will be related to the research essay topic, enabling students to develop their ideas on the topic through multiple projects.

Both pre-class and response assignments will be managed through gamified content designed through the online website “3D GameLab”.

Oral Presentation or Video (15%): Each student will choose an author from the syllabus and prepare either a video or a live presentation that will be shown in class on the day that the author appears on syllabus. The video or presentation must creatively introduce the chosen author, either through a mock interview, a monologue, or another format approved by the instructor.

Research Essay (25%)

Each student will select a novel or longer work by one of the authors covered in the course and write a 6-8-page analytical response to the work, placing it into a larger context and considering its relevancy in current discussions on themes of femininity. Students may use various sources for comparison with the work including, for example: another work by the same author, a comparable work by a different author, an article (or multiple articles) about the work, current cultural figures and their public stances on similar themes, or any other source for comparison approved by the instructor.

Grading System:

Attendance and Participation: 20%

Pre-Class Assignments: 25%

Response Assignments: 15%

Oral Presentation: 15%

Research Essay: 25%

Academic Policies

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's verbatim or paraphrased text in one's own written work without immediate reference. Verbatim text must be surrounded by quotation marks or indented if it is longer than four lines. A reference must follow right after borrowed material (usually the author's name and page number). Without immediate reference to borrowed material, a list of sources at the end of a written assignment does not protect a writer against a possible charge of plagiarism. This also applies to work facilitated or written for students by third parties. The University of Western Ontario uses a plagiarism-checking site called Turnitin.com.

Absenteeism:

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

- UWO's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness
<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>
- Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC)
<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/>

Calendar of Readings and Activities:

Week 1: Introduction

Class 1

Introduction to the course.
Syllabus review.

Class 2

Background readings:

1. Pastor, Brigida M, and Lloyd H. Davies. "Introduction: The Feminine Voice in Latin American Literature." *A Companion to Latin American Women Writers*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Tamesis, 2012. 1-22.
2. Bassnett, Susan. "Introduction: Looking for the Roots of Wings." *Knives and Angels: Women Writers in Latin America*. London: Zed Books, 1990. 1-8.
3. LaGreca, Nancy. "Introduction". *Rewriting Womanhood: Feminism, Subjectivity, and the Angel of the House in the Latin American Novel, 1887-1903*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009. 1-5.

Week 2

Class 1

Explanation of online component.
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648?-1695)

Reading:

"Respuesta a Sor Filotea"/"Reply to Sor Filotea" (parts I and II)

Class 2

Clorinda Matto de Turner (1852-1909)

Reading:

Aves sin nido/Torn from the Nest (chapters 1-6)

Week 3

Class 1

Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y Artega (1814-1873)

Reading:

Sab (chapters 1-3)

Class 2

Juana Manuela Gorriti (1818-1892)

Reading:

"Gubi Amaya"

Week 4

Class 1

Nellie Campobello (1900-1986)

Reading:
Cartucho (part I)

Class 2

Silvina Ocampo (1903-1993)

Readings:
“La casa de azúcar”/“The House Made of Sugar”
“La oración”/“The Prayer”

Week 5

Class 1

Maria Luisa Bombal (1910-1980)

Reading:
“El árbol”/“The Tree”

Class 2

Reponse Assignment 1 Due

Elena Garro (1916-1998)

Reading:
“La culpa es de los Tlaxcaltecas”/“It’s the Fault of the Tlaxcaltecas”

Week 6

Class 1

Clarice Lispector (1920-1977)

Readings:
1. “Uma Galinha”/“A Chicken”
2. “A Menor Mulher do Mundo”/ “The Smallest Woman in the World”

Class 2

Rosario Castellanos (1925-1974)

Reading:
“Lección de cocina”/“Cooking Lesson”

Week 7

Class 1

Elena Poniatowska (1932-)

Reading:

Leonora (chapters 1-10)

Class 2

Response Assignment 2 Due

Luisa Valenzuela (1938-)

Readings:

1. “Nihil obstat”
2. “Proceso a la virgen”/“Trial of the Virgin”

Week 8

Class 1

Rosario Ferré (1938-)

Readings:

1. “La muñeca menor”/“The youngest doll”
2. “El cuento envenenado”/“The Poisoned Story”

Class 2

Rosa Nissán (1939-)

Reading:

Novia que te vea /Like a Bride (pp. 1-35 in English; pp. 9-19 in Spanish)

Week 9

Class 1

Isabel Allende (1942-)

Reading:

Eva Luna (chapter 1)

Class 2

Response Assignment 3 Due

Liliana Heker (1943-)

Readings:

1. “La fiesta ajena”/“The Stolen Party”
2. “Maniobras contra el sueño”/“Strategies Against Sleeping”

Week 10

Class 1

Ana Lydia Vega (1946-)

Readings:

1. “Tres aeróbicos para el amor”/“Aerobics for Love”

2. "Ajustes, S.A"/"Solutions, Inc."

Class 2

Gioconda Belli (1948-)

Reading:

La mujer habitada/The Inhabited Woman (chapters 1 and 2)

Week 11

Class 1

Ángeles Mastretta (1949-)

Reading:

Mujeres de ojos grandes/Women with big eyes (pp. 1-25 in English; pp. 3-17 in Spanish)

Class 2

Laura Esquivel (1950-)

Reading:

Como agua para chocolate/Like Water for Chocolate (chapters 1-3)

Week 12

Class 1

Laura Restrepo (1950-)

Reading:

La novia oscura/The Dark Bride (chapter 1)

Class 2

Carmen Boullosa (1954-)

Reading:

De un salto descabalgó la reina/Cleopatra Dismounts
(pp. 65-119 in English; pp. 63-109 in Spanish)

Week 13

Class 1

Rigoberta Menchú (1958-)

Reading:

Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia/I, Rigoberta Menchú
(chapters 30 and 31)

Class 2

Conclusions

Final Project Due