

COLT 375

Latin American Cultural and Literary Theory

SYLLABUS

Spring 2016  
Section: 22036  
Time: MW 2:00-3:20  
Location: THH 113

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Office hours: W 12-2  
Office: THH 156M



**Course Description:** The main objective of this course is the careful analysis of discourse on Latin American literature and culture in recent decades. We will question the problematic divide between theory “by” and “about” Latin Americans, read provocative works of theory and fiction, and have passionate arguments about topics such as Latin American particularity, cannibalism and *calibanismo*, transculturation and hybridity, subalternity and difference, memory and violence. Required readings include works by some of the most prominent figures in the field of Latin American literary and cultural studies, such as John Beverley, Antonio Cornejo Polar, Christopher Dunn, Néstor García Canclini, Mabel Moraña, Alberto Moreiras, Gabriela Nouzeilles, Rachel Price, Julio Ramos, Ignacio Sánchez-Prado, Silviano Santiago, and Doris Sommer. Students will be expected to read and dissect literary and critical texts, as well as to formulate their own interpretations through written and oral assignments. The course is designed for students specializing in Latin America, as well as for those who have an interest in Latin American(ist) thought and/or literary and cultural theory more broadly.

## Schedule:

### Introduction

#### Week 1. Introduction

1/11-

- Introduction
- Presentation assignments

1/13-

- Abril Trigo, “General Introduction” in *LACSR*\*\*

#### Week 2. Modernism and Latin American Particularity

1/18-

- NO CLASS (MLK, Jr. Holiday)

1/20-

- Julio Ramos, “Prologue” in *Divergent Modernities* (pp. xxxv-xlvi)\*\*
- José Martí, “Our America”\*\*\*

### Cannibalism, Calibanism, Cosmopolitanism

#### Week 3. From Cannibal to Caliban: Cultural Resistance

1/25-

- Oswald de Andrade, “Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry”\*\*, “Cannibalist Manifesto”\*\*
- Christopher Dunn, “Poetry for Export” in *Brutality Garden* (pp.13-20)\*\*

1/27-

- Roberto Fernández Retamar, “Calibán” in *LACSR*\*

#### Week 4. From Caliban to Cosmopolitan

2/1-

- Jorge Luis Borges, “The Argentine Writer and Tradition”\*\*\*
- J.L. Borges, Selected poems (TBA)\*\*\*

2/3-

- Lecture, Ronald Mendoza-de-Jesús (USC Provost’s Postdoctoral fellow), “Time Fails: Reading Ethics in Two Poems of Borges” (Lecture will take place in THH 309K)

#### Week 5. Transculturation/Heterogeneity/Hybridity

2/8-

- Fernando Ortiz, “Cuban Counterpoint”\*\*
- Antonio Cornejo Polar, “Indigenismo and Heterogeneous Literatures” and “*Mestizaje*, Transculturation, Heterogeneity” in *LACSR*\*

2/10-

- Silviano Santiago, “Latin American Discourse: The Space In-Between”\*\*
- Néstor García Canclini, “Hybrid Cultures, Oblique Powers”\*\*
- REVIEW FOR MIDTERM EXAM

#### Week 6. MIDTERM EXAM

2/15-

- NO CLASS (President’s Day)

2/17-

- MIDTERM EXAM

### **Latin American Subaltern Studies**

#### Week 7. Subalternity and Representation

2/22-

- Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, “Founding Statement”\*\*
- John Beverley, “Writing in Reverse” in *LACSR*\*

2/24-

- Mabel Moraña, “The Boom of the Subaltern” in *LACSR*\*

#### Week 8. The Double Bind of *Testimonio*

2/29-

- Rigoberta Menchú, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*\*

3/2-

- Menchú, *I, Rigoberta Menchú* (cont.)\*

#### Week 9. *Testimonio* (cont.)

3/7-

- Doris Sommer, “No Secrets for Rigoberta”\*\*
- John Beverley, “The Real Thing (Our Rigoberta)”\*\*

3/9-

- Alberto Moreiras, “The Aura of *Testimonio*”\*\*

Week 10. SPRING BREAK

Week 11. Zapatismo

3/21-

- “First Declaration from the Lacandón Jungle” in *The Zapatista Reader*\*\*\*
- “A Place Called Chiapas” (film)

3/23-

- “A Place Called Chiapas” (film, in class)
- FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE at the beginning of class

**Contemporary Visual Culture**

Week 12. Visual memory in postdictatorship

3/28-

- Gabriela Nouzeilles, “Postmemory Cinema and the Future of the Past in Albertina Carri’s *Los Rubios*”\*\*
- Albertina Carri, *Los Rubios* (film, in class)

3/30-

- Carri, *Los Rubios* (film, in class)
- Begin reading for next week!

Week 13. Contemporary Cuban art

4/4-

- Rachel Price, *Planet/Cuba*\*

4/6-

- Lecture, Prof. Rachel Price (Princeton University)

Week 14. Neoliberal violence and film

4/11-

- Alejandro González Iñárritu, *Amores Perros* (film, in class)

4/13-

- González Iñárritu, *Amores Perros* (film, in class)
- Ignacio M. Sánchez-Prado, “Amores Perros: Exotic Violence and Neoliberal Fear”\*\*

Week 15. Presentations

4/18-

- Discussion, *Amores Perros*

4/20-

- Alberto Moreiras, “Irruption and Conservation” in *LACSR*\*
- Final paper presentations

#### Week 16. Conclusion

4/25-

- Final paper presentations

4/27-

- Final paper presentations
- FINAL PAPER DUE at the beginning of class
- Distribute TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM

#### **Course objectives:**

Students will:

- receive an introduction to the cultural and intellectual preoccupations of Latin America
- learn to reflect critically on how “Latin America” is imagined by artists and critics
- become familiar with and be able to employ methods of critical analysis of literary and cultural theory
- acquire fluency in the oral and written discussion of narrative and visual cultural materials

#### **Course Requirements:**

**PARTICIPATION.** Each student should read the texts specified above before each class session. Films will be shown in class on the date specified. You are expected to voluntarily contribute to class discussions, which will be reflected in your participation grade. This means that you should prepare notes with comments and questions to bring up in class.

**COURSE FACEBOOK GROUP.** You will be required to make weekly contributions to the course Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1703994433150245/>. These contributions are twofold. First, you will be expected to post a 100-150 word response to one of the readings for the week, due by midnight the Sunday before class. Second, you will be expected to post a comment on a minimum of two other posts, due by midnight on the Sunday following class. **NO CREDIT FOR LATE POSTS.**

**PRESENTATIONS.** You will be responsible for two in-class presentations (15 minutes in length). The first will be based on one of the required readings (topics will be assigned during the first week of class). The second will be a presentation of your final paper.

EXAMS. There will be two exams: the first will be given in class on Wednesday, February 17, and the second will be distributed on Wednesday, April 27 and will be due Monday, May 9 at 2:00p.m. There are no make-ups for the midterm (except a documented medical emergency). Late take-home final exam will be docked one letter grade per day.

FINAL PAPER. The final paper (7-8 pages) is due AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS on Wednesday, April 27. Papers handed in late will receive a lower grade. In addition, you will be required to turn in a one-page abstract for your final paper on Wednesday, March 23, which will describe in prose form your main thesis and supporting arguments. Late or missing abstracts will result in a lower grade for the final paper. Late final papers will be docked one letter grade per day.

FINAL GRADE. Attendance and participation (15%), blog posts (10%), presentations (20%), midterm exam (15%), final paper (15%), final exam #2 (25%).

### **Course Materials:**

\*The following books (marked with one asterisk) will be available for purchase at the bookstore <http://www.uscbookstore.com>:

- Ana del Sarto, Alicia Ríos and Abril Trigo, eds. *The Latin American Cultural Studies Reader*
- Rigoberta Menchú. *I, Rigoberta Menchú*
- Rachel Price, *Planet/Cuba*

\*\*Readings marked with two asterisks will be accessible via USC's Automated Reserves System (ARES) <https://usc.ares.atlas-sys.com/>.

\*\*\*Texts marked with three asterisks will be distributed in class.

### **Statement for Students with Disabilities:**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120, and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

### **Statement on Academic Integrity:**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. The Trojan Integrity Guide can be found at <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tio.pdf>. A Guide for Graduate Students can be found at <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/GradIntegrity.pdf>.