

## SYLLABUS -- DRAFT

### SPAN 545: 20th and 21st Century Latin American Literature and Culture

#### Latin America in Theory / Theory in Latin America

Section: 62311D  
Fall 2016  
T 2-4:50  
Location: SOS B50

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Off. hrs.: Th 12:30-2:30, by appt.



#### Course description:

This seminar attempts to think the place of theory, or critique, in Latin Americanism. After reflecting briefly on the traditional role of the intellectual in Latin America (a figure that often claimed to stand for, speak in the name of, or signify a “whole,” “integrated,” or “original” culture), we will spend the rest of the semester studying aesthetic and intellectual production that bears witness to the breaks, interruptions, fissures and impossibilities of such integrity. This includes, but is not limited to, generations, writers, and debates that exhibit deconstructive, subalternist, and anti-identitarian impulses. By focusing on literary scenes, political moments, and intellectual debates, this course will ask questions that are at the heart of the field of Latin Americanism. In this sense, the course is an appropriate introduction to topics and debates in and of Latin American literary and cultural studies. It will not, however, offer a panoramic or integrative vision of Latin American literature and culture, as might a survey class. Readings and class discussion will be in Spanish and English, depending upon the background of the students enrolled. As is typical of a graduate-level seminar, rigorous participation will be expected of everyone.

## Schedule:

### I. Introduction, Precursors

#### Week 1. 8/23

##### Required:

- J.L. Borges, “Kafka y sus precursores” (<http://lanarrativabreve.blogspot.com/2011/06/kafka-ysus-precursores.html>)
- José Martí, “Nuestra América” ([http://www.ciudadseva.com/textos/otros/nuestra\\_america.htm](http://www.ciudadseva.com/textos/otros/nuestra_america.htm))
- Charles Hatfield, *The Limits of Identity* (Introduction, Ch. 1)\*\*\*

##### Recommended:

- J.E. Rodó, *Ariel*
- Roberto Fernández Retamar, “Calibán. Apuntes sobre la cultura de Nuestra América” (<http://www.revistacaliban.cu/clasico.php>)
- Hatfield, *The Limits of Identity* (Ch. 2)

### II. Identity and Secrecy

#### Week 2. 8/30

##### Required:

- J.L. Borges, “El etnógrafo”\*\*\*
- Jacques Derrida, “The Violence of the Letter: From Lévi-Strauss to Rousseau”\*\*
- Miriam Jerade, “¿Puede el sujeto subalterno escribir? De los archivos de la deconstrucción”\*\*\*\*
- Jacques Derrida, “Pasiones (La ofrenda oblicua)” (<http://redaprenderycambiar.com.ar/derrida/textos/pasiones.htm>) (“Passions: An Oblique Offering”)

##### Recommended:

- Idelber Avelar, “The Ethics of Interpretation and the International Division of Intellectual Labor”
- Erin Graff Zivin, “Writing in Latin America”

#### Week 3. 9/6

- Julio Cortazar, “Axolotl” (<http://ciudadseva.com/texto/axolotl/>)
- Brett Levinson, *The Ends of Literature* (Ch.1: “The Ends of Literature as Neoliberal Act: An Opening”)\*\*
- Kate Jenckes, “The ‘New Latin Americanism’”\*\*

#### Week 4. 9/13

- NO CLASS

### **III. Subalternity and Testimonio**

#### **Week 5. 9/20**

Required:

- Clarice Lispector, *A hora da estrela*\*\*\*
- Adam Joseph Shellhorse, “Figurations of Immanence: Writing the Subaltern and the Feminine in Clarice Lispector”  
(<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/pc/12322227.0006.012?view=text;rgn=main>)
- Catherine Malabou, “Post-Gender Theory and the Feminine”  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMOLisKRO5M>)

Recommended:

- Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, “Founding Statement”
- Rigoberta Menchú, *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia* (*I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*)
- Alberto Moreiras, “The Aura of Testimonio”

#### **Week 6. 9/27**

- Ricardo Piglia, *La ciudad ausente*\*
- Luis García, “Espectros. Fotografía y derechos humanos en Argentina”\*\*\*
- Alejandro Kaufman, *La pregunta por lo acontecido* (selection)\*\*\*
- Guest: Ali Kulez

#### **Week 7. 10/4**

- Kate Jenckes, *Witnessing Beyond the Human* (selection)\*\*\*
- Guest: Lacey Schauwecker

### **IV. Literature, Ethics, Politics**

#### **Week 8. 10/11**

- Roberto Bolaño, *2666* (“La parte de los críticos,” “La parte de Amalfitano,” “La parte de Fate”)\*
- Raúl Rodríguez Freire, *Sin retorno: Variaciones sobre archivo y narrativa latinoamericana* (Ch. 2: “La literatura (im)posible”)\*\*
- Alberto Moreiras, “Infrapolitics and the Thriller”\*\*

#### **Week 9. 10/18**

- Bolaño, *2666* (“La parte de los crímenes”)\*

- Brett Levinson, “Case Closed: Madness and Dissociation in 2666”\*\*\*

### **Week 10. 10/25**

- Bolaño, 2666 (“La parte de los crímenes”)\*
- Kate Jenckes, *Witnessing Beyond the Human* (Ch. 3: “Living and Writing in the Deserts of Modernity”)\*\*\*
- Patrick Dove, *Literature and Interregnum* (Ch. 5: “Repetition or Interruption?”)\*\*\*

### **Week 11. 11/1**

- Bolaño, 2666 (“La parte de Archimboldi”)\*
- Gareth Williams, “Marrano Spirit? . . . and Hispanism, or, Responsibility in 2666”\*\*\*
- FINAL PAPER ABSTRACTS DUE

### **Week 12. 11/8**

- Patrick Dove, *Literature and Interregnum* (selection)\*\*\*

**\*11/11-11/12: Colloquium. Latin America in Theory: Aesthetics, Ethics, Politics**

## **V. Conclusion**

### **Week 13. 11/15**

- Reading to be determined by seminar participants

### **Week 14: 11/22**

- Final paper workshop

### **Week 15. 11/29**

- Final presentations

### **Week 16. 12/13 (make-up class)**

- Final presentations
- FINAL PAPER DUE

## **Course Materials:**

\*The following books (marked with one asterisk) are available for purchase on Amazon.com (or anywhere else online). You may read texts in either Spanish or English.

- Roberto Bolaño, *2666*
- Ricardo Piglia, *La ciudad ausente*

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

\*\*\*Texts marked with three asterisks will be distributed by Prof. Graff Zivin.

## **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.

**FACEBOOK.** You will be required to make weekly contributions to our class Facebook group, "SPAN 545: Latin America in Theory" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/633644926795688/>). These contributions are twofold. First, you will be expected to post a response to the required reading for the week, due by midnight the Monday night before class. Second, you will be expected to comment on your classmates' posts, due by midnight on the Monday following class. No late posts will be accepted for credit.

**PRESENTATIONS.** You will be responsible for two in-class presentations. The first presentation will be based on one of the required readings, and will involve a summary and critique of the piece (approximately 20 minutes), after which you will facilitate a discussion with the rest of the class (approximately 30 minutes). The second will be a conference-style presentation of your final paper (approximately 20 minutes).

**FINAL PAPER.** The final paper is due at the beginning of class on December 13. You may choose between writing an article-length paper (20-25 pages) or a conference paper (8-10 pages). 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 November 1, 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.

**FINAL GRADE.** The final grade will be calculated in the following manner: participation (20%), Facebook posts (15%), presentations (20%), final paper (45%).

## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

### Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* [http://sait.usc.edu/academic-support/center-programs/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academic-support/center-programs/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.