

**COLT/Spanish 375**  
**Latin American Cultural and Literary Theory**  
**Spring 2018**  
**Professor Natalie L. Belisle**

**Contact Information**

**Email:** nbelisl@usc.edu

**Office:** Taper Hall 156 N

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 9:30 am – 11:30 am or by appointment.

**Overview**

This course offers an in-depth survey of the main currents in Latin American literary and cultural thought. The objective of this course is to equip students with the critical vocabulary to analyze, interpret, and situate Latin American literature and culture in relation to wider philosophical and ideological transformations spanning the post-emancipation period until the present. Conversely, we will observe how these key transformations influence and structure the content, expression, and form of Latin American literary and cultural practices. To this end, we will study theoretical interventions by prominent intellectuals and writers—both from within and outside Latin America—who have shaped the meaning of Latin America and Latin Americanist thought. Importantly, we will analyze the tension between “theory” and “creative” practice Latin Americanist writing, paying attention to how theoretical texts avail themselves of creative and poetic discourse and how fiction advances theoretical and philosophical claims about Latin America. Overall, this course is designed for students who specialize in Latin American literature and culture as well as those who have a developing interest in Latin American and Latin Americanist thought, literature, and literary and cultural theory.

**Texts**

All readings for this course are available on Blackboard. *I, Rigoberta Menchú* can be purchased on Amazon.

**Grading and Assignments**

Your performance in this course will be graded on the following components:

**1. Attendance and Participation (10%)**

Although this course is formatted as a lecture in order to share contextual information, there will also be a discussion component. You should be prepared to contribute to the readings with your own thoughts and questions. Your experience in this class will be a communal one; you will get out of it what you put into it.

- ❖ **No-penalty absences:** You will be granted a total of three (3), no penalty absences that you can take for any reason including sick days, personal matters, etc. Additionally, you will be allowed to miss class for religious observances, but you must let me know in writing a week in advance.

**2. In-class Presentations (15%)**

In week 2 of the semester, you will sign up to present one of readings listed in the class calendar. Spanning 10-15 minutes, your oral presentation should meet the following criteria:

- ❖ summarize, define, and interpret the reading’s key points and concepts;
- ❖ evaluate its merits and relevance to the class topic; and,
- ❖ include handouts that outline your key points. You must notify me 24 hours in advance of your presentation if you will require audiovisual technology.

### 3. Midterm Exam (35 %)

- ❖ The in-class midterm exam will ask students to identify and define theoretical concepts, as well as analyze and problematize critical questions in short and long essay form
- ❖ **NO MAKE-UPS ALLOWED.**

### 4. Final Take-home Essay Questions (40 %)

- ❖ Essay questions for the exam will be provided before the final week of class. Students will be expected to respond in a longer essay format to questions

### Grading Scale

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	less 60

### General Policies

#### **Communication**

Please allow me 24 hours to respond to your emails during the week (from Monday through Friday). During the weekends, I will respond to emails within 48 hours. In order to protect your privacy, I only respond to messages sent from your official USC account (*YourNetID@usc.edu*), as I cannot verify your identity with other email providers.

If you have detailed questions about the material covered in class, the coursework, or your writing, please meet with me in person during my office hours, at which time I will be more than happy to address your concrete questions. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to meet with me about your concerns. If you cannot attend my office hours due to a scheduling conflict with another course, please email me so that we may determine an alternative time to meet.

#### **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 STU 301 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. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

dates		themes, readings, assignments
Week 1	1/8	Introductions Sign-up for Presentations
	1/10	Abril Trigo, "Introduction"
Week 2	1/15	No class
	1/17	<b>Modernity and Modernism</b> Graciela Montaldo, "Modernity and Modernization: The Geopolitical Relocation of Latin America"  Julio Ramos, Divergent Modernities, "Prologue"  José Martí, "Our America"
Week 3	1/22	<b>Cannibalizing Thought</b> Oswald de Andrade, "Cannibalist Manifesto:"
	1/24	Roberto Fernández Retamar, "Calibán"
Week 4	1/29	<b>Transculturation, Mestizaje, and Hybridity</b> Mary Louis Pratt, "From the Victoria N'yanza to the Sheraton San Salvador"
	1/31	Antonio Benítez Rojo, "From the plantation to the Plantation"
Week 5	2/5	Antonio Cornejo Polar, " <i>Mestizaje</i> , Transculturation, Heterogeneity"  Fernando Ortiz, "Cuban Counterpoint"
	2/7	Silviano Santiago, "Latin American Discourse: The Space-in Between"  Néstor García Canclini, "Hybrid Cultures, Oblique Powers"
Week 6	2/12	<b>Subaltern Studies, Postcolonialism, and Decolonization</b> Mabel Moraña The Boom of the Subaltern"  "Founding Statement: The Latin American Subaltern Studies Group"
	2/14	Peter Hume, "Postcolonial Theory and the Representation of Culture in the Americas"  Fernando Coronil, "Elephants in the Americas?: Latin American Postcolonial Studies and Global Decolonization"
Week 7	2/19	No class /president's day
	2/21	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>
Week 8	2/26	<b>Testimonio</b> I, Rigoberta Menchú
	2/28	I, Rigoberta Menchú

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Week 9	3/5	Alberto Moreiras, "The Aura of Testimonio" Doris Sommer, "No Secrets for Rigoberta"
	3/7	<b>Third World Marxism and its Discontents</b> Jean Franco, "Introduction," "Communist Manifestos," and "Liberated Territories"
<b>SPRING BREAK/NO CLASSES</b>		
Week 10	3/19	<b>Postmodernism</b> Nelly Richard, "Cultural Peripheries: Latin America and Postmodernist De-Centering" Norbert Lechner, "A Disenchantment Called Postmodernism"
	3/21	<b>Zapatismo and NAFTA</b> "First Declaration from the Lacandón Jungle"
Week 11	3/26	<b>Memory and Mourning in the Postdictatorship</b> Idelber Avelar, "Introduction: Allegory and Mourning in Postdictatorship" and "The Genealogy of a Defeat: Latin American Culture under a Dictatorship: Screening: <i>Los Rubios</i>
	3/28	Gabriela Nouzeilles, "Postmemory Cinema and the Future of the Past in Albertina Carri's <i>Los Rubios</i> "  Discussion: <i>Los Rubios</i>
Week 12	4/2	<b>Gender and Sexuality</b> Jean Franco, "Plotting Women: Popular Narratives for Women in the United States and Latin America"  Sonhia E. Alvarez and Claudia de Lima Costa, "Turning to Feminisms"
	4/4	Robert McKee Irwin and Mónica Szurmuk, "The Gender and Sexuality Turn"
Week 13	4/9	<b>Neoliberal Violence</b> Film viewing and discussion
	4/11	Jean Franco, "Introduction" and "Killers, Touchers, Sadists and Collaborators" Film viewing and discussion
Week 14	4 /16	<b>Globalization, Identity, and Belonging</b> Nestor García Canclini, "Globalize or Defend Identity? How to Get out of This Binary" and "Market and Interculturality: Latin America between Europe and the United States"
	4/ 18	Discussion: Final Take-Home Exam
Week 15	4/24	No class
	4/26	No class

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**TAKE HOME ESSAY QUESTIONS DUE: May 3, 2018  
Submitted to Professor Belisle via Blackboard at 5 p.m.**