

Professor: Pablo García Loaeza

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### TEXTS:

- *Masterworks of Latin American fiction*, Ed. Cass Canfield, Westview Press, 1996.
- Juan Rulfo, *Pedro Páramo*, Grove Press, 1994.
- Carlos Fuentes, *Aura*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986.
- Horacio Quiroga, "Anaconda" (e-campus).

**DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:** This course will provide an overview of modern Latin American literature through short novels/long stories (novellas). We will read and discuss a wide array of relatively brief narratives. Taking into account the feedback loop between literature and culture through an examination of the assigned texts' contexts (historical, geographical, ideological, etc.), we will reflect on their common traits, as well as on their significant particularities. Thus, based on the assumption that *storytelling is a key constituent of character*, we will also gain an understanding of Latin American cultural identities as manifested in the literary production of the region. At the same time, we will consider the universality of Latin American literature.

**REQUISITES:**

- Attendance and participation (20%)
- 1 in-class presentation (10%)
- 2 reaction papers (20%)
- midterm exam (20 %)
- final exam (25%)

**W SECTION REQUISITES:**

- Attendance and participation (20%)
- 3 reaction papers (30%)
- midterm paper & draft (20 %)
- final paper & draft (25%)

**Grading scale:** A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 0-59

A = excellent (given only to students of superior ability and attainment)

B = good (given only to students who are well above average, but not in the highest group)

C = fair (average for undergraduate students)

D = poor but passing (cannot be counted for graduate credit)

F = failure

Rigorous standards of academic integrity will be enforced in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, see the Student Conduct Code ([http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office\\_of\\_student\\_conduct/student\\_conduct\\_code](http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct/student_conduct_code)). In accordance with WVU's commitment to social justice, we will maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination (<http://diversity.wvu.edu>). If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (293-6700).

- Attendance More than 3 absences will have a negative impact on the final grade (-2 % pts. / absence after 3). If for any reason you expect to miss five or more sessions, you should consider dropping the course. Six or more absences automatically result in an F grade, no exceptions. Please be on time; 3 late arrivals will be penalized as an absence.

- Participation: *Coming to class is not the same as participating in class*. Participating means being attentive, asking questions, and sharing your opinions with your classmates. It also means preparing the material for each session ahead of time (reading assigned texts, looking up words in the dictionary, preparing questions to ask in class, etc.). Participation will be assessed by means of "participoint" tickets.

- For each contribution to the class discussion you will receive 0, 1, 2, or 3 points depending on its pertinence, depth, and effect on further dialogue.
- Write your name on the back of each ticket you receive and turn them before leaving each class session.
- "Participoints" earned will be tallied twice, at the midterm and at the end of the course, and curved on a scale of 10; the two scores will be added to calculate the final participation grade on a scale of 20:  

$$\text{points earned} \times 10 \div \text{highest point total} = \text{grade}/10; \text{grade 1} + \text{grade 2} = \text{final participation grade}/20$$
- Note that you cannot earn participation points if you are absent from class, even in case of an excused absence.

- In-class presentations will cover specific topics (countries, characters, events); they should be created in Power Point, thoroughly researched, and profusely illustrated. Further instructions will be provided in class. Presentations will be graded according to the rubric provided below.

- Reaction papers (600-900 words) will address the course readings. Further instructions will be provided in class. Although these will be personal considerations they should be well informed, effectively argued, and carefully written (logically structured, free of grammatical and spelling errors, etc). Written work will be graded according to the rubric provided below. No late work will be accepted. (**W Section:** Reaction paper #3 may be turned in at any time before, but no later than, Friday, November 21.)

- The midterm exam will cover all the material studied up to that point in the course. The questions may include multiple choice, true or false, identification, and short-answer questions, as well as short essays. There will be no make-ups without significant reason. (**W Section:** the midterm paper should be 1500-2100 words on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor)

- The final exam will be comprehensive. The questions may include multiple choice, true or false, identification, and short-answer questions, as well as short essays. There will be no make-ups. (**W Section:** the final paper should be 2400-3000 words on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor.)

### Clear Writing: Some Basic Rules

1. To write clearly you have to have something to say. Write what YOU think, not what you think I want to hear. It is acceptable to use the pronoun "I" in expressing your opinions. However your opinions must be justified and/or illustrated (generally quoting or paraphrasing a source text). Avoid ranting, vagueness, and prejudice. Do not hesitate to use, and duly reference, secondary sources.
2. Always start with an introductory paragraph that contains a clear thesis statement, and end your paper with a concluding paragraph. Make sure the ideas in the body of the paper follow a clear and organized format. A great way to write an organized paper is to start with a solid outline.
3. Avoid using verbs in the passive voice – sentences in which the subject of the sentence receives the action, for example, "Eréndira is portrayed as a victim by García Márquez." A better turn of phrase could be "García Márquez portrays Eréndira as a victim."
4. Avoid a vague "it" or "this" at the beginning of a sentence. Vague: "Eréndira is a victim. This is a shame." [To what does "This" refer? Whose shame is it?]. A better option would be: "Regrettably, Eréndira is a victim." Then justify the comment.
5. Avoid using contractions, run-on sentences, sentence fragments, and slang.
6. Know your words. Do not hesitate to look up words in a dictionary. Do not be afraid to use a thesaurus (Shift +F7 in MSWord) to look for the most appropriate term. Avoid weak qualifiers such as "very," "kind of," and "really."
7. Use quotation marks when quoting lines from a text, and cite the source specifically with line number or page number in a footnote or in a parenthetical citation. If you paraphrase someone else's ideas, be sure to cite this as well. Quotes and paraphrases should strengthen your own ideas, not substitute for them. Ultimately, it is your ideas that matter most.
8. Most important: remember that only proof reading and rewriting produces good writing. You will probably have to outline your ideas several times, and rewrite sentences or even entire paragraphs. Do not be afraid to cut out all that is superfluous. Good writing takes time and beginning a paper the night before it is due is never a good idea.



PRESENTATION GRADING CRITERIA				
Aspect	Excellent (A range)	Good (B range)	Acceptable (C range)	Poor (D range)
1. In general	Very thorough and engaging.	Thorough and engaging.	Somewhat thorough and engaging.	Partial and uninteresting.
2. Preparation	Presenter is evidently very well prepared.	Presenter is evidently well prepared.	Presenter is reasonably prepared.	Presenter is evidently not well prepared.
3. Content	Content shows a full investigation of the topic.	Content shows a good investigation of the topic.	Content shows an acceptable investigation of the topic.	Content shows a minimal investigation of the topic.
4. Organization	Presentation is logically organized.	Presentation is logically organized.	Presentation is fairly well organized.	Presentation is poorly organized.
5. Speech	Speech is clear and distinct 90% of the time.	Speech is clear and distinct 80% of the time.	Speech is clear and distinct 70% of the time.	Speech is clear and distinct less than 70% of the time.
6. Questions/Issues	Discussion questions/issues addressed are pertinent and very interesting.	Discussion questions/issues addressed are pertinent and interesting.	Discussion questions/issues addressed are pertinent and somewhat interesting.	Discussion questions/issues addressed are not very pertinent or interesting.
7. Audience engagement	Presenter consistently engages the audience as a whole and encourages participation and discussion.	Presenter often engages the audience as a whole and encourages participation and discussion.	Presenter attempts to engage the audience as a whole and to encourage participation and discussion.	Presenter barely attempts to engage the audience as a whole and to encourage participation and discussion.
8. Audience feedback	Verbal and non-verbal feedback from the audience demonstrates a high degree of interest and engagement.	Verbal and non-verbal feedback from the audience demonstrates interest and engagement.	Verbal and non-verbal feedback from the audience demonstrates some interest and engagement.	Verbal and non-verbal feedback from the audience demonstrates little interest and engagement.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT GRADING CRITERIA				
Aspect	Excellent (A range)	Very Good (B range)	Average (C range)	Poor (D range)
1. In general	A pleasure to read.	Interesting to read.	Readable.	Challenging to read.
2. Thesis	Essay based on a clear, precise, well defined, and original thesis that goes beyond the ideas discussed in the class	A clear specific thesis, central for the essay.	A general thesis, central to the essay.	Vague or irrelevant thesis.
3. Analysis	Essay contains a cogent analysis that demonstrates a command of interpretative and conceptual tasks required by assignment and course material.	Demonstrates a solid understanding of the texts, ideas, and methods of the assignment.	Shows an understanding of the basic ideas and information involved in the assignment, though with some errors of fact or confusion of interpretation, and a tendency toward recapitulations or narration of standard chronology.	Inadequate command of course material with significant factual or conceptual errors. Fails to respond directly to the assignment.
4. Development and support	The essay includes well-chosen examples, persuasive reasoning consistently applied, and solid evidence directly applicable to the thesis.	Pursues thesis consistently, clearly developing a core argument with clear component points and appropriate supportive detail.	Incomplete development of core argument; weak organization or shallow analysis, insufficiently articulated ideas, or unsupported generalizations.	Discursive and undeveloped, a mere narration that digresses from one topic to another.
5. Structure	Essay moves easily from one point to the next with clear, smooth, and appropriate transitions, coherent organization, and fully developed paragraphs.	Clear transitions, the development of coherent, connected ideas in unified paragraphs.	Some awkward transitions, weak or underdeveloped paragraphs not clearly connected to one another.	Simplistic and discursive, tending to vague summations and digressions from one topic to another.
6. Grammar	The author employs sophisticated sentences effectively, chooses words aptly, and observes all the conventions of English grammar to craft an eloquent essay.	A good command of English, though with occasional stylistic or grammatical problems (most commonly awkward syntax or excessive use of the passive voice).	A tendency toward wordiness, unclear or awkward sentences, imprecise use of words, grammatical errors, and a vagueness of meaning brought on by the passive voice.	Major grammatical problems such a subject verb-disagreement, obscure pronouns, and sentence fragments. Language marred by clichés, colloquialisms, repeated inexact word choices and gross spelling errors.

## COURSE CALENDAR

Date	Read at Home	Discuss in class	Work due
M 08/18	--	Course intro.	--
W 08/20	--	Reading in translation / context	--
F 08/22	Anaconda	Interpretative framework	--
M 08/25	Anaconda	Horacio Quiroga	
W 08/27	Anaconda	Anaconda	
F 08/29	--	Anaconda	
M 09/01	The Daisy Dolls	<b>NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)</b>	
W 09/03	The Daisy Dolls	F. Hernández / Post war in Lat. Am.	
F 09/05	The Daisy Dolls	The Daisy Dolls	
M 09/08	--	The Daisy Dolls	
W 09/10	Pedro Páramo	The Daisy Dolls	
F 09/12	Pedro Páramo	Juan Rulfo / Mexican Revolution	
M 09/15	Pedro Páramo	Pedro Páramo	
W 09/17	--	Pedro Páramo	
F 09/19	The Pursuer	Pedro Páramo	<b>Reaction paper 1</b>
M 09/22	The Pursuer	Julio Cortázar / Jazz	
W 09/24	The Pursuer	The Pursuer	
F 09/26	--	The Pursuer	
M 09/29	Aura	The Pursuer	
W 10/01	Aura	Carlos Fuentes/ 2 <sup>nd</sup> Mexican Empire	
F 10/03	Aura	Aura	
M 10/06	--	Aura	<b>W: Midterm paper draft</b>
W 10/08	--	Aura	
F 10/10	--	<b>Midterm</b>	
M 10/13	The Road to Santiago	<b>NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)</b>	
W 10/15	The Road to Santiago	Alejo Carpentier / Real Maravilloso	
F 10/17	The Road to Santiago	The Road to Santiago	<b>W: Midterm paper</b>
M 10/20	--	The Road to Santiago	
W 10/22	My Uncle, The Jaguar	The Road to Santiago	
F 10/24	My Uncle, The Jaguar	Guimarães Rosa / Brazil	
M 10/27	My Uncle, The Jaguar	My Uncle, The Jaguar	
W 10/29	--	My Uncle, The Jaguar	
F 10/31	The Incredible and Sad Tale...	My Uncle, The Jaguar	
M 11/03	The Incredible and Sad Tale...	Gabriel García Márquez / Boom!	
W 11/05	The Incredible and Sad Tale...	The Incredible and Sad Tale...	
F 11/07	--	The Incredible and Sad Tale...	<b>Reaction Paper 2</b>
M 11/10	The Snow of the Admiral	The Incredible and Sad Tale...	
W 11/12	The Snow of the Admiral	Álvaro Mutis / Amazon	
F 11/14	The Snow of the Admiral	The Snow of the Admiral	

M 11/17	--	The Snow of the Admiral	
W 11/19		The Snow of the Admiral	
F 11/21	Miss Florence's Trunk	Ana Lydia Vega / Puerto Rico	<b>W: Last date for R. Paper 3</b>
M 11/24	<b>NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)</b>		
W 11/26			
F 11/28			
M 12/01	Miss Florence's Trunk	Miss Florence's Trunk	<b>W: Final paper draft</b>
W 12/03	Miss Florence's Trunk	Miss Florence's Trunk	
F 12/05	--	Miss Florence's Trunk	
M 12/08	--	Final thoughts / closing remarks	

**Final exam / paper (W):** Wednesday, December 17th