

Survey of Mexican-American Literature

ENG 338W—Studies in Multicultural Literature

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Office Hours: T & Th 3:30-4:30
& by appointment
Section: 1
Class Time: T & Th 2:00-3:20
Location: EV 351

Course Description:




Mexican Americans have had a long history in what is now the United States. Throughout this time, Mexican Americans have developed a rich and varied literary tradition—ranging from border ballads and protest poetry to novels and journalistic exposés. This course provides a thorough introduction to Mexican-American literature within its historical and cultural context. The selected readings allow for an examination of the historical record, exploring the diverse experiences of this community across time. Moreover, the historical scope of this course will allow us to trace influences and themes throughout this literary tradition.

While not an exhaustive list, the key themes we will explore in this class are identity, community, citizenship, power relations, life in the borderlands, and the past. The following questions provide some points of entrance into the literature we will read this semester: How have Mexican Americans been positioned and positioned themselves in the United States? What is the relationship between literature and social struggle? How do race, class, gender, and sexuality impact identity formation?

Course Goals:

-  Explore the development of the Mexican-American literary tradition within its historical context.
-  Foster an understanding of how Mexican-American literature and experiences intersect with diverse aspects of U.S. history and literature.
-  Investigate themes and issues addressed throughout Mexican-American literature.

Learning Outcomes:

-  Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of Mexican-American literary tradition.
-  Hone critical thinking and close reading skills.
-  Develop, articulate, and support cogent arguments.

Required Texts:

María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, *The Squatter and the Don* (Houston: Arte Público Press, [1885] 1997).

Américo Parades, *George Washington Gómez* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1990).

Oscar Zeta Acosta, *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* (New York: Vintage, [1973] 1989).

Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, [1987] 2007).

Ana Castillo, *So Far From God* (New York: Norton, [1993] 2005).

Luis Alberto Urrea, *The Devil's Highway: A True Story* (New York: Little, Brown, 2004).

Semester Grading Rubric

Quizzes & Daily Assignments_____	20%
Teaching Presentation_____	15%
Short Paper #1_____	15%
Short Paper #2_____	15%
Proposal & Annotated	10%
Bibliography_____	25%
Final Paper_____	

Grading Plan:

Your numerical grade for the semester will correspond to the following alphabetical grading scale: 100%-90% = A, 89%-80% = B, 79%-70% = C, 69%-60% = D, 59%-0% = F.

Quizzes & Daily Work:

These are minor assignments that are geared to foster and evaluate learning throughout the semester. They cannot be made up except in the cases of religious holidays and absences as excused by me.

Teaching Presentation:

During the semester, you and a group of your peers will work together to facilitate a class session. It will be your collective responsibility to devise a lesson plan, provide contextual information, as well as generate discussion and learning in the class. Ideally, these presentations will be both engaging and instructive. Groups will be assigned in the first two weeks of class. Note: all groups should meet with me a week or two prior to the presentation for a strategy session.

Suggested Presentation Topics

1. The Texas Rangers
2. Luis Valdez & El Teatro Campesino
3. Oscar Zeta Acosta
4. Early Chicana Feminism
5. Immigration

Short Papers:

While we will discuss these in more detail as the semester develops, these short writing assignments (approximately 1,000 words, single-spaced) emphasize concision, argument, and evidence. Like all writing assignments, these are the result of a process. I highly recommend that you begin thinking about, organizing, and drafting these papers early. Moreover, please feel free to see me or the writing lab for assistance.

Proposal & Annotated Bibliography:

You are required to write a brief proposal (2pgs.) for your final paper. The proposal should introduce your argument and explain its significance. While your final paper may shift over the course of the semester, this proposal should guide you in the process. Also, with the proposal, you will turn in an annotated bibliography that includes a minimum of six secondary sources. The bibliography should be completed in MLA format followed by brief, 5-6 sentence, annotations evaluating these sources and explaining how they will contribute to your final project. I highly encourage you to meet with me before undertaking the proposal and annotated bibliography.

Final Paper:

For your final project, you will write a more extensive paper (10 pages, double-spaced). As with the short papers, I will be looking for a clear articulation of your argument, integration of evidence, and strong organization. However, the increased length of this paper requires two additional efforts on your part. First, you must engage the work of other critics. In order to aid you in this, I have assigned an annotated bibliography as a prerequisite step in the writing process. Second, you must demonstrate a greater depth of analysis.

Late Work Policy:

I do not accept late work unless you have a serious, legitimate reason (as determined by me). For example, missing a deadline because your appendix has ruptured may be an acceptable justification but "computer problems" that miraculously occur in the wee hours of night (or any time for that matter) are not. Ultimately, I reserve the right to refuse late work.

Classroom Climate:

In order for discussion and learning to flourish, this class needs to foster a climate of respect. Whether dealing with opinions on culture or the literature itself, please listen respectfully to the views of others. This does not mean that discussion and argument should not take place; rather, discussion and argument are most useful when views are shared openly. If you feel that you are not being listened to or showed due respect, please come talk to me. For the university's official statement, see section 5.2.22 of the "Code of Student Conduct and Discipline."

Open Door Policy:

You are welcomed and encouraged to visit me whenever you wish to discuss a paper or a problem as it relates to this class. If you cannot come during my office hours, schedule an appointment with me. The easiest and best way to contact me outside of my office hours is to e-mail me. I try to read my e-mail on a daily basis and will send you a prompt reply.

Attendance Policy:

Regular and punctual attendance is imperative for your success in this course. If you miss more than three class periods, your grade will be lowered. Moreover, if you do not attend, you will miss our enthralling discussion and the ever-important quizzes. Thus, any absences will indirectly affect your grade. Note: tardiness of more than 10 minutes will be considered an absence.

Religious Holidays:

If you are going to miss class for a recognized religious holiday, please notify me in writing at least one week ahead of time. It will be your responsibility to make up all missed work within a reasonable timeframe.

Academic Dishonesty:

If you turn in a piece of writing all or part of which you have plagiarized, you will be dismissed with an "F" in the course. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of other people's work or ideas without proper citation. If you have any questions concerning this, please come to me. In cases of academic dishonesty, further action

within the context of university guidelines may be considered. For more information, see SHSU's "Code of Student Conduct and Discipline."

Students with Disabilities:

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will cooperate with the Counseling Center & ADA Services to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you will require accommodation, you must advise me of your needs in writing no later than the end of the second week of class.

Weekly Schedule

Unit One: Nineteenth Century—Conquest, Loss, & Resistance

Week One: January 14th

TH: Introduction to Chicano/a literature and history

Week Two: January 21st

T: Ruiz de Burton, *The Squatter and the Don*, 55-126

TH: Ruiz de Burton, *The Squatter and the Don*, 127-197

Week Three: January 28th

T: Ruiz de Burton, *The Squatter and the Don*, 198-280

TH: Ruiz de Burton, *The Squatter and the Don*, 281-348

Unit Two: Early Twentieth Century—The Mexican-American Era and the Trouble of the Hyphen

Week Four: February 4th

T: "El Corrido del Gregorio Cortez"
Paredes, *With His Pistol in His Hand* (excerpts)

Presentation #1

TH: Paredes, *George Washington Gómez*, 9-105

Paper #1 Due

Week Five: February 11th

T: Paredes, *George Washington Gómez*, 107-202

TH: Paredes, *George Washington Gómez*, 203-302

Héctor Pérez, "Voicing Resistance on the Border: A Reading of Américo Paredes's *George Washington Gómez*"

Unit Three: El *Movimiento* in the 1960s & 1970s—Nationalism & Feminism, Rights & Resistance

Week Six: February 18th

T: José Antonio Burciaga, "Pachucos and the Taxicab Brigade"

TH: Luis Valdez, *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa*

Week Seven: February 25th

T: Luis Valdez, *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa*

TH: Luis Valdez, "The Militants" & "Los Dos Caras del Patroncito"

Beth Bagby & Luis Valdez, "El Teatro Campesino Interviews with Luis Valdez"

Presentation #2

Week Eight: March 3rd

T: Corky Gonzales, *Yo Soy Joaquín*
"El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán"

TH: Protest music from *Rolas de Aztlán*
Yo Soy Chicano (film)

Paper #2 Due

Week Nine: March 10th

T: **Spring Break**

TH: **Spring Break**

Week Ten: March 17th

T: Acosta, *The Revolt of the Cockroach People*, 1-104

TH: Actosta, *The Revolt of the Cockroach People*, 105-197
 Ilan Stavans, "The Bomb Explodes" from *Bandido*

Presentation #3

Week Eleven: March 24th

T: Acosta, *The Revolt of the Cockroach People*, 198-258
 Louis Mendoza, "Identity, Memory, and Self-Representation in *el Movimiento*"
 from *Historia*

TH: *Chicana* (film)
 Mirta Vidal, "New Voice of La Raza"
 Enriqueta Longeaux y Vásquez, "¡Soy Chicana Primero!"

Presentation #4

Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due

Week Twelve: March 31st

T: Ana Montes, "La Nueva Chicana"
 Leticia Hernández, "Hijas de Cuauhtémoc"
 Bernice Rincón, "La Chicana: Her Role in the Past and Her Search for a New Role
 in the Future"
 Adelaida Del Castillo, "Malintzín Tenepal"

TH: Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La frontera*, Chs. 1-4

Unit Four: The Post-Movement Era—New Visions, New Struggles
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Week Thirteen: April 7th

T: Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La frontera*, Chs. 5-7
 Sonia Saldívar-Hull, "Mestiza Consciousness and Politics" from *Feminism on the
 Border*

TH: Moraga, *Heroes and Saints*
 Ana Castillo, "The Watsonville Women's Strike, 1986"

Week Fourteen: April 14th

T: Moraga, *Heroes and Saints*

TH: Castillo, *So Far From God*, 19-119

Week Fifteen: April 21st

T: Castillo, *So Far From God*; 120-252

Ralph E. Rodriguez, "Chicana/o Fiction from Resistance to Contestation"

TH: Castillo, *So Far From God*

Ibis Gómez-Vega, "The Homoerotic Tease and Lesbian Identity in Ana Castillo's Work"

Domino R. Perez, "Crossing Mythological Borders: Revisioning La Llorona in Contemporary Fiction"

Week Sixteen: April 28th

T: Urrea, *The Devil's Highway*, xv-83

Presentation #5

TH: Urrea, *The Devil's Highway*, 84-161

Week Seventeen: May 5th

T: Urrea, *The Devil's Highway*, 162-220

TH: Urrea, *The Devil's Highway*

Week Eighteen: May 12th

Final Papers Due

Note: The readings for this course may be subject to change throughout the semester.
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