

Latin American Literature & Cinema

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: ARGN 3008

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: Onsite Faculty

Course Description

This course will explore cinematic and literary representations of Argentina and Latin America. It will thus focus on how films and literary texts both enact and depict national identities through storytelling and recurrent topics.

Course Objectives

This seminar will offer the socio-historical and aesthetic context necessary to critically read/watch the Latin American literary texts and films. Also, students will be trained in the techniques and theories of textual/film analysis, as well as encouraged to elaborate personal opinions and comments. The ultimate goal will be to guide students through the learning process of how to read in depth and how to develop a broader and original thought/point of view.

Methodology

This seminar will be conducted in English. All classes will have a theoretical and practical focus. We will discuss the stories, the movies, and the topics assigned from a critical and analytical point of view. Different didactic strategies will be used: debates, questionnaires, study guides, games, lectures, discussions, creative workshops, and screenings. The approach will be student-centered, interactive, and communicative.

Course Requirements

1. Participation in class: Attendance doesn't mean participation. In order to get a participation-in-class grade, you must participate actively in all class discussions.

2. Preparation/Homework: In order to participate, you must read/reflect upon the assigned texts before coming to class.
3. Material: You must have your reading material for each class and bring it to class.
4. Creative project: This is your opportunity to be a writer and a critic. The project consists of the application of the studied short story techniques and the criticism/peer review of our own production.
5. Final written exam: On the last class of the semester, you will be tested on all the topics—readings and films— covered from the first through the last class. This aspect of the final grade component is subject to change if the professor considers that another form of evaluation would be better to improve the students' class performance (e.g., weekly quizzes, reaction papers, and/or group oral presentations). It will all depend on the students' response and their personal involvement.
6. NO LATE EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN. No exceptions

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Participation in class	40%
Mid-Term	30%
Creative Project	10%
Written Exam	20%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

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- A student will receive a grade of A by producing excellent written and oral work that suggests attentive reading and preparation of assigned material, and that demonstrates a detailed familiarity with the texts. Also necessary to receive an A are the articulation of clever arguments based on solid evidence, the ability to engage critically with secondary reading material, and the fluent and articulate expression of ideas.
- A student will receive a grade of B by producing written and oral work that is above satisfactory, and by demonstrating familiarity with the material under review.
- To receive a grade of C, a student must demonstrate a basic understanding of the text under review and must participate positively in the classroom. A C student's written work may lack organization and appear random and disconnected at times, with occasional deviation from the paper's main theme, and the writing itself may lack clarity.
- A student who receives a grade of D makes little reference to the text other than what could be gleaned from an outline or a plot summary. The D student advances ideas that have insufficient relevance to the title; he or she writes simplistically, in a way that does not do justice to the text's complexity; and his or her ideas are often carelessly expressed. PAGE 3
- By making little or no reference to the text under review, deviating from or ignoring the title/subject of the paper, writing poorly and ungrammatically, and indicating clearly the failure to read or understand the text, a student will receive a grade of F.

Course Content

Unit 1

“Contemporary Latin American Short Story”

- Introduction – Contemporary Short Story in Latin America– Characteristics
- Horacio Quiroga – “Decalogue of the Perfect Short-Story Writer” (1927)
- The Fantastic Short Story – Julio Cortázar – “Axolotl” In: *The End of the Game* (1952)

Unit 2

“Film Adaptation of Literary Texts: The Fantastic Story” (I)

- The Fantastic Short Story – Julio Cortázar – “Axolotl” In: *The End of the Game* (1952); “Blow-up” In: *The Secret Weapons* (1964)

Unit 3

“Film Adaptation of Literary Texts: The Fantastic Story” (II)

- The Fantastic Short Story – Julio Cortázar – “Blow-up” In: *The Secret Weapons* (1964)
- SCREENING (in class): *Blow-up*. Dir. Michelangelo Antonioni. Prod. Carlo Ponti. MGM/UA Home Video, 1991 (Film)

Unit 4

“Fantastic & Mysterious Labyrinths: A Continuous Perception of Space and Time” (I)

- The Fantastic Short Story – Jorge Luis Borges – “The Secret Miracle” In: *Artifices* (1944); “Borges and I” In: *The Maker* (1960)
- The Detective-Fantastic Short Story – Jorge Luis Borges – “Death and the Compass” In: *Artifices* (1944)

Unit 5

“Fantastic & Mysterious Labyrinths: A Continuous Perception of Space and Time” (II)

- The Detective-Fantastic Short Story – Jorge Luis Borges – “Death and the Compass” In: *Artifices* (1944)
- SCREENING (in class): *The Oxford Murders*. Dir. Alex de la Iglesia, 2008 (Film)

Unit 6

“Magical Realism: Reality & Its Loose Boundaries”

- The Magical Realist Short Story – Gabriel García Márquez – “The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World” In: *The Vintage Book*; “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” In: *The Incredible and Sad Story of Innocent Erendira and Her Heartless Grandmother* (1972)
- FILM (for homework): *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings*. Dir. Fernando Birri. Screenwriter Fernando Birri, in collaboration with Gabriel García Márquez. Fox Lorber Home Video, 1991
- Juan Rulfo. “Luvina” In: *The Vintage Book*

Unit 7

“Social & Urban Maps”

- Juan Villoro. “Coyote” In: *The Vintage Book*
- José Donoso. “Ana María” In: *The Vintage Book*
- FILM (for homework): *City of God*. Dir. Fernando Meirelles, 2002

Unit 8

“Cultural and Political Dreams of Change (Cuba)”

- Virgilio Piñera. “The One Who Came to Save Me” (*The Vintage Book/online*)
- Antonio Benítez Rojo. “The Scissors” (*The Vintage Book*)
- SCREENING (in class): *Strawberry and Chocolate*. Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea y Juan Carlos Tabío, 1993 (Film)

Unit 9

“The Dictatorship in Argentina”

- Luisa Valenzuela. “The Best Shod”/“The Censors”/ “The Place of Its Quietude” (*The Censors*)
- FILM (for homework): *The Official Story* OR *Kamchatka*

Unit 10

“City Violence & Modern Worlds”

- Roberto Arlt. *The Seven Madmen* (excerpts/copies)
- SCREENING (in class): *Nine Queens*. Dir. Fabián Bielinsky, 2000 (Film)

- SUBMIT CREATIVE SHORT STORY*** (2 COPIES)

Unit 11

REVIEW

- REVIEW—FINAL EXAM
- CREATIVE WORKSHOP

Unit 12

FINAL EXAM

- Written FINAL EXAM (Session #1 through #11)

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).