

**Carleton University
Winter 2012
Department of English**

ENGL 2957A: *Literatures of the Americas II*

Prerequisite: 1.0 credit in ENGL at the 1000 level or, in exceptional cases, permission of the instructor and the department.

Mon/Wed 2:35 - 3:55 pm

Location: 447 TB - *Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

**Instructor: Prof. Sarah Casteel
Email: sarah.casteel@carleton.ca
Office: 1801 Dunton Tower
Office hours: Tuesdays 12-2 pm**

Course Description:

The history of the Americas is characterized by the dramatic uprooting, mixing, and reinvention of cultures that resulted from the "discovery" and colonization of the "New World" as well as the institution of slavery and other forced and voluntary migrations. This history presents both challenges and opportunities for contemporary writers of the Americas, who creatively negotiate the difficult legacies of colonialism and explore such themes as:

- the European fantasy of the New World as paradise
- the encounter between European and indigenous cultures
- the trauma of the Middle Passage and plantation slavery
- the emergence of mixed and creolized identities

In this introductory survey of the literatures of the Americas, we will follow a hemispheric or comparative American studies model, bringing into dialogue literary texts from the Caribbean, Latin America and North America. Giving special emphasis to diaspora, ethnic minority, and indigenous writing, we will consider continuities and discontinuities among visions of the New World that have been put forward by major writers of the Americas including Alejo Carpentier (Cuba), Maryse Condé (Guadeloupe), Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia), and Gloria Anzaldúa (USA). Surveying a variety of modes and genres of writing including magical realism, diasporic writing, and borderlands writing, our particular focus will be on the role that space, nature and landscape play in the articulation of New World identities.

Please note that this course is introductory in nature and no previous knowledge of the literatures of the Americas is expected or required.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

10%	attendance and participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular attendance is essential to your success in this course you are expected to come to class prepared, having completed the assigned reading and with the assigned text in hand the class will combine lecture and discussion; the quality of the class experience will depend on your willingness to engage with the texts and to share your views with your fellow students 	
15%	in-class writing exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> periodically throughout the term you will be asked to complete in-class writing exercises the exercises may ask you to apply a new term or idea to the reading, give a close reading of a passage, or explore your own personal response to the reading or to an audiovisual work they will be unannounced and there will be no make-up exercises except in cases of serious illness (with doctor's note), bereavement, or religious observance you may miss 1 in-class writing exercise without penalty; if you complete all of the exercises, I will drop your lowest grade 	
35%	research essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> suggested topics will be distributed in class 	due in last class
40%	final exam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one scheduled examination consisting of identifications and essay questions 	during exam period

Reading List:

Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World* (Douglas & McIntyre/FSG)
 Maryse Condé, *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* (University of Virginia)
 Gish Jen, *Mona in the Promised Land* (Vintage)
 Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (HarperCollins)
 Guillermo Verdecchia, *Fronteras Americanas* (Talon Books)
 coursepack (containing readings marked *)

All texts (including the coursepack) are available at Haven Books (43 Seneca St. at Sunnyside, (613) 730-9888). Please purchase the editions of the novels specified above.

Recommended Texts and Resources:

I strongly recommend M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (ITP Nelson/ Harcourt Brace), available at bookstores or in the reference section of the library (PN44.5.A2 1999). In addition, you may wish to consult the *MLA Style Manual* (PN147.A28) as well as the Purdue Online Writing Lab (owl.english.purdue.edu). Another valuable resource is the *Literature Resource Centre* (available through the Library Web under "Online Resources": "Journal Articles and Databases").

Course Policies

Email:

- Please use your email account so that I can communicate with you and so that you will receive class emails.

Etiquette:

- Turn off all cell phones in class, as well as any other electronic devices.
- Refrain from talking during class or any other behaviour that is distracting to the instructor and your fellow students.
- Be respectful of each other's perspectives and strive to make sure that every student feels comfortable expressing his or her views.

Completion of Assignments:

- In order to pass the course, **you must complete all** of the course requirements. This includes keeping up with the assigned reading and coming to class prepared and with the assigned text in hand.

Plagiarism:

- Plagiarism is a serious offence, and I am required to report *all* cases to the Dean of the Faculty. Plagiarism includes copying from a book, article, or another student, downloading ideas or material from the internet, or otherwise submitting someone else's work or ideas as your own. See section 14 of the Undergraduate Calendar for further information and come see me if you have any questions or concerns regarding the appropriate use of secondary or internet sources.

Exam:

- The exam will be held during the exam period. Make sure that you do not schedule any holidays until the exam schedule becomes available.

Essay Format:

- Use **MLA format** for all citations, bibliographies etc. (consult the *MLA Handbook* or the Purdue Online Writing Lab at owl.english.purdue.edu for details).
- Staple your essay, double space the text, and type it in 12-point font.
- Include a title, word count, your name, my name, your student number, and the course number.

Essay Content:

- Offer fully developed arguments, employing the vocabulary and analytical frameworks introduced in class.
- Ground your arguments in close readings of the texts and organize them around a central thesis.
- I encourage you to consult me, the TA, and/or the Writing Tutorial Service (404 MacOdrum Library, wtts@carleton.ca, 520-2600 x.1125, www.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service) when preparing your essays.

Grading of Essays:

- Essays are graded on logical coherence, grammar, spelling, adherence to MLA format and appropriate use of secondary sources.
- Keep your rough drafts and notes for each assignment. I reserve the right to examine such materials if I deem it necessary.
- Essays are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the syllabus. **I will deduct a third of a letter grade per day late including weekends** (ie. a B would become a B-) and extensions will be granted only in cases of serious illness (with

doctor's note), bereavement, or religious observance. Any essays not handed directly to me during class must be handed in to the English Department secretary, who will date-stamp them.

- Late papers may be graded without comments.

Academic Accommodations

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by the last official day to withdraw from classes in each term.

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>

Schedule of Readings (subject to revision)

date	topic	reading
Jan 6	introduction	
Jan 8	do the Americas have a common literature?	Neruda, "Ode to Walt Whitman"*
Jan 13	historical and cultural contexts I:	"Vodou: Resistance, Revolution, Resilience" (guest lecture by Sarah Waisvisz)
Jan 15	historical and cultural contexts II:	"The Cannibal Myth: Representation and Dispossession in the Americas" (guest lecture by Gabrielle Etcheverry)
Jan 20	slavery, the marvelous, and Caribbean spaces of resistance	Carpentier, <i>Kingdom of This World</i> Part I
Jan 22		Carpentier, Part II
Jan 27		Carpentier, Parts III and IV
Jan 29		Condé, <i>I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem</i> Part I
Feb 3		Condé, Part II
Feb 5		Condé, Epilogue
Feb 10	the Latin American baroque	Borges, "The Library of Babel"*
Feb 12		Márquez, <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> , p.1-78
Feb 17/19		<i>Reading Week</i>
Feb 24		Márquez, p.79-203
Feb 26		Márquez, p.203-313
March 3		Márquez, p.315-417
March 5	the U.S. suburbs and diasporic belonging	Roth, "Eli the Fanatic"*
March 10		Jen, <i>Mona in the Promised Land</i> , Part I
March 12		Jen, Part II
March 17		Jen, Part III
March 19	the U.S.-Mexican borderlands	Anzaldúa, <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i> (excerpt)*
March 24		Cisneros, "Woman Hollering Creek"* Fuentes, "The Crystal Frontier"*
March 26	Canada and the Americas	King, "Borders"*
March 31		Verdecchia, <i>Fronteras Americanas</i> , Act I
April 2		Verdecchia, Act II
April 7	conclusion	exam review *final essay due in class*

