

**Carleton University
Winter 2015
Department of English**

ENGL 2957A: *Literatures of the Americas II*

Mon/Wed 8:35-9:55

Location: *Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

Instructor: Prof. Sarah Phillips Casteel

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Office: 1801 Dunton Tower

Office hours: Wednesdays 10:00-11:30

Course Description:

The history of the Americas is characterized by the dramatic uprooting, mixing, and reinvention of cultures that resulted from the so-called 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 adopt a hemispheric or comparative American studies approach, 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 genres of writing including magical realism 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. Literatures of the Americas I is not a prerequisite for Literatures of the Americas II.

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 	
5%	research essay proposal and annotated bibliography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a 1-paragraph description of your proposed topic and approach • bibliographic entries should be in MLA format; each entry should summarize the central argument of the source and its relevance to the proposed essay topic 	due in mid-March
30%	research essay (8 pages) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • essays must address at least one of the assigned texts • suggested topics will be distributed in class but I encourage you to develop your own topic if you wish 	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

Required Texts:

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)

All texts will be available at Haven Books (43 Seneca St. at Sunnyside, (613) 730-9888). In addition, readings marked * will be available in electronic format via CULearn and the Ares Course Reserves system (<http://libares01.carleton.ca/>) or the library catalogue. *If you find that a required reading is not available for a given week, please notify me immediately by email.*

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 gmail 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, wts@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 5	introduction	
Jan 7	do the Americas have a common literature?	Neruda, "Ode to Walt Whitman"*
Jan 12	class cancelled	
Jan 14	slavery, the marvelous, and Caribbean spaces of resistance	Carpentier, <i>Kingdom of This World</i> Part I
Jan 19		Carpentier, Part II
Jan 21		Carpentier, Parts III and IV
Jan 26		Condé, <i>I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem</i> Part I
Jan 28		Condé, Part II
Feb 2		Condé, Epilogue
Feb 4	the Latin American baroque	Borges, "The Library of Babel"*
Feb 9		Márquez, <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> , p.1-78
Feb 11		Márquez, p.79-203
Feb 16/18		<i>Reading Week</i>
Feb 23		Márquez, p.203-313
Feb 25		Márquez, p.315-417
March 2	the U.S. suburbs and diasporic belonging	Roth, "Eli the Fanatic"*
March 4		Jen, <i>Mona in the Promised Land</i> , Part I
March 9		Jen, Part II
March 11		Jen, Part III
March 16	the U.S.-Mexican borderlands	Anzaldúa, <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i> (excerpt)*
March 18		Cisneros, "Woman Hollering Creek"* Fuentes, "The Crystal Frontier"*
March 23	Canada and the Americas	King, "Borders"*
March 25		Verdecchia, <i>Fronteras Americanas</i> , Act I
March 30		essay writing workshop
April 1		Verdecchia, Act II
April 6	conclusion	exam review *final essay due in class*