LIT 223: Contemporary Latin American Literature  
Fall 2010  
Wednesday & Friday 11-12:20pm, B321

“...my father made me read Mexican history, study Mexican geography, and understand the names, the dreams and defeats of Mexico: a nonexistent country, I then thought, invented by my father to nourish my infant imagination with yet another marvelous fiction: a land of Oz with a green cactus road, a landscape and a soul so different from those of the United States that they seemed a fantasy.” Carlos Fuentes

Course Description
LIT242 is a three credit Humanities course that satisfies the Diversity requirement. Successful completion of WRT101 is a prerequisite for this course.

In this course, we will read poetry, essays, short prose, and novels from several Latin American nations including Colombia, Peru, Cuba, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, and Chile. We will also examine images of Latin America in film and literature from various critical perspectives.

Student Learning Objectives:  
The students who successfully complete the requirements of this course will be able to:

1. Identify the nations that comprise the political designation “Latin America,” and be able to recognize and discuss the major literary works, genres, movements, and ideological components of this category.

2. Recognize and discuss major themes of Latin American literature; and identify major tropes used by representative authors.

3. Identify the major periods of Latin American literary history—from the precolonial to the postmodern to the transnational—and discuss the role of the author in shaping various historic moments.

4. Apply appropriate and culturally relevant critical lenses to respond to, evaluate, analyze, and understand major works of Latin American literature.

5. Produce a properly formatted written evaluation of selected works of Latin American literature; and demonstrate competency in both research methodologies and literary analysis.
Sample/Recommended Texts:


Evaluation
You will write several short (2-3 page) response papers that will be both analytical—in terms of text and sociopolitical context—and critical. There will also be periodic quizzes as necessary; and there will be a midterm essay and a term paper.

Response papers: 50%
Midterm Essay: 15%
Term Paper: 25%
Participation and Quizzes: 10%

Written assignments must be formatted according to MLA standards. You will find citation guides on our library’s website. Please note that you will also be expected to produce a documented term paper with secondary sources; and you may find appropriate—relevant—resources in our library. You are encouraged to schedule an appointment with one of our reference librarians if you did not attend an instructional seminar in your writing class.

BCC’s Writing Center is located in L125, and you are encouraged to work with our faculty and professional writing tutors. Please note that the center is indeed a tutoring center—you are not to drop off your paper for proofreading as this is not a function of the center.

A note on deadlines: no late papers will be accepted, and papers may not be submitted electronically—via email.
Attendance Policy:
Your presence is vital to our classroom community, so regular attendance is required. You will be permitted four absences after which your grade will be negatively affected. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned texts and to produce written responses both in class and at home.

A note on plagiarism: please give credit where credit is due! Honesty is expected of you. It is expected that the work you hand in will always be your own, and that you will never copy sentences, phrases, paragraphs, or whole essays from any other person's work, for that is plagiarism. If you are ever unclear about how to cite another person or author's ideas, come see me or consult the staff in the writing center.

Sample Class Schedule/Reading List:
(Class schedule is subject to change depending upon class progress.)

Weeks 1 & 2 (9/5 & 9/10, 9/12): From Macondo to McOndo…
Alejo Carpienter Prologue: The Kingdom of This World (handout)
Jorge Manach Roboto “America’s Quixotic Character” (handout)
Arturo Uslar Pietri “The Other America” (handout)
Angel Rama “Literature and Exile” (handout)

Weeks 3 & 4 (9/17, 9/19 & 9/24, 9/26):
Mexico:
Carlos Fuentes “How I started to Write” (handout)
Carlos Fuentes “The Doll Queen” (McNees)
Guillermo Arriaga A Sweet Scent of Death

Weeks 5 & 6 (10/1, 10/3 & 10/8, 10/10):
Colombia:
Gabriel Garcia Marquez Innocent Erendera and Other Stories
Jorge Franco Rosario Tijaras

Week 7 (10/15, 10/17):
Puerto Rico:
Martin Espada The Republic of Poetry, selections TBA
*Please note that Martin Espada will be reading his work on Thursday 10/16 at 6:00pm in the Ciccone Theatre. Your attendance is required.

Weeks 8 & 9 (10/22, 10/24 & 10/29, 10/31):
Dominican Republic:
Junot Diaz The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao
*Midterm Essay is due on 10/29; specific assignment information will be announced.
Week 10 (11/5, 11/7):
Cuba:
Alejo Carpentier “Journey Back to the Source” (McNees)
Jose Marti, collected poems (handout)

Weeks 11 & 12 (11/12, 11/14 & 11/19, 11/21):
Peru:
Mario Vargas Llosa “Novels disguised as History” (handout)
Mario Vargas Llosa “Sunday” (McNees)
Daniel Alarcon War by Candlelight: Stories, selections TBA
Cesar Vallejo, collected poems (handout)

Weeks 13 & 14 (11/26 & 12/3, 12/5): (11/27 is Thanksgiving)
Brazil:
Jorge Amado “Sweat” (McNees)
Clarice Lispector “The Imitation of the Rose” (McNees)
“City of God”
*This film is available in our library and will be an optional addendum to this unit; you may consider the film in your final project.

Week 15: (12/10, 12/12)
Chile:
Pablo Neruda, collected poems (handout)
Isabel Allende “An Act of Vengeance” (handout)
Roberto Bolano “Mauricio ‘The Eye’ Silva” (handout)

Weeks 16 (12/17, 12/19):
Argentina:
Jorge Luis Borges “Death and the Compass” (McNees)
*Term paper is due on 12/17; specific assignment information will be announced.