

**SPAN 373/473: Dictadores y dictaduras (CRN 17704/17709)**

FALL SEMESTER 2013

SUNY-Geneseo Department of Languages and Literatures

MW 4:00 5:15pm Welles 117

Kyle James Matthews  
matthewsk@geneseo.edu  
Welles 209B  
x4252

*Office Hours:*  
Wednesday 12:00 2:00  
Friday: 12:00 1:00  
and by appointment

**Final exam: Monday December 16th, 3:30 6:30pm**

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will read 4 novels written over the course of the 20th century that address the question of Latin American dictatorships. The novels approach their subject in a variety of ways, from harsh condemnation to problematic, ambivalent sympathy, and in response to numerous literary and socio-political movements, including realism, surrealism, and magical realism. As Caudillo, Supremísimo, Presidente, Dictador, or without a name, we will investigate the literary depiction of dictators and dictatorships in the lives and psyches of Latin America.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Recognize patterns of similarities and differences in the depiction of dictators (and life under a dictatorship) by authors responding to a variety of 20th-century literary styles and movements, socio-political contexts, and ideological motives.
- Trace the development of Hispanic American literature in the 20th century – the progression from the vestiges of 19th-century realism through the so-called post-Boom – through the lens of novels of dictators and dictatorship.
- Appreciate the problematic relationship Latin America has with dictators and dictatorships – even those in the distant past –, and perceive how this relationship bears not only on historical memory, but on contemporary social and political structures.

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

- A Spanish-English dictionary (50,000+ word minimum) – access to wordreference.com fulfills this requirement
- A Spanish-Spanish dictionary (50,000+ word minimum) – access to rae.es fulfills this requirement
- Asturias, Miguel Ángel. *El Señor Presidente*.
- García Márquez, Gabriel. *El otoño del Patriarca*.

- Guzmán, Martín Luis. *La sombra del Caudillo*. (PDF)
- Traba, Marta. *Conversación al Sur*.
- Occasional articles on MyCourses (PDF).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

### DAILY CLASS EXPECTATIONS — PARTICIPATION AND PREPARATION (20%)

**Attendance:** Daily attendance is essential for succeeding in this course. We cannot effectively build a coherent narrative of the fantastic if there are holes in our story! You are allowed two absences on non-evaluation days during the semester with no penalty; each additional absence will reduce your final participation grade by 1 point.

**Preparation:** You are responsible for thorough preparation of daily assignments (as indicated on the calendar) **before** class. Good preparation includes reading and making an effort to understand the texts in a way that will enable you to participate actively in class discussions. Most importantly, class can be more fun if you are well-prepared!

**Participation:** You are not expected to be a scholar of Spanish American literature — if you were, you would not be taking this course! You will, however, be asked to think in new ways about texts whose historical and political contexts and motivations may be unfamiliar to you, and whose aesthetic qualities may strike you as confusing or complicated. **Your participation grade will depend both on your willingness to take risks and speak up, ask questions, participate in classroom activities, treat your own ideas and those of your classmates seriously and with respect, and speak exclusively in Spanish.** Remember that there is no dialogue unless we are capable and willing to consider, qualify, and build on one another's thoughts. **The best ideas and most striking insights often result from the synthesis of multiple unfinished thoughts and observations.** Please refer to the document of class participation for a variety of valid options for contributing to class discussion.

**Analytical Questions:** While I will provide analytical questions for *La sombra del Caudillo* as models, you will be responsible for posting an analytical question on the course forum for each class session about the three subsequent novels. You will also be responsible for responding to at least one question posted by me or one of your peers for all four novels. Questions must be posted by 9:00pm the day before class; responses by 8:00am the day of class. Your thoughtful questions and answers help me structure class around the aspects of the texts that jump out at and interest you, and ensure that you come to class with something to contribute to the conversation! Your questions and responses will be graded as follows and factored into your final participation grade:

- √+ analytical question, thoughtful response, posted on time
- √ analytical question posted late, cursory or late response
- √- comprehension question or no question, cursory or absent response

### REACTION PAPERS (20%)

You will be responsible for turning in one 1-2 page (250-500 word) double-spaced reaction paper in Spanish each week on the text we are currently reading. You may turn this paper in on Monday or Wednesday. These reaction papers may include a reflection on your im-

mediate reactions, any aspect(s) of the texts that you find particularly important or confusing, or anything that strikes you as interesting. You may also respond to topics or questions I will distribute to guide you in your readings, dig deeper into any of the analytical questions submitted by you or your classmates, or respond to our in-class discussion. Your reaction paper should be **analytical in nature** and **not** simply provide a synopsis of the reading or restate a classroom discussion.

I encourage you to take the time to write these reflections *before* the class in which we discuss the texts in question. Thoughtful reflection prior to class will help you articulate your thoughts more clearly during class discussions!

#### WRITTEN MIDTERM EXAM (20%)

There will be an written take-home midterm exam, which will include identifications, short responses, and short essays on topics we have discussed in class. The specifics of the exam will be covered as the midterm approaches.

#### FINAL WRITTEN PAPER (30%)

In lieu of a final written exam, you will write an 6-8 page research paper in Spanish about a dictator novel that we did *not* read in class (discussed with me by November 25th). You can find a list of acceptable novels in the “Bibliography” of this syllabus. *Any departure from this list must be approved by me.* Your final paper will be graded based on the quality of your analysis and the correctness of your Spanish, and will be due on December 16th at or before the final exam session.

#### ORAL PRESENTATIONS (10%)

During our final exam session, each student will give a 10-minute oral presentation, in the style of an academic conference presentation, on his or her final paper topic.

## CLASSROOM POLICIES

#### GRADED WORK

All work listed on the calendar is due on the day for which it is listed. Late work will be penalized a full letter grade per day late. Be sure to read and follow instructions, proofread your work carefully, and rigorously attribute when you cite the ideas of others.

#### MAKE-UP WORK

Because attendance is required and thorough preparation essential, students are responsible for all course work. For this reason the calendar is detailed. If you have any doubts about what you might have missed, contact a classmate or your instructor. Work delayed because of an unexcused absence will not be rescheduled.

#### DICTIONARIES

I am not a dictionary! If you'd like to look words up during class, please bring a dictionary (or a smartphone with access to a dictionary).

#### CELL PHONES

*Please make certain that your cell phone won't ring or vibrate during class, especially if you will be using a smartphone to access online dictionaries. Respect the energy and preparation of your classmates. Rings, vibrations, and texting will not be tolerated in class.*

#### CONTACTING ME

The best way to communicate with me is by email. I will do my best to respond promptly, but please be patient after 5:00pm and on weekends and holidays.

### ACADEMIC HONESTY

We will observe the Academic Honesty Policy and its related process as stated in the 2013-2014 *Undergraduate Bulletin* and in the *Student Handbook*.

The Department of Languages and Literatures takes cheating and plagiarism very seriously! Do not jeopardize your success in this course if you have *any* questions about either of these offenses, please come and talk to me.

### DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES MAKE-UP EXAMINATION POLICY

The Department of Languages and Literatures authorizes make-up examinations **only** for **documented reasons** involving personal medical or family emergencies or due to participation in College team sports or legitimate academic events (e.g., Model United Nations, scholarly conferences). If such documentation is provided, it is up to the instructor's discretion to grant a make-up exam or to excuse the student from taking the exam without penalty. If the instructor approves a make-up exam, its content may significantly differ in format from the scheduled exam. If the student's performance in the course up to the date of the missed exam makes it impossible to pass the course, even if taking a make-up and scoring 100%, no make-up or special arrangements will be offered. The Department considers make-up exams a **privilege**, not a right.

### ACCOMODATIONS

SUNY Geneseo will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented physical (including pregnancy), emotional or learning disabilities. Students must contact the Director in the Office of Disability Services (Dr. Tabitha Buggie-Hunt, 105D Erwin) and their faculty to discuss needed accommodations as early as possible in the semester.

### A FINAL NOTE

My goal is not only for you to succeed in this course, but to enjoy it enough that your interest in the language extends beyond the bounds of the classroom. Every group of students is different; **if you feel that any aspect of the course is not working for you, I encourage you to share your concerns with me, and even help think of possible solutions.**

Likewise, if you are having difficulty with the material, the workload, class discussions, or any other aspect of the course, please do let me know so we can ensure that you get the most out of the time you put in!

If you are struggling in this class or are concerned about your grade, you should meet with me during office hours immediately. Problems addressed early in the semester can often be solved by adjusting study/work habits!

### FINAL GRADE BREAKDOWN

	A	95-100	A-	90-94	
B+	87-89	B	84-86	B-	80-83
C+	77-79	C	74-76	C-	70-73
	D	60-69			
	E	0-59			

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### NOVELS OF DICTATORS AND DICTATORSHIPS:

(\* indicates that the novel was read in class)

Mármol, José. *Amalia* (1851)<sup>1</sup>

Blanco Fombona, Rufino. *El hombre de hierro* (1907)

Valle-Inclán, Ramón. *Tirano Banderas* (1926)<sup>2</sup>

\*Guzmán, Martín Luis. *La sombra del Caudillo* (1929)

Blanco Fombona, Rufino. *La bella y la fiera* (1931)

\*Asturias, Miguel Ángel. *El Señor Presidente* (published 1946, completed 1933)

Bedoyas, Manuel. *El tirano bebedas* (1939)

Zalamea, Jorge. *El gran Burundún-Burundá ha muerto* (1952)

Ayala, Francisco. *Muertes de perro* (1958)

Puig, José Soler. *Bertillón 166* (1960)

Ibargüengoitia, Jorge. *El atentado* (1962)

. *Los relámpagos de agosto* (1963)

Sarduy, Severo. *Gestos* (1963)

Lafourcade, Enrique. *La fiesta del rey Acab* (1964)

Granados, Manuel. *Adire y el tiempo roto* (1967)

Ibargüengoitia, Jorge. *Maten al león* (1969)

---

1. Since it was published well before the 20th century, *Amalia* cannot be used for your final paper.

2. *Tirano Banderas*, though written by a Spaniard, is set in Latin America and is generally regarded as a major influence on the dictator novel. It is the *only* work not written by a Latin American author that may be used for the final paper.

- Aguilera Malta, Demetrio. *El secuestro del general* (1973)  
Carpentier, Alejo. *El recurso del método* (1974)  
Roa Bastos, Augusto. *Yo el Supremo* (1974)  
\*García Márquez, Gabriel. *El otoño del Patriarca* (1975)  
Uslar Pietri, Arturo. *Oficio de difuntos* (1976)  
Puig, Manuel. *El beso de la mujer araña* (1976)  
Donoso, José. *Casa de campo* (1978)  
Traba, Marta. *Conversación al sur* (1981)  
Valenzuela, Luisa. *Cola de lagartija* (1983)  
Martínez, Tomás Eloy. *La novela de Perón* (1985)  
García Márquez, Gabriel. *El general en su laberinto* (1989)  
Vargas Llosa, Mario. *La fiesta del chivo* (2000)  
Beltrán, Rosa. *La corte de los ilusos* (2007)  
Uribe, Álvaro. *Expediente del atentado* (2008)