

Spring 2010

Latin American Historiographic Metafiction

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[Meeting time(s)]

[Room]
Grading: [Grading Scheme]
Office Hours: [Times]

“The past isn’t dead and buried. In fact, it isn’t even past.”
—William Faulkner

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The authors of Latin America have been writing literature that implicates the historical record for as long as they have produced writing. To what, though, do we owe the explosion of historical literature that has been produced in the last 30 years? This seminar is intended as an introduction to and in-depth exploration of this body of work, the so-called New Historical Novel in Latin America. Beginning with the genre’s theoretical underpinnings—beginning, indeed, with its (at best problematic) name—and historical antecedents, this course will explore a selection of exemplary works culminating in the consideration of recent trends. This course will provide a foundational understanding and a panoramic vision of the richness of this ongoing, flourishing genre.

COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course you will be able to read and discuss the Latin American New Historical Novel intelligently and contextually. You will be able to recognize the various common ways in which history is appropriated and the effects of its ideological manipulation. You will furthermore have gained the valuable professional experience of formally presenting your work to your peers in a conference-like setting, and of leading your peers in a seminar-style class discussion.

REQUIRED TEXTS (AVAILABLE AT [[[PLACE]]])

Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda. *Sab*

Homero Aridjís. *1492: vida y tiempos de Juan Cabezón de Castilla*

Alejo Carpentier. *El arpa y la sombra*

Alejo Carpentier. *El reino de este mundo*

Gabriel García Márquez. *El otoño del patriarca*

Fernando del Paso. *Noticias del imperio*

Augusto Roa Bastos. *Yo el supremo*

Ignacio Solares. *Madero, el otro*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Daily Expectations

You are expected to come to class having completed the reading assignments scheduled for the class meeting and having prepared 2-3 questions for discussion. You should post these questions on the course's message board by noon the day before. You will also be responsible for reading and responding, briefly or at length, to 2-3 of your classmates' questions on the message board prior to class. These questions and responses should help you focus and articulate your thoughts regarding our readings, and will heavily inform class discussion.

Nota bene: At the conclusion of the seminar the message boards will be archived and distributed to all students enrolled in the course for their records.

Oral presentations

Each week a different student will "run" the discussion during the second hour of the seminar. You will meet and share a draft of your discussion plan with the me at least 24 hours prior to class. Additionally, each student will prepare and give a brief presentation on one of our theoretical readings.

Midterm paper

The midterm paper will consist of an 8-10 page, MLA style paper intended for a conference panel. This may be considered a "first draft" of the final paper, but must also be complete, coherent, and self-contained. An extra class meeting will be arranged so that you may present your work in a colloquium style setting. Grades will be determined based on the originality and depth of the research as well as on the coherence and correctness of its presentation.

Final paper

The final paper will consist of a 12-15 page paper analyzing of a historical novel *not* read in class. A 1-2 page proposal will be due before **Class 11**. Please consult the bibliography at the end of this syllabus, or with the me, if you need suggestions. Grades will be determined based on the originality and depth of the research as well as on the coherence and correctness of its presentation.

GRADING

Class Participation 15% includes weekly preparations and participation both in class and on the message board. Anyone in doubt regarding his or her participation grade should consult with me.

Oral Presentation 25% includes preparation of a lesson plan and its successful implementation in class.

Midterm Paper 25% includes a component for the text itself as well as for its formal presentation and defense during the colloquium.

Final Paper 35%

CLASSROOM POLICIES

This class will be given in English and Spanish. You should feel free to speak whatever language they are most comfortable using. You will be required, however, to write at least one of your two papers in Spanish.

Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. You are afforded one “free” absence to be used at any time and for any reason. Should you miss class, you will be expected to augment his or her activity on the message board.

Participation in lively debate and discussion in class and on the forums is encouraged and expected. Students who feel less comfortable speaking up in class may augment their activity on the message board, but this should not be seen as a replacement for live discussion.

Please turn off all cell phones upon entering the classroom! Please respect the energy and preparation of your classmates. Rings, vibrations, and texting will not be tolerated in class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The policies and procedures concerning academic dishonesty, as published in the most recent Student Handbook, will be adhered to and enforced in this course. All outside source and reference material, including Internet sources used in the assignments must be correctly noted or cited in accordance with a style guide (e.g. *MLA Handbook*).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Nota bene: While most of the novels we will read for this seminar are relatively short, there is one novel an order of magnitude longer than the rest. We will spend two class periods discussing Fernando del Paso’s *Noticias del imperio*; please look ahead with this novel in mind. It is advisable that you not put it off until the week it will be dealt with in class.

Week 1. Introductions: The New Historical Novel in Latin America

No homework

Week 2. Theoretical Foundations: The Old Historical Novel, The New Historical Novel, & The Problem with Postmodernism

Seymour Menton. “Prependix” and “Latin America’s New Historical Novel: Definitions and Origins” from *Latin America’s New Historical Novel*. [PDF]

Fernando Aínsa. *Reescribir el pasado*. [PDF]

Mikhail Bakhtin. Excerpts from *The Dialogic Imagination*. [PDF]

Mikhail Bakhtin. Excerpts from *Rabelais and His World*. [PDF]

Linda Hutcheon. “Historiographic Metafiction: “The Pastime of Past Time”” from *A Poetics of Postmodernism*. [PDF]

Week 3. Historical Antecedents: The Family Romance

György Lukács. Excerpts from *The Historical Novel*. [PDF]

Doris Sommer. Chapters 1 (“Irresistible Romance”) and 4 (“Sab C’est Moi”) from *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. [PDF]

Grützmaker, Lukasz. “Las trampas del concepto ‘la nueva novela histórica’ y de la retórica de la historia postoficial.” [PDF]

Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda. *Sab*.

Week 4. Historical Antecedents II: La novela de dictadura

Gabriel García Márquez. *El otoño del patriarca*.

Week 5. Origins

Alejo Carpentier. *El reino de este mundo*.

Week 6. The Quincentennial

Alejo Carpentier. *El arpa y la sombra*.

Week 7.

Augusto Roa Bastos. *Yo el Supremo*.

Week 8. National Antiheroes

Fernando del Paso. *Noticias del imperio*.

Week 9. National Antiheroes (cont'd)

Fernando del Paso. *Noticias del imperio*.

Week 10. The Bodies of Mexico's Historiographic Metafiction

Ignacio Solares. *Madero, el otro*.

Recommended: Álvaro Uribe. *Expediente del atentado*.

Recommended: Jorge Volpi. *La paz de los sepulcros*.

Week 11. The Quincentennial Redux: The Jew in the Historical Novel

Homero Aridjís. *1492: vida y tiempos de Juan Cabezón de Castilla*.

Recommended: Homero Aridjís. *Memorias del Nuevo Mundo*.

Recommended: Jorge Isaacs. *María*.

Recommended: Doris Sommer. "María's Disease: A National Romance (Con)founded" from *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. [PDF]

Week 12. Conclusions

PERSONAL NOTE

It is my sincere hope that you enjoy and succeed in this course, and my intention to help you do so each step of the way. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the course material, or suggestions to improve your experience of this literature, your thoughts and presence are always welcome.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Theory and Criticism