English 2335.001
Themes and Genres in the Literature of the Americas:
Reinvented Selves
Summer I 2013
CI-106

Texts:

Esquivel, Laura. Like Water for Chocolate.
Marquez, Gabriel Garcia. Love in the Time of Cholera.
Mosely, Walter. The Devil in a Blue Dress.
Davies, Robertson. Fifth Business.

Description

Who you are when you are born doesn't mean that's who you are going to be at the end of your life. You can change yourself--your identity, your name, your appearance, your economic circumstance, and, in some cases, your past. This idea--that we can reinvent ourselves, that we can become someone else--is an idea that "sprang up" along with the idea of "America" itself. We are going to examine this idea of "self invention" and will explore the consequences--good, bad, and indifferent for successions of generations of people who consider themselves "American." We will look at the literature and culture of the Americas, not simply the United States.

Course Objectives

1. To examine the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts by reading texts by authors from a range of cultures and nationalities.
2. To explore the distinctive characteristics of relevant literary periods, genres, and writers.
3. To understand and use basic literary terms and concepts.
4. To develop analytic skills by close reading, class discussion, and writing.
5. To use writing as a tool for learning.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

After completing this course, students will:

- Recognize the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts;
- Respond critically to literary works.

**Grades**

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<th>Component</th>
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<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Creative Project</td>
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<td>Paper One</td>
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<td>Paper Two</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Daily Work</td>
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A 90-100
B 80-89
C 70-79
D 60-69
F below 60

**Course Requirements:**

**Presentation:**

You work in groups of two to four students to research, write, and present a group presentation of a topic relevant to the literature we are studying. You want to find GOOD information (beware Milt's Melville Website and other easy-to-find but not very accurate information you'll get on 'net search engines), you want to show how what you find relates to the work we're reading at the time, and you need to effectively present the information that you've found in an interesting way that engages your fellow students. Visuals, Power Point, interpretive dance--don't be afraid to try new things to make your presentation both engaging and educational. I once had a student learn and perform all the dances from *The Great Gatsby*. I want to meet with the members of the group two to three days before the presentation so I can give you feedback and help. I also want to get a sense of what everyone in the group has contributed, so, on the class period after your presentation, I'd like you to turn in an evaluation form. More information
will be available on the course website. These will be presented throughout the semester. Here's the link to the Student Wiki Pages. You'll need these to post, communicate, and present your work.

Creative Project

Your creative project should respond to or interpret one of the course's literary works in relation to your own ideas about invented and what it has meant to the people of the Americas. You might rework a story from another character's point of view, you might write a short play, you might act out a scene, make a movie or multi-media presentation, write a song--if you have an idea, try it out on me. Two of my recent favorites were a group of students (they asked if they could collaborate) on a musical comedy based on a work we were reading, and another person who wrote a Poe-style murder-mystery based on class material. You should include a one-page reflection that shows how your project relates to the ideas we've been working on in the course and should "link" your project to one of the course objectives. You will be needed to make a five-minute presentation to the class (if a group of you stage a musical comedy, we'll adjust the time accordingly). You'll be evaluated on your effort, on how creative you are, how your project illuminates the work we are reading, and how well you do. These will be presented throughout the semester.

Papers

Paper #1 should be a short (3-5) page analysis of some aspect of one of the works we have read to date. You could analyze a character, look for a theme, explore imagery or metaphor, etc. Papers should have a clear focus or main point, and supporting detail should be provided in the form of direct quotation. Paper #2 is a 4-6 page exploration of some aspect of the course's theme and the consequences it has had for the peoples of the Americas. Your essay should have a clearly stated main point, proposition, or theme with supporting arguments. In addition, your essay should refer to at least two of the texts covered in this course. Feel free to draw in relevant historical, political, cultural or personal examples to enhance your point. You will need to use some outside materials, but I am more interested in the connections you make between texts, your own ideas, and contexts. Please schedule individual conference with me at least two weeks before the due date so we can discuss your ideas and your progress towards completing this assignment. Papers should done in MS word or a similar program, with 12 point Times New Roman font, normal margins, and double spaced. Citation should be done in the MLA format.

Exam

For your exam, you will write an analytical essay responding to your choice of two of three prompts. The questions will center on thematic and genre concerns that link and distinguish the major texts that we will cover this semester, requiring you to use specific evidence from them to support your argument. They also will require you to make connections that show your understanding of relevant historical, cultural, and literary contexts that we will cover through group presentations, class discussions, and other readings. You will also be asked to demonstrate your familiarity with key terms and concepts explored in the course.
Daily Grades

The major business of this class is to read. If you can come, on time, every day, having done the reading, you will do fine. Each novel is broken up into manageable ‘chunks,’ so that I don’t expect you to read the whole book in one sitting. Reading is always due on the day it appears on the syllabus, so that, if the reading is ‘Great Gatsby Chapters 1-3), you should show up having already read the first three chapters of that book.

The exam will be in two parts, each worth a total of two points:

**Objective**—These will be fact based answers to determine whether or not you have done the reading. You can answer them quickly; I’ll give you a free answer now. At one point in *Great Gatsby*, we are told that the light at the end of the Buchannan’s dock is green.

I will ask you, “What color is the light at the end of the Buchannan’s dock?” You will answer “Green”.

There will be up to four objective questions worth a total of two points.

**Discussion**—The other two points will be based on your ability to effectively answer a discussion question based on some idea or concept in the reading.

2 points—You wrote in a thoughtful, careful manner about the material.
1 point—You wrote in a way that showed you’d read the material.
0 points—You wrote in a way that showed you were present but not well prepared.

Course Policies:

**Attendance and Tardy Policy**

You need to make every reasonable effort to attend every class. I realize this will not always be possible. Three types of absences may be excused: illness, personal emergency, and school business. If you are ill enough to miss class, you are ill enough to seek medical attention, and your illness will be excused when I receive some sort of medical documentation. If you have some sort of personal emergency, such as an illness or death in the family, please notify student affairs and they will arrange for you to make up any missed work. If you miss because of school business (band trip, athletic event, etc.), please let me know before you leave so that you will not return from your trip behind in your school work.

**NOTE:** If you accumulate two absences that are unexcused, I reserve the right to penalize your grade up to and including failure of the course. If you miss four or more classes without reasonable explanation, you run the risk of failing.

**Tardies:** This is a 2:00 pm class. What are you going to do--oversleep? Don't be late. If you come after class starts, you will be considered tardy. Two tardies count as an unexcused absence.
**Late Work:** Daily work cannot be turned in late for any reason. I will not accept late papers or projects unless you have talked to me in advance of the due date about an extension. Makeup exams will only be given in extraordinary situations that are discussed with me in advance. No late work will be accepted for any reason after the final exam.

**Extra Credit and Make-Up Assignments:** If you miss class, you can make up the related daily points by writing a review of a poetry or fiction reading, play, lecture, art exhibit, or other cultural event related in some meaningful way to multicultural America. If you miss no classes, you may write such a review for extra credit points. During the semester, I will announce these events as I hear of them. If you know of others, please tell the rest of us. The first step is to attend such a reading, play, or lecture. Then compose a brief summary of the event in which you describe what happened (or what you saw) with details. Finally, give your thoughtful opinion of the event: Was any particular part of the event moving, brilliant, or clever? What was it like to be there? What was important or significant about the event? What did you learn? The review should be 1-2 pages (typed, double-spaced) and is due to me no later than 3 weekdays after the event. Reviews will be evaluated on a 4-point scale: 4 is for a detailed, specific, and insightful review; 3 is the score I will award most often; 2 is for reviews that are pretty vague; and 0 to 1 is the score you will earn if I'm not sure you even attended the event. You may hand in no more than two reviews during the semester. Daily work cannot be made up in any other way for any reason. No reviews will be accepted after the final exam. *Hint:* You may be able to assure an evaluation score higher than a 0 or 1 if you are able to attach to your review an event ticket, program, brochure or other paraphernalia demonstrating your attendance.

**Academic Honesty:** I will follow the policy that appears in the university catalogue and in the student code of conduct. Plagiarism, which is “the presentation of work of another as one's own work” is only one form of academic dishonesty, which also includes falsification (the intentional alteration of information), fabrication (the intentional invention of information), multiple submission (using the same material for two separate assignments or courses without permission from the instructors), and abuse of academic materials (the intentional destruction of resource materials). Sometimes students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example) because they are unaware of the standards that apply. If you are unsure of how to document or properly use information, please check with me WELL BEFORE THE PAPER IS DUE. Also, know that I have some heavy-duty anti-plagiarism web applications, so you'll probably get caught. If you have questions or doubts about what constitutes a breach of integrity, a violation of policies or a proper citation, it is important that you consult with me. The SMALLEST penalty you will get if you are caught is a zero on the project; you could, potentially fail the course, and, if you have plagiarized in other classes, you may face disciplinary action by the university.

I only feel it fair to notice that this issue is something the university is "Hot and Bothered" about right now, and that, if we suspect something, we are now REQUIRED to notify the administration. This isn't something we can keep "in house" any more.

All of this can be avoided simply by doing your own work to the best of your ability.

**Writing Center**

The Writing Center of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi provides free help for students at any stage in the writing process. Writing center consultants are trained to work with writers one-on-one.
one to help them find ideas, organize their thoughts, cite sources, and succeed at all aspects of the writing task. The writing center works closely with faculty across campus to understand the writing projects they assign and to help students meet the expectations of those assignments. The writing center is located in the Glasscock building. Both drop-in and scheduled appointments are available. More information is available at http://critical.tamucc.edu/wiki/WC/Home.

**Academic Advising**

It is imperative that all students visit regularly with an academic adviser. Each college within the university has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisers to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. To find out how to contact the right adviser, go to: http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php

Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information, go to: http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac

**Grade Appeal Process**

As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs

**Students with Disabilities**

Notice to Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361)825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom, or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance.

**Reminder to English Majors**

As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should keep a copy of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

**A Note on Reading Assignments:** Readings must be completed by the date noted. Some of the readings are lengthy. To avoid falling behind, you will need to determine how much time you
require to get the reading done and build that time into your schedule. It is a good idea to use the weekends (and class days without reading assignments) to get ahead in your reading.
## Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change):

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<th>June 3</th>
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<th>6</th>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to the Course; Discussion of &quot;American&quot; and &quot;The Americas&quot;; key concepts and ideas; Kate Chopin's &quot;Story of an Hour,&quot; hand out.</td>
<td>Walter Moseley, <em>Devil in a Blue Dress</em> (DBD), Part One.</td>
<td>DBD, Part Two.</td>
<td>DBD, Part Three.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finish DBD.</td>
<td>Robertson Davies, <em>Fifth Business</em> (FB), Ch 1.</td>
<td>FB 2</td>
<td>Finish DBD.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finish LWC.</td>
<td>Film: <em>Santitas.</em></td>
<td>Gabriel Garcia Marquez, <em>Love in the Time of Cholera</em> (LTC) 3-72.</td>
<td>LTC 73-142 <strong>Paper #2 due.</strong></td>
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<th>July 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>LTC 143-212</td>
<td>LTC 213-282</td>
<td>Finish LTC. Film selections from of LTC</td>
<td>Fourth of July Holiday. Contemplate the Americas.</td>
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### Final

The final examination will be during the regular class time on Friday, July 5th.

### Electronics Policies

Cell phones must be turned off and put away during class time. While we're on the subject of technology, note that you may not "record" any class, either in an audio or visual format, without the instructor's permission. I'll likely give it, but you do need to ask. Use of laptops and notebooks should be sparing, specifically only for the purpose of taking notes. And, although I don't like to have to say this, if you are e-mailing or on any social networking software during class, you'll be counted absent that day.
In Conclusion

This should be a worthwhile and even enjoyable class. You can count on me to do three things. I will read everything you have to, so depending on the author, we will either enjoy or suffer together. I will endeavor to make class as interesting and as stimulating as possible. Finally, I am here to help you, but I cannot do so unless you let me know when you need help. Communicate.