English 2335.003
Themes and Genres in the Literature of the Americas:
*Reinvented Selves*
TTh 11 am
Center for Instruction (CI) 128
Spring 2013

*Texts:*

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

*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.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Teaching</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Project/Essay</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper One</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Paper Two</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Paper Two</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Work</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
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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. You must clarify the historical context of the topic as well as present or explain or identify important terms, themes, or ideas.

Visuals, Power Point, interpretive dance--don't be afraid to try new things to make your presentation both engaging and educational. On the other hand, reading aloud from a power point is a great way to insure a low score. 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.
You should encourage class involvement by asking questions, providing handouts etc. 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. One student learned and performed all of the dances from *The Great Gatsby*. 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 need 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, how well you present, and the quality of the write up that you do. These will be presented throughout the semester.

**Papers**

Papers 1 and 2 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 or 11 point Calibri (in other words, the default that Word uses), normal margins, and double spaced. Citation should be done in the MLA format.

**Exams**
For your exams, you will also be asked to demonstrate your familiarity with key terms and concepts explored in the course. You will also write in class analytical essays 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. I do believe in reviews, so I will provide a review sheet a week prior to each exam. One will be give in the middle of the term; the other will be given during the final examination period.

**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 Buchanan’s dock is green.

I will ask you, “What color is the light at the end of the Buchanan’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 three absences that are unexcused, I will deduct 5 points from your FINAL AVERAGE, and will continue doing so for each additional absence. If you miss five or more classes without reasonable explanation, you run the risk of failing.

**Tardies:** This is an 11:00 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, movie, play, lecture, art exhibit, or other cultural event related in some meaningful way to reinvention in the Americas. 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, film, 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 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

Academic Advising

The College of Arts and Humanities requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as
soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan,
which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's
Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

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: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Corpus Christi Hall 116, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading(s)</th>
<th>What's Due</th>
<th>Presentation Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course; Discussion of &quot;American&quot; and &quot;The Americas&quot;;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>key concepts and ideas;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kate Chopin's &quot;Story of an Hour,&quot; hand out.</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (GG), Ch. 1-3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bio/Critical Introduction to the Works of Scott Fitzgerald</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>GG 4-5</td>
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<td>February 5</td>
<td>GG 6-7</td>
<td>Prohibition in the 1920s</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Finish GG.</td>
<td>The 1920s in American Literature</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Robertson Davies, Fifth Business (FB), Ch 1. (Note that Davies likes to</td>
<td>Bi/Critical Introduction to the Works of Robertson Davies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>divide his chapters into subsections; don’t be distracted by them—there are</td>
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<td>14 short subsections to Chapter 1)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>FB 2</td>
<td>Essay #1 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>FB 3-4; Read Christian Sauve’s &quot;Being Canadian&quot;</td>
<td>Major Themes in Canadian Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reading/Activity</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><em>Ceremony</em> 68-138.</td>
<td>Major Themes in Native American Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 11-15</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>You’ll discover that Walter Mosely makes great beach reading.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td><em>Ceremony</em>, 139-201</td>
<td>Feminist Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Finish <em>Ceremony</em>.</td>
<td>The Vietnam War in Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>LWC Apr-June</td>
<td>Mariachi Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>LWC July-Sept.</td>
<td>Major Themes in the Literature of Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Finish LWC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>LTC 73-142</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>LTC 143-212; Selections from Pablo Neruda's <em>One Hundred Sonnets of Love</em></td>
<td>Major Themes in South American Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>LTC 213-282</td>
<td>“The Boom” in Latin-American Literature (El Book Latinoamericano)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Finish LTC</td>
<td>Magical Realism</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>DIBD Part 2; James Balwin “Notes of</td>
<td>Major Themes in</td>
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**Final**

The final examination will be at 11 am on Tuesday, May 14.

**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.