Course Description

Using migration and movement across borders as its thematic focus, this course examines literatures of the Americas, seeking to demonstrate how literary and cultural imaginaries drive cultural movement. From South America to Central America to the Caribbean and to the North, dictatorial regimes and oppressive political projects have inspired people, for better or for worse, to imagine the U.S. as a land of opportunity and political freedom. The novels, films, and essays under investigation in this class will give voice to the experience of movement and migration, posing questions about citizenship, belonging, and the problems of assimilating to an alien culture. Furthermore, this class will weave together a diverse range of literature that spans across the Americas, aiming to identify cross-currents in the social and political contexts that inspire cultural diaspora. Incorporating this analytical lens to examine literature of the Americas will allow students to understand the U.S. within a broader arena of trans-cultural discourse.

Course Objectives

1. To consider how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience by examining the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts.
2. To use literature to explore ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures and nationalities.
3. To recognize the distinctive characteristics of relevant literary periods, genres, and writers.
4. To understand and use basic literary terms and concepts.
5. To develop analytic skills by close reading, class discussion, and writing.
6. To use writing as a tool for learning.

Student Learning Objectives:

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills in four Core Objectives defined by the Higher Education Coordinating Board of the State of Texas:
Critical Thinking
CT1. Generate and communicate ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information.

Communication Skills
CS1. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication.

Social Responsibility:
SR1. Demonstrate intercultural competence.

Personal Responsibility:
PR1. Connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision making.

Required Texts

Cristina García, *Dreaming in Cuba*
Gabriel García Marquez, *Of Love and Other Demons*
Cormac McCarthy, *All the Pretty Horses*
Héctor Tobar, *The Tattooed Soldier*

In addition to these texts, some of the required readings are available for download on the Internet. When we cover these readings in class, students should either bring hard copies or bring a laptop or tablet on which they may access the readings. **Cell phones are not permitted for accessing course readings in class.**

Course Grading

The course will be structured on a 1000-point scale. The scores you receive on your assignments, exams, blackboard postings, reading quizzes, and participation will be totaled at the end of the semester, and your final grade will be calculated based on this score. The points will be distributed as follows:

- Writing Assignment #1: 200 points
- Writing Assignment #2: 300 points
- Blackboard Postings: 50 points (25 points each)
- Reading Quizzes: 50 points
- Participation: 100 points
- Exam 1: 150 points
- Exam 2: 150 points

Participation will be calculated based on class attendance, participation in class discussions, and preparedness for class discussions. Reading quizzes may be factored into this grade as well. If a student is absent for a class period, he/she is not participating. Students will be expected to bring their text to class every day, having read the assignment due for that day.

Class Policies
**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Students will automatically receive a zero on the assignment and will likely be subject to disciplinary action by the university.

**Classroom/professional behavior**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf)). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**Disabilities Accommodations**

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 at (361) 825-5816.

Policy on class attendance: Students are allowed a maximum of four (4) absences. All absences count equally, irrespective of the cause, and students who exceed four absences will be penalized 50 points on their final grade for every absence over the limit.

- Note: Students who participate in university-sanctioned activities should meet with me during the first week of classes.

Dropping a Class: I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Please be aware that you are allowed 6 drops in your entire undergraduate career, so these decisions must be made carefully.

Wednesday, November 15 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

If I am absent: If I need to cancel class because my car broke down, or if I am ill, etc., I will try to get someone to post a sign. I also will try to email you all before class. However, if you come to class and I am not here by the time 15 minutes has elapsed (from when class is to start), please assume that class is canceled.

Policy on Laptops and Cell Phones: Cell phones are not permitted in class. If a student is found using a cell phone, they will be counted absent for that day. Laptops may only be used to access a reading posted on Blackboard.

Late Writing Projects: All papers are due on the date listed on the syllabus. Students submitting their papers after this time will lose one letter grade for every class period that the paper is late. Students must submit their assignments via the link provided on Blackboard.

Blackboard Grade Center: You will see grades for assignments, exams, and blackboard discussion postings appear on Blackboard during the semester. While these scores may be useful in tracking your grade throughout the semester, they should NOT be used to calculate your final grade. Several point categories will not appear on Blackboard (such as Participation and Reading Quizzes), and only I will have access to these scores. If you are ever concerned about your grade, visit me in my office and we can discuss the issue in person.

Resources

1. Writing Center: The Writing Center of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi provides free help for students at any stage of 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 Center for Academic Student Achievement in CASA 112 (formerly Glasscock Center). Both drop-in and scheduled appointments are available. For more information see http://casa.tamucc.edu/wc.php.

2. **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

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Blackboard 9.1:** To log into Blackboard, go to: http://bb9.tamucc.edu. You must have a NET ID (also known as an Active Directory account) to log in. For instructions on how to get this account and more information about using Blackboard, go to: http://distance-education.tamucc.edu/student_resources.html. If you need additional help at any time to access, download, or print course materials on Blackboard, please contact the Island Online (IOL) Help Desk by telephone at (361) 825-2825 or by email at iolsupport@tamucc.edu.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**October Film Series**

During the month of February, instructors in the Core Literature program will host three free film screenings on campus. These events are open to students and faculty and the host for the evening will lead a discussion on the film following the screening. These discussions will provide participants with an opportunity to address ideas and issues relevant to the film and to the world around us. To this end, the October Film Series is designed to
build community around the study of film and literature, and students are encouraged to bring their friends and family for a fun evening on campus. Raffle tickets will be handed out at each film screening, and a drawing will be held during the final screening for a special prize provided by the English Department. In some cases, extra credit assignments may be attached to the film screening.

**Course Calendar (Subject to Change)**

**Unit One—Imagining the Americas**

Week 1: (August 29, 31)
- Thursday
  - Introduction
  - Syllabus Overview

Week 2: (September 5, 7)
- Tuesday
  - Jorge Luis Borges, “The South” (Blackboard)
- Thursday

Week 3: (September 12, 14)
- Tuesday
  - Gabriel García Márquez, *Of Love and Other Demons* (Chapters 1-2)
- Thursday
  - Gabriel García Márquez, *Of Love and Other Demons* (Chapters 3-5)

**Unit Two—Transnational Migrations**

Week 4: (September 19, 21)
- Tuesday
  - Héctor Tobar, *The Tattooed Soldier* (1-80)
- Thursday
  - Héctor Tobar, *The Tattooed Soldier* (81-134)

Week 5: (September 26, 28)
- Tuesday
  - **Essay Outline #1 DUE 1 p.m.**
- Thursday
  - Héctor Tobar, *The Tattooed Soldier* (226-Finish)

Week 6: (October 3, 5)
- Tuesday
Sin Nombre (dir. Cary Fukunaga)  
Thursday  
Sin Nombre (dir. Cary Fukunaga) (cont.)  

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE 1 p.m.

Unit Three—Assimilation and Dislocation

Week 7: (October 10, 12)  
Tuesday  
Cristina García, Dreaming in Cuban (1-101)  
Thursday  
Cristina García, Dreaming in Cuban (105-181)

Week 8: (October 17, 19)  
Tuesday  
Cristina García, Dreaming in Cuban (183-Finish)  
Thursday  
Midterm Exam (Blue Book Required)

Week 9: (October 24, 26)  
Tuesday  
Sugar (Dirs. Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck)  
Thursday  
Sugar (Dirs. Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck)

Unit Four—Border Crossings

Week 10: (October 31, November 2)  
Tuesday  
Sandra Cisneros, “Woman Hollering Creek” (Blackboard)  
Thursday  
Cormac McCarthy, All the Pretty Horses (1-59)

Week 11: (November 7, 9)  
Tuesday  
Cormac McCarthy, All the Pretty Horses (59-151)  
Thursday  
Cormac McCarthy, All the Pretty Horses (152-217)

Week 12: (November 14, 16)  
Tuesday  
Cormac McCarthy, All the Pretty Horses (218-Finish)  
Thursday  
The Three Burial of Melquiades Estrada (Dir. Tommy Lee Jones)

BLACKBOARD POSTING #2 DUE 1 p.m.
Week 13: (November 21, 23)
   Tuesday
      *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* (Dir. Tommy Lee Jones)
   Thursday
      **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY—NO CLASS**

Week 14: (November 28, 30)
   Tuesday
      **First Draft of Writing Assignment #2 Due IN CLASS**
   Thursday
      **Peer Review Workshop**

Week 15: (December 5)
   Tuesday
      **WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE**
      Last Day of Class

**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 12, 1:45-4:15 p.m.**