

Introduction to Mexican American Literature

Houston Community College
English 2351.0222/ CRN 71139/ Room 174, San Jacinto Bldg
Mon & Wed 10-12 pm/Fall 2015

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Office Hours: Wed 11:50 am to 12: 50pm, Tues 10-11am, or by appt.

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Course Catalog Description: This course is a survey of Mexican-American/Chicano(a) literature including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama.

Course Description: Mexican American writers have been producing politically and culturally relevant literary work since the early 20th century, yet their inclusion in the Western canon has been minimal. Part of the purpose of this course is to disrupt this pattern by introducing the student to a variety of literary work produced by Mexican American authors that now constitutes part of the Chicano/a Literary Canon. The works studied in this class will span multiple forms and genres and multiple periods of recent American history.

As part of our exploration in this course we will attempt to discern why the chosen readings can be considered representative of the Mexican American community and/or experience during a particular time and space. Furthermore, we will examine their continued relevance in contemporary society by looking closely at the political and social issues they address. We will be using concepts such as race, class, gender, and identity to form guiding questions through which we can approach the texts of this course. We will also be investigating the influence of the Western canon on Mexican-American literary production and problematizing the notion of “canonization” in general. Through these various approaches we will come to a preliminary answer to the following question: Does the value of Mexican-American literature lie in its contribution to universal themes, issues, and concerns or does it lie in its particularity?

Supplies and Textbooks: You should have a notebook for taking notes and a folder to keep handouts provided in class. The textbooks listed below are required for this course and are available at the bookstore.

The Collected Stories of Maria Cristina Mena by Maria Cristina Mena

George Washington Gomez by Americo Paredes (ISBN 9781558850125)

Borderlands/La Frontera by Gloria Anzaldua (ISBN 9781879960855)

Hunger of Memory by Richard Rodriguez (ISBN 9780553382518)

The Hungry Woman by Cherrie Moraga (ISBN 9780970534408)

The Shallow End of Sleep by Jose Antonio Rodriguez (ISBN 9781882688418)

House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros (ISBN 9780679734772)

Zoot Suit and Other Plays by Luis Valdez (ISBN: 9781558850484)

Rain of Scorpions by Estela Portillo Trambley (ISBN 9780927534291)

The Deportation of Wopper Barraza by Maceo Montoya (ISBN 9780826354365)

Grade Breakdown: Below is the grade breakdown for the course.

Quizzes/Assignments/Participation	20%
Exam # 1	20%
Exam # 2	20%
Paper A	10%
Paper B	10%
Paper C	10%
Group Project	10%

Explanation of Grade Breakdown:

Quizzes/Assignments/Participation: This category will be made up of your quiz grades, your homework and in-class assignment grades, and participation grades. Missed work in this category cannot be made up.

Quizzes: There will be reading quizzes for some of the readings assigned for this course. Quizzes are announced on the schedule. The instructor reserves the right to assign a pop (unannounced) quiz. These quizzes will be basic quizzes made up of multiple choice or short answer questions that are meant to confirm that you have read the material.

Homework Assignments: You will be given an assignment packet with homework assignments corresponding to certain readings or class discussions. The assignment packet will have all the instructions you need and a due date. All homework assignments should be typed (double-spaced). Homework assignments may be added during the semester, so make sure you are attending class every class day.

In-class assignments are not announced on the syllabus and are only announced during class time.

Participation: You may also, at the professor's discretion, be awarded a participation grade. This grade may be given for participation in in-class discussion, for being prepared during class time, for showing up to class on time, etc. Thus, you might lose participation points for not being prepared during class time, for not attending class, or for showing up late habitually.

Exams: There will be two exams in this course. The exams will be part multiple choice, part matching, and part short answers. A missed exam can be made up with proper documentation of a legitimate emergency.

Papers: There will be three essays assigned in this course. Essays must be properly documented and formatted using MLA guidelines. The length requirement for each essay is 950-1200 words (roughly 3-4 pages). Further instructions will be provided. Papers will be accepted up to 5 class days late with the exception of Paper C. Each day that your paper is late you will lose 5 points.

Group Project: There will be one group project for this course. The project will be assigned at the end of October and due at the end of the semester. Further instructions will be provided. Groups will be assigned.

Additional Course Policies:

Attendance: Attendance is required. Each class missed results in you missing important instruction or activities. This means that the more you are absent, the more your grade is likely to suffer. Both absences and tardiness (excused or unexcused) may affect the participation portion of your grade for apparent reasons – if you are not in class you cannot be engaged in class. More than three absences will result in serious penalty.

I do not distinguish between excused or unexcused absences. You are allowed three absences (excused and/or unexcused) without serious penalty (however, penalty still applies in the participation portion of your grade or for missed work for any absences prior to your fourth absence). Regardless of the excuse, unless we have made an arrangement ahead of time, you will either be dropped or will receive a grade penalty, if you exceed the limit of allotted absences. It is of utmost importance that you understand what I've stated above: I do not distinguish between excused or unexcused absences. You have three allotted absences, period. For this reason, save your three absences for emergencies, rather than expecting further absences to be excused once emergencies arise. In other words, regardless of reason a fourth absence and anything beyond that will result in penalty to your final grade, in a grade of FX, or in you being dropped from the course.

Exams may be made up with proper documentation of a legitimate absence. Homework, in-class assignment, and quizzes may not be made up, regardless of the excuse. Because I am aware that emergencies do happen, three grades from the quizzes/assignments category will be dropped.

You are responsible for the material covered in class during your absence. Keep a peer's number or email handy in case you need someone to fill you in. You may also come see me during office hours if you have any questions. Do not expect me to explain everything you missed during your absence after class the next time we see each other. I can go over some of the material with you if you come to office hours or set up an appointment with me.

Preparation: Students are expected to show up to class prepared. This means students should have all their reading assignments completed for that day before coming to class. Quizzes will be given to account for your preparation. Active participation will be expected. Always bring your writing materials, assignments, and books to class.

Discussion: This course relies heavily on student discussion and the sharing of one's knowledge, experience, opinions, and interpretations of the readings and the issues at hand. Come prepared to share your thoughts. I request that you be respectful of others' opinions and that you express your opinions in a respectful manner and only when relevant to the class discussion.

Group Work: Some of the work you do for this class will be group work. You will be asked to discuss texts in groups. This group work time is not socializing time. If you feel you must, take the time to get to know your classmates outside of class. During group work you are expected to act responsibly and

respectfully. Your level of engagement affects both **your** thinking process and **your group member's** thinking process. Failure to follow these general guidelines may result in a penalty in your participation grade.

There will be one group project for this class. Groups will be assigned. No one will be exempt from group work unless an accommodations letter is provided. The group grade will consist of an average of the individual grade earned and the group grade earned. Each student will be evaluated by their group members and this evaluation will be part of the student's individual grade. Students will also be evaluated by the instructor. Further instructions will be provided.

Use of Electronics: Students should put away their electronic devices upon entering this classroom. I don't ask that you silence them completely but simply that you put them on vibrate. If I observe you using your phone in class, you will lose points from your participation grade. (In the case of an emergency please let me know before class that you need to have your phone out). The same applies to the use of other electronic devices. If you are in the habit of taking notes on your laptop or similar device, please write me a formal email requesting the use of such device in the classroom. Otherwise, your electronic devices should not be visible to me at all.

Tardiness: Entering the classroom late disrupts the class. By being on time you are practicing courtesy and respect towards others as well as ensuring you don't miss out on anything that may be important. Quizzes are usually given at the beginning of the period; if you miss a quiz because you are late, you will not be allowed to make it up. Although you should not make tardiness a habit, please do go ahead and come to class even if you are running late.

Disruptive Behavior: Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to talking out of turn, sleeping, and use of electronics. If any of the above are observed you will be docked in participation points. I am also at liberty to have you removed from class, if necessary.

Late Work: I do not accept any late work. Do not ask to turn work in late regardless of the excuse.

Make-up Work: Quizzes cannot be made-up regardless of the reason for your absence. Exams can be made-up only in the case of extreme emergencies and only if proper documentation is provided. It is up to the instructor's discretion to judge what constitutes a legitimate emergency.

Scholastic Honesty: Students are responsible for conducting themselves with honor and integrity in fulfilling course requirements. Penalties and/or disciplinary proceedings may be initiated by college district officials against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty. "Scholastic Dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarizing on a paper and collusion. **Cheating and plagiarism in this course will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment without a possibility of making up the work. A repeated offense of plagiarism will result in an F for the course.** Other forms of cheating will also be penalized. Possible punishments for academic dishonesty may include a grade of "0" or "F" on the particular assignment, failure in the course, and/or referral to the college Dean of Student Services for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Please also review the Scholastic Honesty policy in the HCC Student Handbook. If you do not understand or know what plagiarism is, it is your responsibility to seek counsel, inform yourself, or speak to the instructor. You will be held to the stipulations above regardless of whether your plagiarism was "intentional" or not.

Academic Integrity: Requesting to know your grade at any point in the semester is always invited but it is never, ever appropriate to tell me what grade you “need.” If you are in a bind and need a specific grade in order to remain in good academic standing, you should work for that grade so that you can achieve it.

Reasonable Accommodation: Any student with a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodation must contact the Office of Ability Services Office in LHSB 106 of the Central Campus or the Counselor at the South Campus at the beginning of *each* semester. Faculty are authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Ability Services office. If you have questions, please contact the Ability Services Counselor in LHSB106 of the Central Campus or at 713-718-6164.

Title IX: HCC is committed to provide a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination on the basis of sex which includes all forms of sexual misconduct. Title IX of the education amendments of 1972 requires that when a complaint is filed, a prompt and thorough investigation is initiated. Complaints may be filed with the HCC Title IX coordinator available at 713-718-8271 or email at oiie@hccs.edu.

EGLS3—Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System: At Houston Community College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time, you will be asked to answer a short online survey of research-based questions related to instruction. The anonymous results of the survey will be made available to your professors and division chairs for continual improvement of instruction. Look for the EGLS3 as part of the Houston Community College Student System available online: hccs.edu/EGLS3.

Support Services:

Tutoring: Free tutoring for writing is available at Central Campus. Check with the English Department (San Jacinto 222) for more information. You can also try the online tutoring service: <http://hccs.askonline.net/>

Library: HCC library is on the third floor of the Learning Hub of the Central Campus. The librarians are dedicated to helping you find whatever you need.

Open Computer Lab: Computers are available for word processing in the San Jacinto building on the third floor and at the library as well as other places on campus. It is my understanding that there is no “free” printing anywhere on campus.

****Changes in this document:** *At her discretion, the professor may announce necessary changes in this syllabus and the assignment calendar at any time during the term.*

**Reading and Work Schedule for ENGL 2351
Intro to Mexican American Literature**

Date:	Readings due:	Quizzes or Exams	Work Due:
M 9/21	Introduction to the Course		
W 9/23	“Chicano Literary History: Origin and Development” by Luis Leal “Teaching Chicano Literature: An Historical Approach” by Raymund Paredes http://faculty.georgetown.edu/bassr/tamlit/essays/chicano.html “I am Joaquin” by Rodolfo Corky Gonzalez http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/latinos/joaquin.htm		Hmwk #1
M 9/28	From <i>The Collected Stories of Maria Cristina Mena</i> read the following: “John of God, the Water-Carrier” p. 12-28 “The Gold-Vanity Set” p 1-11	Quiz # 1	
W 9/30	From <i>The Collected Stories of Maria Cristina Mena</i> read the following: “The Emotions of Maria Concepcion” p 29-46 “Vine-Leaf” p. 87-94		Hmwk #2
M 10/5	“The Birth of the God of War” p.63-69 Critical Context and Maria Cristina Mena (Wrap up)	Quiz # 2	
W 10/7	<i>George Washington Gomez</i> by Americo Paredes p. 9-157	Quiz # 3	
M 10/12	<i>George Washington Gomez</i> by Americo Paredes p.157-302	Quiz # 4	Paper A
W 10/14	“Zoot Suit” by Luis Valdez p. 23-94		Hmwk # 3
M 10/19	Excerpt from <i>Labyrinth of Solitude</i> by Octavio Paz, will be provided		Hmwk #4
W 10/21	Review for Exam # 1 “El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan,” will be provided Excerpt from <i>Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo</i> , will be provided		
M 10/26	Exam # 1	Exam # 1	
W 10/28	From <i>Rain of Scorpions</i> by Estela Portillo Trambley read “Rain of Scorpions” and “The Burning”	Quiz # 5	Hmwk #5
M 11/2	<i>House on Mango Street</i>		

W 11/4	<i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i> by Gloria Anzaldua p. 23-73		Hmkw #6
M 11/9	<i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i> continued 73-225	Quiz # 6	Paper B due
W 11/11	“The Hungry Woman” by Cherrie Moraga (Read all)	Quiz # 7	
M 11/16	“The Hungry Woman” continued		Hmwk # 7
W 11/18	The Elements of Poetry <i>The Shallow End of Sleep</i>		
M 11/20	<i>The Shallow End of Sleep</i>		Hmwk # 8
W 11/25	<i>Hunger Of Memory</i> by Richard Rodriguez (Read all)	Quiz # 8	
M	Thanksgiving Break		
M 11/30	Exam # 2	Exam # 2	
W 12/1	Arte Publico Visit		
M 12/6	<i>The Deportation of Wopper Barraza</i> p. 3-118	Quiz # 9	
W 12/8	<i>The Deportation of Wopper Barraza</i> (Finish the novel)	Quiz # 10	
Finals Week	Group Projects are due to be viewed in class		Group Project due Paper C due

The instructor of this course reserves the right to modify this schedule at any point in the semester, if necessary. Make sure that you are in class every day in case changes to this schedule are announced. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to contact a peer or the instructor regarding potential changes to the schedule.