



Introduction to Mexican-American Literature

English 2351.0051 - CRN 10702

Second Summer Session · Five Weeks

ONLINE

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COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION: A survey of Mexican American/Chicanx literature from Mesoamerica to the present. Students will study literary works of fiction, poetry, drama, essays, and memoirs in relation to their historical, linguistic, political, regional, gendered, and cultural contexts. Texts will be selected from a diverse group of authors, literary movements, and media forms. Topics and themes may include the literary performance of identity and culture, aesthetic mediation of racialization, struggle and protest, and artistic activism. Core curriculum course. 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: ENGL 1301.

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 canon¹ 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 can be said to constitute part of the Chicanx Literary Canon. For this reason, this course is in many ways a survey course with one of its primary goals being exposure to the works. We will try to read a lot of texts; the texts studied in this class will span multiple forms and genres and multiple periods of recent Mexican-American (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 the canon in general. Finally, we will pay close attention to the aesthetic aspects of the literary works assigned. 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?

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Identify key ideas, representative authors and works, significant historical or cultural events, and characteristic perspectives or attitudes expressed in the literature of different periods or regions.
- Analyze literary works as expressions of individual or communal values within the social, political, cultural, or religious contexts of different literary periods.

¹ Canon is the body of cultural production, in this case, literature, that is believed to be representative of the culture in question. More explanation of this concept will be provided in the course.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the development of characteristic forms or styles of expression during different historical periods or in different regions.
- Articulate the aesthetical principles that guide the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.
- Write research-based critical papers about the assigned readings in clear and grammatically correct prose, using various critical approaches to literature.

ENGLISH PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Write in appropriate genres using varied rhetorical strategies.
- Write in appropriate genres to explain and evaluate rhetorical and/or literary strategies employed in argument, persuasion, and various genres.
- Analyze various genres of writing for form, method, meaning, and interpretation.
- Employ research in academic writing styles and use appropriate documentation style.
- Communicate ideas effectively through discussion.

CORE OBJECTIVES: Given the rapid evolution of necessary knowledge and skills and the need to take into account global, national, state, and local cultures, the core curriculum must ensure that students will develop the essential knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college, in a career, in their communities, and in life. Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning. Students enrolled in this core curriculum course will complete assignments designed to cultivate the following core objectives:

- Critical Thinking Skills—to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
- Communication Skills—to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
- Personal Responsibility—to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.
- Social Responsibility—to include intercultural competency, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

BOOKS: The books listed below are required for this course and should be available at the HCC bookstore. Books must be purchased immediately. There is a link on our Canvas page that will expedite the process. You may also try to acquire your books on Amazon, Half Price Books, or at the HCC library or other local libraries. Finally, Arte Publico at University of Houston might also have some copies of our books (713-743-2998).

The books are listed below in the order they will be used. We will be using our first book on the second week of class. You must have the book to complete work. No late work will be accepted, nor will extensions be granted to students who don't have a book. Please make sure you order your books as soon as you are done reading this syllabus. If you are going to the bookstore in person, take this list with you to the bookstore, as they often do not update their lists in a timely manner. Also make

note that there will be other readings in the course that I will provide online. The books below ARE NOT the only readings for the course.

The Collected Stories of Maria Cristina Mena by Maria Cristina Mena (ISBN 9781558852112)

George Washington Gomez by Americo Paredes (ISBN 97815588501)

The Hungry Woman by Cherrie Moraga (ISBN 9780970534408)

House Built on Ashes by Jose Antonio Rodriguez (ISBN 978-0806155012)

GRADE BREAKDOWN: Below is the grade breakdown for the course.

Quizzes & Reading Responses	32%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%
Course Portfolio	18%

EXPLANATION OF GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Quizzes: There will be reading quizzes for most of the readings assigned for this course. There may also be reading quizzes on some of the power points and lectures. There will be a total of about 10 quizzes. The quizzes are made up of multiple choice or short answer questions that are meant to confirm that you have read the material or listened to a lecture. They are not meant to be difficult but are simple information recall quizzes. I assign quizzes to motivate you to read the material. The quizzes are timed. Generally, your quiz performance is a reliable measure of your overall class performance.

Reading Responses: Reading response will require a higher level of engagement with the readings than the quizzes do. You will be asked to answer specific questions and to discuss the readings in a thoughtful way. Beyond showing that you have read the materials, these assignments will require you to show that you are processing, interpreting, and/or analyzing the readings as well. While these responses are not meant to be “essays”, usually you must respond in at least 275 – 300 words. Sometimes you will have one specific question to tackle; sometimes you will have two to three questions to respond to; and sometimes you will be asked to pick your own passages from the readings to discuss. Instructions, including length requirement, will be given online in the assignment submission link. You will have 5 to 8 of these assignments.

****Your two lowest grades from the Quizzes/Reading Responses category (only) will be dropped. This will be indicated by a greyed out grade on the Canvas gradebook. This policy is meant to account for emergencies, illnesses, or any other reason for which you may have made a bad grade on a quiz or reading response.**

Exams: There will be two exams in this course. The exams will be part multiple choice, part matching quotes with speaker/character, part short answers and two short essays (400-600 words or at least 20 sentences). A few of the multiple-choice questions will come from quizzes that you will have already taken on the material. Exams will be timed. A missed exam can only be made up with proper documentation of a legitimate emergency. It is up to the instructor to determine what constitutes a legitimate emergency. A very general review outline will be provided a few days before the exams. The final exam may include a formal literary analysis essay.

Course Portfolio: For this assignment, you will be asked to include a 900-word review of literary criticism, a poem or other creative response to the course readings, and an infographic. Further instructions for this assignment will be provided.

Extra Credit: There will be one opportunity for extra-credit in this course. Points and assignment are yet to be determined, but the extra-credit will not exceed 2 points on the final grade. **Please DO NOT ask instructor for extra-credit or about the extra-credit assignment.** The instructor will provide the opportunity and instructions for the entire class when she sees fit.

GRADING:

A (90-100%) Excellent work that demonstrates a clear understanding of the assignment, has few errors of any kind, and shows exceptional ability to communicate knowledge of the material.

B (80-89%) Above average work that shows understanding of the assignment and material, has few errors, and shows above average ability to communicate knowledge of the material.

C (70-79%) Average work that shows understanding of the assignment and material, has few serious errors, and shows average ability to communicate knowledge of the material.

D (60-69%) Below average work that fails to follow the assignment instructions and/or work that only minimally demonstrates an understanding of the material, contains a number of serious errors, and demonstrates only marginal ability to communicate knowledge of the material in question.

F (0-59%) Incomplete work, work that fails to follow the assignment instructions, and/or work that fails to demonstrate an understanding of the material in question, contains a number of serious errors, and shows little to no ability to communicate knowledge of the material in question.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: As stated in the HCC catalog, all students are expected to attend classes regularly. Students in DE courses must log into their Eagle Online class weekly and actively participate or they will be counted as absent. (Because this is a summer course, you really will need to be signing in at least three times a week). Signing in alone will not count as attendance. Active participation and completion of assignments is required. Although it is the responsibility of the student to withdraw officially from a course when necessary, the professor also has the authority to block a student from accessing Eagle Online, and/or to withdraw a student for excessive absences or failure to participate regularly.

Students who miss more than 3 assignments in a row may be dropped from the course for excessive absences.

*****IMPORTANT*** Students who have not signed in and completed at least one assignment by the official day of record, Thursday, July 11, will be dropped for noncompliance with the attendance policy. Completing the DE online orientation does not count as attendance.**

LATE WORK POLICY: Quizzes and reading responses are **NOT ACCEPTED LATE**. There are no exceptions to this rule regardless of the reason or excuse for missing a deadline. Even if your excuse is a good and legitimate excuse, this policy stands. To account for emergencies and/or other legitimate issues that may arise, **your TWO lowest grades from this category are dropped** as mentioned previously in this syllabus. This way you don't have to ask for exceptions to be made for you when you miss a deadline. Asking for an exception to be made for you, may result in your forfeiting your privilege of dropping your two lowest grades from the Quizzes and Reading Responses grade category. Note that even if you are running behind on a couple of minor assignments in this course, you should be okay. That is the purpose of the DROP rule, to help you succeed even in the case of an emergency and even though I don't accept late work.

Exams have to be completed by the deadline. Exams that are submitted more than 10 minutes late will not be graded. If an emergency keeps you from completing the exam by the deadline, you may request extra time; however, documentation of your emergency will be requested. It is up to the instructor to determine whether the emergency is legitimate or not.

ACADEMIC HONESTY & PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is a serious offense. According to the Student Handbook for the Houston Community College System, scholastic dishonesty includes cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion and is punishable by a grade of 0 or F on the particular assignment, failure in the course, and/or recommendation for probation or dismissal from the College. A recommendation for suspension or expulsion will be referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary disposition. Plagiarism includes using another person's words or ideas as your own and/or incorporating them into your own work without quotation marks (if using exact phrasing) or appropriate and correct acknowledgement. Collusion includes any "unauthorized collaboration" with your classmates or any other students— present or past—in the composition of work that you claim as your own. Plagiarism, collusion, or cheating will result, at a minimum, in a grade of 0 for the assignment, NO DISCUSSION. You will not be allowed to rewrite or revise ANY plagiarized assignments (responses, quizzes, tests, or papers). Please note also that "accidental" plagiarism or collusion will result in the same penalty. More than one instance of plagiarism of any kind or on ANY assignment in the course will result in an F for the course **without discussion**. If you are still not sure what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor or inform yourself. There will also be a short lesson on plagiarism incorporated into the course in the first week.

A student who is academically dishonest is, by definition, not showing that the coursework has been learned, and that student is claiming an advantage not available to other students. You are expected to be familiar with the HCC's policy on Academic Honesty found in the catalogue. What that means is that if you are charged with an offense, pleading ignorance of the rules will not help you.

OTHER POLICIES:

Student Handbook: Students are responsible for all information in the *Student Handbook*. The *Student Handbook* can be accessed here:

<http://www.hccs.edu/resourcesfor/currentstudents/student-handbook/>

HCC Online Policies: Access HCC Online policies on this website: <http://www.hccs.edu/online/>

All students are responsible for reading and understanding the *HCC Online Student Handbook*, which contains policies, information about conduct, and other important information. Click on the following link to access the handbook: <http://www.hccs.edu/online/class-orientation--handbook/>

The *HCC Online Student Handbook* contains policies and procedures unique to the HCC Online student. Students should have reviewed the handbook as part of the mandatory orientation. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the handbook's contents. The handbook contains valuable information, answers, and resources, such as HCC Online contacts, policies and procedures (how to drop, attendance requirements, etc.), student services (ADA, financial aid, degree planning, etc.), course information, testing procedures, technical support, and academic calendars.

Academic Calendar, Drops, Refunds, & Last Day to Withdraw: The academic calendar posted online has information regarding drop dates and refund dates, etc. Monday, July 29, is the last day to **withdraw** from this course without academic grade penalty. You may withdraw yourself through your HCCS student center login. If you stop attending class and don't withdraw by this date, you are subject to the FX grade.

You may see the academic calendar at the link below.

<http://www.hccs.edu/student-experience/events-calendar/>

Repeating Courses: Students who repeat a course for a third or more times will face significant tuition/fee increases at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities. Please ask your instructor or counselor about opportunities for tutoring and/or other assistance prior to considering course withdrawal or if you are not receiving passing grades.

Withdrawal Policy: Beginning Fall 2007, the State of Texas imposes penalties on students who withdraw/drop courses excessively. Students are limited to no more than SIX total course withdrawals throughout their educational career at a Texas public college or university. Students are encouraged to review the HCC 6 Drop Policy.

Final Grade of FX: Students who stop attending classes after the official date of record will receive a grade of "FX" as opposed to "F," which is due to poor performance. *Logging into a DE course without active participation is seen as non-attending.* Please note that HCC will not disperse financial aid funding for students who have never attended class. Students who receive financial aid but fail to attend class will be reported to the Department of Education and will have to pay back their aid. A grade of "FX" is treated exactly the same as a grade of "F" in terms of GPA, probation, suspension, and satisfactory academic progress.

International Students: Receiving a W in a course may affect the status of your student Visa. Once a W is given for the course, it will not be changed to an F because of the visa consideration. Since January 1, 2003, International Students are restricted in the number of distance education courses that they may take during each semester. International students must have full-time enrollment status of 12 or more semester credit hours, and of these at least 9 semester credit hours must be face-to-face on-campus courses. Please contact the International Student Office at 713-718-8521 or email int_student_svcs@hccs.edu, if you have any questions about your visa status and other transfer issues.

Campus Carry: At HCC the safety of our students, staff, and faculty is our first priority. As of August 1, 2017, Houston Community College is subject to the Campus Carry Law (SB11 2015). For more information, visit <http://www.hccs.edu/departments/police/campus-carry/>.

STUDENT PROFESSIONALISM & COMMUNICATION:

Professionalism: The classes you take at HCC are not only beginning points for your academic career; they also prepare you for your professional life, whatever path that may be. As such, your HCCS classes are spaces in which you can and should polish your professional persona. This can be done in multiple ways, some of which are listed below:

- Doing the assigned readings on time so that you can respond to them appropriately.
- Posting or uploading your work on time or even ahead of time.
- Actively participating in any discussions available.
- Responding to classmates' writing, discussion posts, and emails when appropriate.
- Asking questions, respectfully, of your peers and/or me when an idea or assignment is unclear.
- Formatting your emails respectfully and professionally.
- Contributing seriously and responsibly when assigned group work.

- Being open to new ideas and perspectives and respectful of other's opinions.
- Avoiding purposefully inflammatory comments or behavior.
- Abiding by course policies

Note on Course Content: Many of the materials used in a variety of college courses are meant to cover or express a broad range of human experience; so is the case with works of art (literature included) and even with works in history, sociology, psychology, etc. Therefore, the content of this course may include topics that are difficult for some people to confront or discuss; these may include but are not limited to rape, abuse, death, violence, war, and racism. Furthermore, we will deal with sensitive material about controversial topics and we may encounter adult content. If you foresee this getting in the way of your successful completion of the course, you must email me as soon as possible and before any problems arise. You may also consider taking another course.

Email: Email is an official mode of communication for this course, and you are expected to check your email frequently. I also post important announcements frequently. Make sure that you have set your announcements to go to your email. Finally, when you email me please be clear and professional.

1. Include a descriptive and specific subject line, such as, "Question on Quiz # 1"
2. Begin with a professional address such as "Dr. Mejia" or "Hi, Instructor Mejia." Please do not just start your email or say "hey, ...".
3. Be as specific as possible in your message. For example, avoid referring to "that one essay" or "my essay" or "the assignment"; instead, identify each assignment by number or title, such as Reading Response for Mena's Short Stories, or Essay # 1 Draft, etc.
4. Include whatever information you think will expedite my response to your question. If you are not specific and clear, I will not know what you are talking about and this will cause delays in you acquiring the information you need.
5. **Make sure that you have read the syllabus and any documents, instructions, emails and announcements carefully, before you ask me a question.**
6. Close with your name/signature.

Once you have emailed me, expect a response **within 48 hours**. If you can't reach me via our Canvas email and have an urgent question, you may try calling 713 718 6230. Finally, please be aware that, unless we are planning a meeting or dealing with an urgent issue, I *may not* respond to emails between the hours of 8 pm and 9 am. I will be available sporadically over the weekends.

Announcements: It is important that you check announcements at least every two days. While I try not to change the schedule very much, sometimes it is necessary to make adjustments and such adjustments will be announced in the ANNOUNCEMENTS section of Canvas. Announcements are also used to communicate with you for other reasons such as the following: checking in, my progress on grading or comments, reminders of deadlines (sometimes), extensions, extra-credit, etc. The best thing is to change the setting of your Canvas course and have your announcements go directly to email.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:

Food & Housing Insecurity: Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Student Success for support.

Ability Services: Houston Community College is dedicated to providing an inclusive learning environment by removing barriers and opening access for qualified students with documented disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Ability Services is the designated office responsible for approving and coordinating reasonable accommodations and services in order to assist students with disabilities in reaching their full academic potential. In order to receive reasonable accommodations or evacuation assistance in an emergency, the student must be registered with Ability Services.

If you have a documented disability (e.g. learning, hearing, vision, physical, mental health, or a chronic health condition), that may require accommodations, please contact the appropriate Ability Services Office below. Please note that classroom accommodations cannot be provided prior to your Instructor's receipt of an accommodation letter and accommodations are not retroactive. Accommodations can be requested at any time during the semester, however if an accommodation letter is provided to the Instructor after the first day of class, sufficient time (1 week) must be allotted for the Instructor to implement the accommodations.

Ability Services Contact Information:

Central College 713.718.6164	Southwest College 713-718-7910 713-718-5408
Coleman College 713-718-7376	Southeast College 713-718-7053
Northeast College 713-718-8322	Interpreting and CART services 713-718-6333
Northwest College 713-718-5408 713-718-5422	Adaptive Equipment/Assistive Technology 713-718-6629 713-718-5604

Accommodations due to a Qualified Disability: HCC strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please meet with a campus Abilities Counselor as soon as possible in order to establish reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and Ability Services. It is the policy and practice of HCC to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. For more information, please go to <http://www.hccs.edu/support-services/disability-services/>

Libraries: HCC has a Learning Resource Center at each campus for student use. The library provides electronic resources including an online catalog system as well as numerous databases that contain full-text articles all available at <https://library.hccs.edu>. Many of the required texts can be found at the library. See library hours & locations at http://library.hccs.edu/about_us/locations_hours.

Open Computer Labs: Students have free access to the internet and word processing in open computer labs available at HCC campuses. Check on the door of the open computer lab for hours of operation.

Tutoring Centers: HCC provides free tutoring in person and online. The following is the statement from the HCC Tutoring Centers:

The HCC Tutoring Centers provide academic support to our diverse student population by creating an open atmosphere of learning for all students enrolled at HCC. Using a variety of tutoring techniques, we assist students across academic disciplines, addressing their individual needs in a constructive, safe, and welcoming environment. Our emphasis is on maximizing academic potential while promoting student success and retention. We are committed to helping students achieve their educational, personal, and career goals by empowering them to become confident, independent, lifelong learners.

Tutoring for individual subjects is offered at specific times throughout the week on various campuses. There is no need to make an appointment. If you need a tutor, please refer to our website: <http://ctle3.hccs.edu/alltutoring/> for times and locations.

For more information about tutoring at HCC, please go to <http://hccs.edu/district/students/tutoring>

Online Tutoring: The goal of online tutoring is to help students become academically independent through guided assistance by HCC faculty or faculty-eligible tutors in almost all departments. Our tutoring is asynchronous, which means that it is NOT real-time.

Students can get real-time help on campus and through several textbook sources. We believe that when tutors can take time to absorb and analyze the work, we give a different type of help. Because the tutoring is asynchronous, it is important for students to plan ahead. It generally takes about two days to get a complete review back, and it may be longer than that when hundreds of papers come in every day for several days in a row. It is crucial for students to look at the yellow banner on the log-in page to see how long the turn-around time is.

Students can submit work 24/7/365; we tutor even when the college is closed for holidays or natural disasters. All HCC students can take advantage of online tutoring by logging on to <https://hccs.upswing.io/>. The HCC email address and the associated password get students into the online tutoring site, so when the email password changes, so does the Upswing password.

Campus Safety: If you are on campus and need emergency assistance, call 713-718-8888 or, from any campus phone, 8-8888. Use this emergency number instead of 911, which gets routed back to the HCC Police Department dispatch thus lengthening response time to your emergency situation.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT & TITLE IX POLICY

Sexual Misconduct: Houston Community College is committed to cultivating an environment free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual or gender-based nature including sex discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Sex discrimination includes all forms of sexual and gender-based misconduct and violates an individual's fundamental rights and personal dignity. The director of EEO/Compliance is designated as the Title IX Coordinator and Section 504 Coordinator. All inquiries concerning HCC policies, compliance with applicable laws, statutes, and regulations (such as Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504) and complaints may be

directed to: David Cross, Director EEO/Compliance, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, 3100 Main, Houston, TX 77266-7517, or institutional.equity@hccs.edu.

Title IX Discrimination: Houston Community College is committed to cultivating an environment free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual or gender-based nature including sex discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Sex discrimination includes all forms of sexual and gender-based misconduct and violates an individual's fundamental rights and personal dignity. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex including pregnancy and parental status-in educational programs and activities. If you require an accommodation due to pregnancy please contact an Abilities Services Counselor. The Director of EEO/Compliance is designated as the Title IX Coordinator and Section 504 Coordinator.

All inquiries concerning HCC policies, compliance with applicable laws, statutes, and regulations (such as Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504), and complaints may be directed to:

David Cross

Director EEO/Compliance

Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity

3100 Main

(713) 718-8271

Houston, TX 77266-7517 or Houston, TX 77266-7517 or Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu

Tentative Reading Schedule - For a more detailed reading and assignment schedule consult your Canvas course page on the first day of class. You will need to follow that schedule to navigate our course.

Week	Topics
1A	Introduction, Read background Articles
1B	"I am Joaquin" poem
2A	Early Mexican-American Writing and the Craft of the Short Story, Read <i>The Collected Stories of Maria Cristina Mena</i>
2B	Mexican-American & Identity: Of Names, Origin, and an Education, Read <i>George Washington Gomez</i>
3A	Continue <i>George Washington Gomez</i>
3B	Portrayals of Culture: Pachucos, the media, and legality, Read <i>Zoot Suit</i> and "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan"
4A	Women in Chicano/a Literature, Read <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i> and "La Malinche" poem
4B	Queer and Chicana, Read <i>The Hungry Woman</i>
5A	The Immigrant in Chicano/a Literature, Read <i>House Built on Ashes</i>