

University of North Carolina Wilmington  
SPN 495-Contemporary US Latino Literature

**Course Information**

Instructor: Dr. Amrita Das  
Office: Leutze Hall 286  
Office Hours: TR 11-12 or by appointment  
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Telephone: 962-2430

Course: SPN 495  
Time: TR 2:00-3:15 pm  
Location: LH 130

**Pre-requisite: SPN 321/322/323 or equivalent**

**Course Description:** This course is a study of some of the representative texts of contemporary US Latino Literature. Films will complement the literary texts. The texts are representative of the Chicano, Caribbean, Central American, and South American experiences of native, immigrant, and exile Latino communities. The texts chosen for the course are written in Spanish and English, reflective of the bicultural nature of the US Latino literature. The course will further study issues related to biculturalism, bilingualism, immigration, racism, poverty, and identity construction among other issues related to the Latinos of the United States.

**Course Objectives:**

The students will be able to critically analyze the thematic content of the representative texts of US Latino literature.

The students will be able to discuss analytically issues related to the Latino populations of the United States.

The students will be able to appreciate the diverse nature of the United States, and the contributions to the socio-cultural debates in the country.

**Texts:**

The student must obtain all texts. ISBN numbers have been provided to facilitate an online search. All texts, including the ones made available through BlackBoard (hard-copy) must be brought to class on the days of discussion as listed in the course calendar.

Tomás Rivera. ...y no se le tragó la tierra. 1996. (ISBN 9781558851511)  
Sandra Cisneros. Women Hollering Creek. 1992. (ISBN 978-0679738565)  
Mario Bencasatro Odisea del norte. 1999. (ISBN 9781558852662)  
Ernesto Quiñones, Bodega Dreams. 2000 (ISBN 978-0375705892)  
Junot Diaz. Brief Wonderous Life of Oscar Wao. 2007. (ISBN 978-1594483295)  
Roberto G. Fernández. Raining Backwards. 1988. (ISBN 9781558852235)  
Obejas, Achy. Ruins. 2009. (ISBN 978-1933354699)

**Available through BlackBoard:**

Juan Armando Epple. "Garage Sale"  
Gustavo Perez Firmat. Selections from El año que viene estamos en Cuba.  
Marjorie Agosin. Selections from The Alphabet in My Hands. 2000.

**Course Policies**

**Language:** Spanish will be the language of instruction and communication. All assignments will be in Spanish. English or "Spanglish" will only be used to cite directly from a text or to cite references to the bilingual nature of the content.

**Class Behavior:** All students are expected to respect the learning environment of a classroom. All cell phones and other electronic gadgets must remain off at all times. Any use of the above-mentioned objects and hence disruption of class will earn you zero participation points for the class.

**Attendance:** Attendance is compulsory. However in case of emergency a student may be absent from 2 (two) classes. No participation grade will be awarded for that day. Any absence after the second will result in deduction of 5% points from the final grade. Tardiness will not be tolerated and being late to class will affect the participation grade.

**Make-up:** There is NO make-up for class quizzes or presentations. However, for exams, a student may reschedule only if the absence is validated with documentation and permitted by the instructor.

**Participation:** Students are expected to come to class prepared for discussions based on the assigned readings. Active participation in class discussions must reflect analytical understanding of the course objectives applied to the text. If you do not attempt to answer or ask questions you will be considered inactive.

**Assignment Deadlines:** No late assignment will be accepted. The assignment must be turned in class on the day assigned only. **No electronic assignment** will be accepted. However in case of an emergency, a student must provide valid documentation and seek instructor's permission before submitting a late assignment. Be organized and follow all deadlines listed in the detailed calendar for this course.

**Electronic resources:** Detailed calendar and other material: other readings and some primary texts will be made available through BlackBoard. Handouts sent through emails or on BlackBoard must be printed for class.

**Office Hours:** Students may seek assistance during office hours. Walk-ins are welcome and no appointment is necessary. If a student has a scheduling conflict, the student may ask for an appointment after class, or via email. A student may also use an email for general queries.

**Electronic correspondence:** Emails must be considered a formal letter written to an instructor. Please use commonly accepted salutations, sentence phrasing, word choice, and sign offs in either language-Spanish or English. If in doubt contact the Learning Center. I will not respond to any email that does not do the above. Further more if information is already available on the syllabus or blackboard, I will not respond to those queries. Do not expect immediate responses to your emails.

**Academic Honor Code:** All work must be the student's own work. Plagiarizing, on-line translators, use of high-fluency Spanish speakers or any other source other than permitted, is prohibited. Any student found violating this UNIVERSITY POLICY may face up to expulsion from UNCW. Please read the following document for the details about UNCW's honor code

<http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/doso/documents/Code.Of.Student.Life.pdf>

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities will be accommodated with prior notification to the instructor. Please contact UNCW's Disability services <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/disability/> for further information.

**Safety on campus:** UNCW practices a zero-tolerance policy for violence and harassment of any kind. For emergencies contact UNCW CARE at 962-2273, Campus Police at 962-222, or Wilmington Police at 911. For University or community resources visit <http://uncw.edu/wrc/crisis.htm>.

### **Evaluation**

A 94-100	A- 90-93	B+ 87-89	B 84-86	B- 80-83	C+ 77-79
C 74-76	C- 70-73	D+ 67-69	D 64-66	D- 60-63	F 0-59

**Evaluation components:** The student is responsible to check with the instructor for his or her progress in class by coming to the office.

**Quiz:** Each reading may be tested with a quiz at the beginning of the class. The questions will pertain to comprehension questions, and will test the students' preparedness. 10%

**Participation:** A student must participate in class discussions by asking questions, attempting to answer questions, and contributing thoughts about the issue in discussion. (Please refer to the document "How to Read" in BlackBoard. Use the format to prepare for each text). 10%

**Class Discussion:** Students will be lead one class discussion. Each student will be assigned a text and must prepare a series of questions or discussion ideas based on an assigned aspect of the text. The student is responsible of further investigation of socio-historical background, if need be. 10%

**Short Papers:** A short argumentative analysis of one aspect of 3 texts read and discussed in class. The paper on a specific text must be turned in on the date indicated in the calendar and each of the three papers is due by the date indicated in the calendar. Papers may range from 3-5 pages. (Please see details on how to format, the breakdown of the evaluation criteria, and content expectations in the document "Short Paper Instructions" in BlackBoard). 30%

**Exams:** Two exams-mid term and final. Both exams will have the same format. A mix of short identification and comprehension questions, and one essay question. It will be a comprehensive exam. 40%

### Important Dates

1/25- Paper on *...y no se lo tragó la tierra* is due

2/3- Paper on *Women Hollering Creek* is due

2/15- Paper on *Odisea del norte* is due

2/15- 1st Paper is due by today

2/24- Paper on *Bodega Dreams* is due

3/8- Paper on *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* is due

3/10 Mid-Term Exam

3/29- Paper on *Raining Backwards* is due

3/29- 2nd Paper is due by today

4/14- Paper on *El años que viene estamos en Cuba* is due

4/19- Paper on "Garage Sale" or "The Alphabet in My Hands" is due

4/19-3rd and Final paper is due by today

5/5- Final Exam (3-6pm)