



BSAS LITR 3312
Literature of the Americas

CAPA BUENOS AIRES PROGRAM

Spring 2017

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| Faculty name | : | TBD |
| E-mail | : | TBD |
| Class times | : | TBD |
| Classroom location | : | TBD |
| Office Hours | : | TBD |

Course Description

The Americans of all nations at any time upon the earth have probably the fullest poetical nature.
—Walt Whitman

“In the four quarters of the globe,” one glib Englishman asked in 1820, “who reads an American book?” If no one did in the decades following the revolutions of the late 18th century, nearly everyone would soon enough. By the early 20th century, such US poets as Gertrude Stein traveled to Paris and there dominated the “Old World’s” literary scene. Caribbean writers Claude McKay and Aimé Césaire moved across the hemisphere and the Atlantic, transforming poetry and fiction. So did such Latin American writers as Jorge Louis Borges and Clarice Lispector. Writers of the Americas came to play a fundamental role in the invention of modern literature, and they insisted literature played a fundamental role in the invention of modern life.

This semester, we’ll explore some of the many literary forms writers invented to suit modern life in the hemisphere Europeans first called the “New World.” We will read the works of three poets (Whitman, Stein, Césaire) and three fiction writers (McKay, Borges, Lispector). All of our writers conceived new styles and rhythms they believed emerged from and responded to a unique set of American conditions. These conditions included great possibilities—democracy, liberty, rights—and terrible abuses—slavery, colonialism, racism. To confront realities of this kind, these writers revitalized language, updated sound and sense, and reconceived literature’s relationship to other human activities in original and powerful ways. As we read their sometimes weird, sometimes difficult poems and stories, we will ask how writers respond through formal experimentation to the urgent political and social questions life in the Americas raises.

Requirements and Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Developmental Outcomes

Students should demonstrate: responsibility & accountability, independence & interdependence, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, appreciation of differences.

Class methodology

Participation

Participation is noted at the end of each session. Come to class each day ready to participate. Complete all reading, bring assigned texts to class, and try to speak at every meeting. If you do not bring your text, seem distracted, or use a device during class, you will not receive participation credit that day. You may post additional comments to the discussion board if you worry you do not speak often in class.

Writing Assignments

See assignment sheets for details.

- Presentation (2 page close reading + discussion, 10 mins. total): Students read short papers aloud in class. Presentations offer a brief reading of a trope or formal feature. Each student leads class discussion with 2-3 questions after his or her presentation. Students hand in hard copies of close readings and questions.
- Discussion Board (4 @ 500 words/each): Discussion board posts and comments prepare you to compose essays and final papers. I score posts and comments for completion. If you post a total of 500 words by the assigned due date, you receive 100 points. I do not accept late posts. You may post additional comments to the discussion board by the date comments are due if you worry you do not speak often in class.
- Essays (2 @ 4-5 pages/each): Essays make significant arguments about texts and support them with observations about a text's formal features and themes.
- Final Paper (7-9 pages): Final papers demonstrate mastery of course materials and reading practices. Students select texts and topics and submit a proposal in advance.
- Formatting Instructions: Assignments should be double-spaced with standard margins in 12-point Times New Roman font. Number pages and include a title. Do not include additional spaces between paragraphs. Use MLA style for headings and citations (include in-text citations and Works Cited page). The MLA Handbook is available at the library or for purchase at the bookstore. Purdue University's OWL website is also reliable: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

Assessment/Grading Policy

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| Discussion Board (4) | 10% |
| Participation | 15% |
| Presentation | 15% |
| Essays (2) | 30% |
| Final Paper | 30% |

Overall grade **100%**

| DESCRIPTOR | ALPHA | NUMERIC | GPA | REQUIREMENT/EXPECTATION |
|-----------------------------------|-------|---------|-----|--|
| Outstanding (High Distinction) | A | 93+ | 4.0 | Maximum grade: In addition to description for grade "A-", the student shows detailed understanding of materials about which he or she can show independent analytical ability. This means the ability to question an issue from different perspectives and evaluate responses in an objective manner. |
| Excellent (Distinction) | A- | 90 - 92 | 3.7 | Student shows understanding of literature beyond the textbook/class hand-outs/class notes, and the work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for evaluation. |
| Very good (High Credit) | B+ | 87 - 89 | 3.3 | Shows evidence of a capacity to generalise from the taught content, or the material in literature, or from class lectures in an informed manner. Also, the work demonstrates a capacity to integrate personal reflection into the discussion and an appreciation of a range of different perspectives. |
| Good (Credit) | B | 83 - 86 | 3.0 | The work is well organised and contains coherent or logical argumentation and presentation. |
| Good (Credit) | B- | 80 - 82 | 2.7 | Student shows understanding of literature beyond the textbook and/or notes, and, there is evidence of additional reading. |
| Average (Good Pass) | C+ | 77-79 | 2.3 | The work demonstrates a capacity to integrate research into the discussion and a critical appreciation of a range of theoretical perspectives. Also, the work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question and its theoretical implications and demonstrates evidence of additional reading. |
| Adequate (Pass) | C | 73 - 76 | 2.0 | Shows clear understanding and some insight into the material in the textbook and notes, but not beyond. A deficiency in understanding the material may be compensated by evidence of independent thought and effort related to the subject matter. |

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| Below Average (Borderline Pass) | C- | 70-72 | 1.7 | Shows some understanding of the material in the textbook and notes. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought related to the subject matter. |
| Inadequate (Borderline Fail) | D+ | 67 - 69 | 1.3 | Fails to show a clear understanding or much insight into the material in the textbook and notes |
| Poor (Fail) | D | 60 - 66 | 0.7 - 1.0 | Besides the above for D+, student has not shown interest or engagement in the class work or study. |
| Poor (Fail) | F | <60 | 0 | Shows little or no understanding of any of the material |
| Incomplete | I | | | Please see CAPA policy in the Faculty Handbook. |

Dress Code

No requirements.

Course Materials

Required Readings:

- Borges, Jorge Louis. *Ficciones*. 1941, 1944. Trans. Anthony Kerrigan. New York: Grove Press, 1994. Print.
- Césaire, Aimé. "Discourse on Colonialism." 1955. Trans. Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000. Print.
- Notebook of a Return to the Native Land. 1939. Trans. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith. Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 2001. Print.
- Lispector, Clarice. *Near to the Wild Heart*. 1943. Trans. Alison Entrekin. New York: New Directions, 1990. Print.
- McKay, Claude. *Banjo*. 1929. New York: Mariner, 1970. Print.
- Stein, Gertrude. *Tender Buttons*. 1914. New York: City Lights, 2014.
- "A Transatlantic Interview—1946." *A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein*. Ed. Robert Bartlett Hass. Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1974.
- Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*. 1855. Mineola, New York: Dover, 2007. Print.

Weekly Course Schedule

This schedule is for three class meetings per week

| Date | Reading Due | Assignment Due |
|------|---|---------------------------|
| | Introduction | |
| | Whitman <i>Leaves of Grass</i> , "Preface" 1-27 | |
| | Whitman <i>Leaves of Grass</i> , "Song of Myself" | Discussion Board 1 |
| | Whitman <i>Leaves of Grass</i> , all poems | |
| | Whitman <i>Leaves of Grass</i> | |
| | Whitman <i>Leaves of Grass</i> | |

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| | Whitman <i>Leaves of Grass</i> | Presentation 1 |
| | Stein <i>Tender Buttons</i> 7-32 | |
| | Stein <i>Tender Buttons</i> 33-60 | |
| | Stein <i>Tender Buttons</i> 61-76 | Presentation 2 |
| | Stein <i>Tender Buttons</i> *“A Transatlantic Interview, 1946” | Discussion Board 2 |
| | Stein <i>Tender Buttons</i> *“A Transatlantic Interview, 1946” | |
| | Césaire <i>Notebook of A Return to the Native Land</i> 1-25 | Presentation 3 |
| | Césaire <i>Notebook of A Return to the Native Land</i> 26-51 | |
| | Césaire <i>Notebook of A Return to the Native Land</i> | |
| | Césaire <i>Notebook of A Return to the Native Land</i> | Presentation 4 |
| | Césaire <i>Notebook of A Return to the Native Land</i> *“Discourse on Colonialism” | |
| | McKay <i>Banjo</i> 1-37 (Chapters I-III) | Essay 1 |
| | McKay <i>Banjo</i> 38-82 (Chapters IV-VI) | Presentation 5 |
| | McKay <i>Banjo</i> 83-113 (Chapters VII-IX) | |
| | McKay <i>Banjo</i> 114-147 (Chapters X-XI) | Discussion Board 3 |
| | McKay <i>Banjo</i> 148-187 (Chapters XII-XIV) | Presentation 6 |
| | McKay <i>Banjo</i> 188-234 (Chapters XV-XVIII) | |
| | McKay <i>Banjo</i> 235-279 (Chapters XIX-XXII) | |
| | McKay <i>Banjo</i> 280-326 (Chapters XXIII-XXV) | Presentation 7 |
| | Borges <i>Ficciones</i> 15-43 | |

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| | Borges <i>Ficciones</i> 45-63 | |
| | Borges <i>Ficciones</i> 65-88 | Presentation 8 |
| | Borges <i>Ficciones</i> 89-102 | Discussion Board 4 |
| | Borges <i>Ficciones</i> 103-122 | |
| | Borges <i>Ficciones</i> 123-142 | Presentation 9 |
| | Borges <i>Ficciones</i> 143-158 | |
| | Borges <i>Ficciones</i> 158-174 | |
| | Lispector <i>Near to the Wild Heart</i> 1-33 | Essay 2 |
| | Lispector <i>Near to the Wild Heart</i> 34-63 | |
| | Lispector <i>Near to the Wild Heart</i> 64-92 | |
| | Lispector <i>Near to the Wild Heart</i> 93-122 | Presentation 10 |
| | Lispector <i>Near to the Wild Heart</i> 123-154 | |
| | Lispector <i>Near to the Wild Heart</i> 155-194 | |
| | Lispector <i>Near to the Wild Heart</i> | Presentation 11 |
| | Lispector <i>Near to the Wild Heart</i> | Final Paper Proposal |
| | Lispector <i>Near to the Wild Heart</i> | |
| | Conclusion | |
| | Final Paper Due | |

Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities

Attendance: CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class. Unauthorized absence from class will result in a reduction of the final grade and potentially a failure for the course.

Missing classes for medical reasons: If you need to miss a class for medical reasons or for a family emergency, you must send an e-mail to let the Director of Academic Affairs (DAA) or Resident Director know at least one hour in advance of your class or meeting at the following e-mail: _____. Note that calling the CAPA Center (_____) is acceptable only if you do not temporarily have access to the internet. An e-mail is still required as quickly as you can get access to the internet again. You will need to provide evidence of the reason for your absence. Unexcused absences will result in a grade reduc-

tion. In the event of a missed class or field trip, it is your responsibility to contact your instructor and make up any missed assignments.

Class Participation: Students are expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assignments BEFORE the class, and come in on time. Participation is a vital part of your grade: students are expected to participate orally in seminars and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others in the class will not be tolerated.

Academic Integrity: A high level of responsibility and academic honesty is expected. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism and cheating will result in dismissal from the program. See the Handbook of CAPA Academic Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

Use of electronic equipment in class: All devices such as laptops, I-pods, I-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are **NOT** allowed unless you have express permission from the faculty or you have been instructed to do so. If you require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, inform the Director of Academic Affairs or the Resident Director at the beginning of Term.

Use of Electronic Translators: In Language courses students are NOT allowed to use electronic translators for writing texts in the target language: those submitting compositions and texts of whatever kind translated in such a fashion will receive a final F grade for the course.

Late Submission: Late submission of papers, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request must be made to the relevant Faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a full alpha grade penalty. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of F will be given for the assessment.

Behavior during Examinations: During examinations, you must do your own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.