

San José State University
Department of English & Comparative Literature
English 123A: *Literature of the Americas*

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Office Hours: Tu/Thurs 9:30-10:15 am & by appointment

Class Days/Time: Tu/Thurs. 12-1:15 pm

Classroom: BBC 120

Prerequisites: **For upper division GE courses (R, S, V):**

“Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), and completion of Core General Education are prerequisite to all SJSU Studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students.”

GE/SJSU Studies Category: The English 123 –Global Literature series is intended as an upper-division GE (area V) course that introduces students to literature of the world from various regions and helps students: 1) appreciate literature as a form of human expression and understand how that expression has developed over time in different cultures; 2) increase their understanding of how other cultural traditions have influenced American culture and society, and how cultures in general develop distinctive features and interact with other cultures.

Course Description

English 123 A—Literature of the Americas introduces students to the literature and cultural heritage of the Americas dating back to the time of the Columbian contact. While we will read some material relating to this initial contact, the majority of the readings will focus on the literary production of the modern period in the northern and southern American context. In reading literature from Latin America and the Caribbean/West Indies, as well as from North America, we will encounter issues such as colonialism, slavery, genocide, race, ethnicity, language, class, gender, religion, cultural hybridity, modernity, human rights and indigenous movements. We will also gain a deeper understanding into the ways the United States and Europe have shaped the cultures of the Americas through colonialism and imperialism.

Our readings will help us to grapple with a more complex definition of what it means to be “American” and to introduce the ways that writers in the modern period present a complex view of the Americas as a regional and cultural concept and construct. One important theme we will consider is the tension between the personal and collective in narratives about “American” identity. These tensions are expressed in a quest for identity, the desire for a sense of home, and in the narrative of coming of age found in the *bildungsroman*. Using comparative methods, we will seek to identify and analyze various literary motifs, paying special attention to the ways that writers challenge, express, and complicate notions of “Americanness.” We will also inquire and understand the diverse cultures of the Americas, and contextualize the rich history of this region as it informs discussions and debates today.

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO) (Delete if not applicable)

SJSU Studies Area V Student Learning Objectives (SLO)/GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

A. The GE writing requirement will be met in this class by means of 3 written assignments with an aggregate word count of 5,000+ words, as follows:

1. Analytical/Critical Essay #1—1250+ words
2. Analytical/Critical Essay #2—1250+ words
3. Final Exam and Midterm based on reading and class discussion

B. The General Education Learning Outcomes that are fulfilled by the course and the class activities/assignments/experiences linked to those outcomes are described below:

GELO 1: Upon successful completion of this program, students shall be able to compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S.

This GELO/GELO will be met by means of close examination, analysis, and critique of the texts throughout the semester; student success in achieving this objective will be assessed by means of systematic comparison tasks embedded in the midterm exam and/or the final exam.

SLO/GELO 2: Upon successful completion of this program, students shall be able to identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture. This GELO/GELO will be met by means of extensive cultural activities and involved learning experiences embedded in lectures, presentations, discussions, and other class interactions throughout the semester; student success in achieving this objective will be assessed by means of appropriate writing assignments focusing on (1) the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S.A., and on (2) how American culture has been influenced, affected, or impacted by such cultural traditions.

SLO/GELO 3: Upon successful completion of the course, students shall be able to explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures. This objective will be met by means of in-depth study of the texts and their contexts as students conduct library research beyond the lectures and other in-class activities. Student success in achieving this objective will be assessed by means of a scholarly paper with specific focus on questions of cultural change in a culture outside the U.S.A.

Course Learning Outcomes: Students will demonstrate the ability to (CLO's)

1. read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, and/or rhetoric;

2. show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American and World Literature;
3. write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject;
4. develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively;
5. articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

Required Texts:

Century of the Wind by Eduardo Galeano (Uruguay)

Crystal Frontier by Carlos Fuentes (Mexico)

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Columbia)

Course Packet to be purchased from MAPLE PRESS

Required Films: (scheduled times to be announced)

“Sugar Cane Alley” (Haiti)

“El Norte”(US/Guatemala)

Course Requirements and Grading

Course work includes daily and weekly reading assignments; quizzes; informal writing assignments (reader responses); two 4-5 pp. formal essays (these will be assigned in conjunction with your midterm and final exams); a midterm and final exam composed of identification terms and passage identification; and one formal oral presentation. This course is not a lecture course. You are expected to actively participate in and generate discussion. This means that you must come to class prepared, having read the material and bringing your own insights and readings to this class. Students who fail to participate will not receive a grade higher than C-, regardless of how well they satisfy all other requirements).

Participation/Quizzes/Facebook Posting (min.2)	20%
Reader Responses (total of three)	25%
Midterm (including essay)	20%
Final (including critical essay)	25%
Presentation (including a short report)	10%

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU Catalog. Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A=excellent; B=above average; C=average; D=below average; F=failure.

Participation: This is a discussion and writing-intensive course and full-class lectures will be minimal. The success of this format depends on how well-prepared each student is BEFORE he or she comes to class. Effective participation requires that students arrive to class on time and are ready to engage in advanced conversation about the materials for that day. Students will be give an opportunity to discuss and defend their opinions, interpretations, insights in class as well as to be tolerant of differing opinions. Moreover, students are encouraged to examine their convictions and interpretations not only in writing but also in the process of classroom discussion. Class will often be divided into smaller discussion groups in order to discuss topics in greater detail. Your class participation grade is based on observations of student performance in the following categories:

Attendance—student regularly attends class without late arrivals or early departures.

Preparation—student completes homework assignments(reading) and studies course materials thoroughly BEFORE coming to class.

Class Interaction and Citizenship—Student is attentive and cooperative with the rest of the class; actively participates in class and collaborates with classmates in paired or group activities, and contributes to class discussion.

Quizzes: We will have weekly quizzes to determine how carefully students have done the read assignments. These will be short and simple. If you do the reading, you will have no problem. If you don't, it will show.

Course Preparation: In addition to reading for class, you will often be given questions to consider before coming to class. You should make notes and write brief answers to these questions before arriving. I will occasionally collect your answers. Even when these are not collected, your preparation of the reading/homework will be obvious by your class participation. I encourage you to take notes as you read, mark passages, jot down any concerns or questions. Your engagement will make for a more lively class and a satisfying discussion of the material.

Attendance and Classroom Protocol:

Come to all scheduled class sessions. Much of the interesting and important work will be done through discussion in class, and your peers are counting on your input. I do expect you to contact me (or preferably a classmate) if you miss class; you will only complicate matters by missing work and disappearing. Please inform me of emergencies.

The only excused absence is one that is documented with a physician's note or a family death. If you need to miss class because of a religious holiday, please give me advance warning. You are responsible for all deadlines regardless of your attendance. You are responsible for making sure you were marked present on the roll sheet if you come in late. Excessive tardiness and absences will reduce your grade significantly. Leaving early is unacceptable and disrespectful as your peers are counting on you.

Papers are considered late if they are not turned in at the beginning of class on the day designated. If you disappear for several weeks and do not contact me (regardless of your circumstances—serious illness, car accident, etc.) I will assume you have dropped the class. Do not suddenly reappear after a week or two and expect my sympathy. It is your responsibility to contact me and notify me of what is going on. I have a phone number and an email account—use them!

NOTE: Cell phone use and text messaging will not be tolerated in the class. If I catch you texting, checking email, etc. during class, I will ask you to leave. I have no tolerance for texting in class. Please make every effort to turn off your ringer so we are not interrupted by the sound of your phone.

Statement on Plagiarism and Writing Expectations:

The misrepresentation of another's work as one's own, whether the original work is published or not, **is plagiarism** and will result in a failing grade. The incident will also be reported to the dean of students for possible further action. All quotes must be enclosed in quotation marks or when more than three lines long, put in an indented block quote. Full citation of the original author and source must also be included. For some basic help with MLA style, review the Modern Language Association (MLA) website: <http://www.mla.org> (see the section on MLA style for Frequently Asked Questions); further assistance with formal paper issues (quotations,

citations, etc.) can be addressed by purchasing a writer's reference book (available in bookstore under 1A and 1B course sections). I expect all of you to be able to produce formal, college-level essays. This is not a writing class and I will not provide extensive commentary on things like spelling and commas—you should know how to attend to these problems. My comments will mostly address your ideas/organization/ arguments in your writing (but your grade will be determined by the sum total of your writing that is--on the content of your ideas as well as your ability to produce well-organized, documented, thoughtful essays). Again, I will grade your papers with attention to grammar, organization, sophistication of ideas and general attention to editing and style. Any act of plagiarism (suspected or proven) will be reported to the Office of Student Affairs and may result in punishment as severe as dismissal.

Reading/Presentations: You are expected to be able to keep up with all the reading. This is an upper division English class and as a rule you are expected to read and finish a novel (with a few exceptions) over a period of two class weeks. This means you should be prepared to read approximately 75-125 pages per week. This is an upper division class and if you don't think you can handle that amount of reading, I suggest you reconsider enrolling in this class. Presentations will be either individually or no more than 2 people and will involve a more in-depth analysis of the reading. You may want to focus on a set of themes/issues that occur in the reading; focus on characters, events, and historical connections you make between texts. Your presentation **MUST NOT** be a summary of the reading. What I am looking for is for you to delve more deeply into characters, historical situations, themes, symbolism, connection to historical events or people. You may want to do some additional library research, but your presentation must deal directly with the reading and if it is contextual information you are providing, you must tie it to the reading. If I find you plagiarizing or reading from a website, you will automatically be failed. Your work here is to provide your own reader analysis and to deepen and broaden the conversation of the work. You are invited to give more of your insights to the class and to share them with your peers. The goal is to incite more discussion. Your presentation should lead classmates to more insights into the reading. At the time you give your presentation, you will turn in a 1-2 page report that includes an outline of your ideas and some development of your presentation. I will provide a sample of this later. (Each presenter in a group must provide a written report and it will be turned in the same day that you present to the class).

Reader Responses: You will write a minimum of three (3) reader's response (2-3 pages typed) for several of major books/novels/sections. I will give you approximate deadlines during the second week of class. A reader response is not a summary or a book report. It is not just a personal reaction to the book either. Although it is not a formal essay, I expect you to write a well-written and organized exploration of some aspect of the text. The topic of your reader response could be a particular character or theme, an exploration of issues of identity in the text, or an exploration of literary motifs and styles. The reader response should show me that you have deepened your understanding of the text—for this reason being present and participating in class discussions will assist you! You should use specific examples/quotes from the text to support your ideas, and avoid overly general ideas and writing. (I will at some point give you a handout about reader responses –making your reading count!). While this is not a formal essay, the reader response must be well organized, thoughtful and must use quotes and page citations. You are expected to write well (both in terms of grammar and organization of your ideas). Your response will help me understand that you have both read and thought about the text and that you've been paying attention and present in class.

Disclaimer: The instructor reserves the right to modify any terms of this syllabus and course schedule throughout the semester. It is your responsibility to be in class and to find out what changes have been made. Contact me or your classmates for any changes of the syllabus should you miss class. I expect you to have an email account so that we can communicate with each other. In the event that you fall behind, it is your responsibility. Remember, this is an upper division university literature course. If I seem demanding about the reading, you are right. I expect you to keep up and be prepared. This is not a writing class, so if you need help

with writing, please come and see me or seek out assistance at the Learning Activities Resource Center (LARC) or the Writing Center.

ENGLISH 123A- Literature of the Americas

Fall 2016

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/25	Introduction to the course- Framing the Americas Assignment: find newspaper account about a country/event/etc. in Latin America, write a two-page summary and analysis. Read <i>Century of the Wind</i> pp. 3-63
2	8/30	8/30: discussion of <i>Century of the Wind</i> Read <i>Century of the Wind</i> pp. pp. 64-137 Presenter _____
2	9/1	9/1: discuss <i>Century of the Wind</i> ; read <i>Century of the Wind</i> pp. 138-233 Presenter _____
3	9/6	9/6: Discussion of <i>Century of the Wind</i> : read <i>Century of the Wind</i> pp. 234-279 Presenter _____
3	9/8	Discussion of Poetry from Americas-Contexts/ read Course Packet pp. 1-41; select at least one of the selections and write your reactions to the text(s)---bring to class (it must be typed) and I will call on you to ask for your reflections, analysis, etc. Presenter _____ Read: <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> , pp. 1-58
4	9/13	Discussion of <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> Presenter: _____ Reader Response on <i>Century of the Wind</i> due Read: <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> , pp. 59-101
4	9/15	Discussion of <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> watch Possible—watch “Banana Land, Blood, Bullets, Poison” http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/banana-land-blood-bullets-poison/ Presenter: _____ Read: <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> , pp. 103-181
5	9/20	Discussion of <i>100 Years of Solitude</i>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Presenter: _____ Read: <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> , pp. 181-243
5	9/22	Discussion of <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> Presenter: _____ Read: <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> , pp. 245-315
6	9/27	Discussion of <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> Presenter: _____ Read: <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> , pp. 315-375 9/28 Francisco Jimenez, Author of <i>The Circuit</i> receives Steinbeck Award, 7:30 pm, SJSU Student Union Theater (\$10 for students) – extra credit
6	9/29	Discussion of <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> Presenter: _____ Read: <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> , pp. 377-END
7	10/4	Final Discussion of <i>100 Years of Solitude</i> Presenter: _____ Read Course Packet: pp. 41-85
7	10/6	Discussion of Course Packet Readings Presenter: _____ Read: Course Packet: pp. 86-124
8	10/11	Discussion of Course Packet Readings Presenter: _____
8	10/13	First draft of Essay due in class --- peer editing Bring two copies stapled to class
9	10/18	Screening of film “ <i>Sugar Cane Alley</i> ” (Martinique)
9	10/20	Screening of “ <i>Sugar Cane Alley</i> ” (Martinique)
10	10/25	Midterm Exam (final draft of Essay #1 due) Read: Course Packet, pp. 124-157
10	10/27	Discussion of Course Packet Presenter: _____ Read: <i>The Crystal Frontier</i> , pp. 3-54
11	11/1	Discuss <i>The Crystal Frontier</i> Presenter: _____ Read <i>The Crystal Frontier</i> , pp. 55-114
11	11/3	Discuss <i>The Crystal Frontier</i> Read <i>Crystal Frontier</i> , pp. 114-165 Presenter: _____

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
12	11/8	Discuss <i>The Crystal Frontier</i> Read <i>The Crystal Frontier</i> , pp. 166-215 Presenter: _____
12	11/10	Discuss <i>The Crystal Frontier</i> Presenter: _____ Read <i>The Crystal Frontier</i> , pp. 216-END
13	11/15	Discuss <i>The Crystal Frontier</i> Presenter: _____ Read Course Packet, pp. 158-178
13	11/17	Discuss Course Packet Readings Read Course Packet, pp. 178-End
14	11/22	Discuss Course Packet Readings Reading TBA
14	11/24	Thanksgiving – NO CLASS
15	11/29	Watch “El Norte”
15	12/1	Watch “El Norte”
16	12/6	Draft of Final Essay due- Peer Editing in Class
16	12/8	Final Class discussion
Final Exam	12/19	Final Exam – turn in papers 9:45 -12 noon