



**ENG 503.01—Multicultural Literature and Languages**  
**“Latinos in Transition”**

**Spring 2013**  
**W—4:30 pm-7:10 pm**  
**Room: HL 201**

**Instructor:** (Christopher Gonzalez, PhD – Assistant Professor)

**Office Location:** Hall of Languages (HL) 225

**Office Hours:** MWF 1:00 pm-2:30 pm and by appointment

**Office Phone:** 903.886.5277

**Office Fax:** 903.886.5980

**University Email Address:** Chris.Gonzalez@tamuc.edu

NOTE: I reserve the right to revise the contents of this syllabus as I deem necessary.

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:**

***Textbooks Required:***

***The Hispanic Condition: The Power of a People***, by Ilan Stavans. ISBN: 0-06-093586-3

***Translation Nation: Defining a New American Identity in the Spanish-Speaking United States***, by Héctor Tobar. ISBN: 978-1-59448-176-5

***Ruins***, by Achy Obejas. ISBN:

***The Agüero Sisters***, by Cristina García. ISBN: 0-345-40651-6

***In the Time of the Butterflies***, by Julia Alvarez. ISBN: 0-452-27442-7

***The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao***, by Junot Díaz. ISBN: 978-1-59448-958-7

***So Far from God***, by Ana Castillo. ISBN: 0-393-32693-4

***Woman Hollering Creek***, by Sandra Cisneros. ISBN: 0-679-73856-8

***The Magic of Blood***, by Dagoberto Gilb. ISBN: 0-8021-3399-1

***La Maravilla***, by Alfredo Véa, Jr. ISBN: 978-0-452-27160-9

***Enrique's Journey***, by Sonia Nazario. ISBN: 978-0-8129-7178-1

**(ENG 503 catalogue description):** An examination of selected works from Africa, Europe, Latin America, or different cultures within the United States. Considers multicultural groups in relation to their literature, language, and culture.

## **Course Description**

ENG 503 is designed to provide graduate students with an opportunity to critically examine a specific swath of “multicultural” literature within the larger literary tradition of the United States. In this particular iteration of ENG 503, the emphasis is on the recent literary production of Latinos in the US. While this sounds like a relatively straightforward endeavor, studying Latino/a literature is as complex an issue as understanding Latino/a identity. Indeed, because Latino/a literature has historically arisen out of a searching articulation of this group of Americans, it is necessary to take up issues of history, politics, language, and more when attempting to critically examine this body of literature. Conversely, it is a disservice to Latino/a authors and the literature they create if we solely subscribe to ideopolitical examinations of these works. Therefore, we will also emphasize formal issues of our selected readings as we strive to investigate how form and content work with and against one another in Latino/a literature.

The selected readings for this class run a gamut of permutations of Latino/a identity and experience. We will discover, for example, how Chicana Feminist literature differs from Dominican American literature, and what sorts of differences arise between journalism and fictional films that deal with same narrative content (border crossing), and much more. In order to do this sort of evaluation effectively, we must attend to the formal elements, thematic contents, historical meaningfulness, philosophical contributions, and cultural identities. Students should plan to engage in and at time lead productive discussions; hone the skills of writing scholarly book reviews, continue to develop conference presentation skills, and write a final seminar paper aimed at publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

## **Course Objectives:**

- Students will further develop their scholarly review skills.
- Students will demonstrate their engagement with the scholarly community.
- Students will practice their ability to lead a graduate-level discussion.

## **Student Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will further develop their scholarly review skills as measured by the composition of a book review.
- Students will demonstrate their engagement with the scholarly community as measured by the academic conference process that takes their idea from abstract to oral delivery of their ideas to an audience.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

This course consists of a series of activities and assessments to assist you in achieving the outcomes and objectives of this course and instructional units/modules. By the end of this course the class will read and discuss many book-length texts as well as secondary materials.

During the semester you will complete several major assignments designed to build on each other intellectually and conceptually. These assignments are:

<b>Weekly Reading Responses/Class Participation</b>	<b>20%</b>
---	------------

Active class participation is vital in graduate classes, but it is at time difficult to measure. Beyond engaging in critical discussions on the day's readings, you will produce a one-page, single space formal response to the readings and submit your response at the end of a given class. The response should engage with the material in specific ways, and should serve as your "set piece" or contribution to the day's discussion. In this way, every student has thought extensively on at least one aspect of the texts. You should be prepared to articulate your response during the class meeting.

**Book Review** **15%**

One of the first types of publications graduate student attain is the book review. These intensely-focused reviews range between 1,000-1,500 words and essentially critically evaluate a book-length work of scholarship. You are free to select a scholarly work so long as it adheres to the following: Latino/a literature must be the book's primary subject of investigation, and it must be a work published within the last five years.

**Class Presentation** **10%**

On a class of your choosing, you must lead the class discussion on the day's readings. In order to accomplish this, plan to present your information for about 15 minutes, preferably in a manner that will open up lines of discussion upon the completion of your presentation. Also, you must email the class at least 24 hours prior to the class meeting with key passages on which you'll be focusing your remarks and/or questions you'd like for the class to consider before our class meeting. Ideally, you will unite our primary text with the secondary text(s) for your given day.

**Conference Abstract + Conference Presentation** **25%**

This assignment is very much akin to the process of presenting at a conference. You will propose an abstract (300-500 words), revise the abstract, and then, on the final weeks of class, you will present your conference papers (15 minutes) to the class. Further information on the parameters of this assignment will be forthcoming.

**Final Seminar Paper** **30%**

At the culmination of the course, you will submit a well-organized, persuasively-argued, well-research seminar paper between 15-20 pages. Ideally, this paper will grow from your conference paper and possibly even your class presentation when you led the class discussion. This is not requisite, but it may help streamline your workload.

**Grading**

Students' assignment and course grades will be determined by the following:

Weekly Reading Responses/Class Participation	20%
Book Review	15%
Class Presentation	10%
Conference Abstract + Conference Presentation	25%
Final Seminar Paper	<u>30%</u>
<b>Total: 100%</b>	

**Scale used to compute final letter grades:**

**Percentage**

- A: 100-90
- B: 89-80
- C: 79-70
- D: 69-60
- F: 59-0

## **Technology**

This course is conducted face to face (f2f). However, some aspects of the course (e.g., grades, dropbox) are accessed via eCollege, the Learning Management System used by TAMUC. Many of your assignments will be submitted through eCollege, so it is essential to your success that you be able to access eCollege in a relatively convenient manner. Because the university provides students access to computers and other technologies, please make use of these items if you do not have a computer of your own. If you have technical questions, please contact Technology Services at 902-468-6000 or at [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu). Do not allow a technological problem or question keep you from a successful outcome in this course. Technology is designed to facilitate your learning experience in this class, not to hinder it.

*There will be no extra credit assignments. As a rule, I do not accept late work.*

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Course Specific Procedures:**

#### *Academic Honesty Policy*

Texas A&M University-Commerce and the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate **plagiarism** and other forms of **academic dishonesty**. Conduct that violates generally-accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. “Academic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another person and passing them off as one’s own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension and expulsion (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1, 2, 3]). Cheating, including plagiarizing papers in whole or part, will result in a grade of zero (0) on the assignment for the first offense and failure of the course for any subsequent offenses.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance in this online class equates to participation in the discussions and is important to the success of this class and to your development as a writer. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you notify me of potential conflicts with course expectations. The expectation is that you will do more than simply log on to the course site. Your active participation, in the form of discussion responses and questions, is vital for success in this course. You must begin engaging in course discussions by Tuesday evening in order to stay current with the material. Deadline extensions and other allowances can often be accommodated before they are required, but this requires advance notice. Related to this, SEE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

### **Assignment Policy**

Student work must be completed and submitted on time. All assignments should be turned in during the class period when they are due. Students who know they will miss class when an assignment is

due must contact the instructor as soon as possible in advance of class to arrange for submission of the assignment.

All papers should conform to the MLA style guidelines.

#### **Late Work**

I will not accept any assignment after its due date. Assignments submitted after the due date may receive a score of zero (0).

#### **Drop a Course**

A student may drop a course by logging into his/her myLEO account and clicking on the hyperlink labeled “Drop a class” from among the choices found under the myLeo section of the Web page.

#### **Incompletes**

Incompletes (grade of “X”) are granted only under rare and extraordinary circumstances.

#### **Administrative Withdrawal**

I reserve the right to drop a student from the course administratively for excessive absences or violations of student conduct codes.

### **University Specific Procedures:**

#### *ADA Statement*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library 132  
**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835**  
**Fax (903) 468-8148**  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu)  
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

#### *Student Conduct*

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. It is next to impossible to explore ideas in a classroom setting if students and instructors do not feel safe or otherwise supported. I will not tolerate discrimination in all its forms. Likewise, rudeness has no place in any classroom, and I will ensure that my classroom remains a rudeness-free environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

#### *Responsibility*

You are responsible for understanding all of the material contained in this syllabus, as well as any announced changes to this syllabus. You are also responsible for understanding instructions and directives related to assignments, exams, and grades. This means visiting your professor during office hours if instructions and/or directives remain unclear. Unless you state otherwise, I will assume that you have understood what is expected of you in this class.

### **COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

The following course schedule is subject to revisions and other modifications as the instructor deems necessary for the course. Any changes to the course schedule will be announced on the course website in advance of the week in which the change will occur.

NOTE: Secondary articles will be indicated and provided on the first day of class.

Spring 2013

<b>Date</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
Week 1 Jan 16	Introduction, syllabus overview, Stavans, <i>The Hispanic Condition</i>
Week 2 Jan 23	Tobar, <i>Translation Nation</i>
Week 3 Jan 30	García, <i>The Agüero Sisters</i>
Week 4 Feb 6	Obejas, <i>Ruins</i> <b>Book Review Due</b>
Week 5 Feb 13	Alvarez, <i>In the Time of the Butterflies</i>
Week 6 Feb 20	Díaz, <i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i>
Week 7 Feb 27	Díaz, cont. <b>Conference Abstract DRAFT Due</b>
Week 8 March 6	Castillo, <i>So Far from God</i>
Week 9 March 20	Cisneros, <i>Woman Hollering Creek</i> <b>Conference Abstract Due</b>
Week 10 March 27	Véa, <i>La Maravilla</i>
Week 11 April 3	Gilb, <i>The Magic of Blood</i>
Week 12 April 10	Nazario, <i>Enrique's Journey</i>
Week 13 April 17	Fukunaga, <i>Sin Nombre</i> (We will watch this film during the first half of class and discuss in the second half.)
Week 14 April 24	Conference Talks, Pt. 1
Week 15 May 1	Conference Talks, Pt. 2
	<b>Final Papers due at Midnight, May 8, 2013</b>