COURSE SYLLABUS
EL DORADO IN HISPANIC LITERATURE AND FILM
SPW4580/SPW6495

GENERAL INFORMATION • IMPORTANT INFORMATION • COURSE DETAIL • COURSE CALENDAR

PROFESSOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Prof. Santiago Juan-Navarro  
Office Hours: By appointment, phone only

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The myth of El Dorado contains a utopian vision of self-fulfillment and self-determination in an imagined place which is to provide the material and spiritual conditions for a new, better life to be begun. This course explores different manifestations of this myth in Latin American and Spanish literature and film. The course is organized around three major figures of the age of exploration and conquest: Christopher Columbus, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, and Lope de Aguirre. Through the analysis of their works—as well as of contemporary reconstructions of their biographies—the course will study this crucial period in the formation of Latin American identity.

Please notice there are two sections of this course. Although the topic of both is the same (“El Dorado in Hispanic Literature and Film”) each is oriented to a specific type of student:

SPW 4580 El Dorado in Hisp Lit & Film - Section RVAA - 1115: Undergraduate students who are taking this class as part of their major/minor in Spanish or who want to take it as an elective.

SPW 6495 Lat Amer Lit & Film - Section RVAA - 1115: Graduate students who are taking this class as part of the M.A. or Ph.D. in Spanish.

Reading and listening knowledge of Spanish is required to all students (regardless of the section in which they are registered). The class will be conducted entirely in Spanish.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- To explore the general characteristics of colonial Spanish American literature against its historical and literary background.
- To explore contemporary reconstructions of the age of discovery and conquest from a literary and cinematic perspective.
- To understand the dynamics of the utopian imagination in a colonial and postcolonial context.
- To introduce the students to the literary and cinematic works of a number of Hispanic writers and filmmakers.

MAJOR & CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES TARGETED
On successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a sound general understanding of the chosen literary works, films, and themes, including reference to their place in the cultural context of their time.
- Evaluate and apply a range of critical approaches to the material covered.
- Understand and use, in written and oral contexts, a range of literary and film critical terms
- Access and use critically printed and, where appropriate, electronic learning resources identified as useful by the course’s instructor, and, to a limited extent, discover other useful materials independently.
- Demonstrate literary and visual literacy skills appropriate to the level, such as the ability to relate images to meanings beyond the images themselves and an understanding that the cinematic image is the product of a particular socio-cultural context.

**TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

Presentations and discussions will be conducted entirely in Spanish and will focus on three major topics: 1) literary and cinematic analysis of the primary sources under discussion; 2) historiographic discussions of specific periods; and 3) theoretical exploration of the mechanisms of historical representation in literature (fiction, drama, poetry) and film.

**ASSURANCE OF LEARNING**

The College of Business cares about the quality of your education. More on the College’s commitment to Assurance of Learning can be found at the following link:

http://businessonline.fiu.edu/course_addons/Learning_Commitment.pdf

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**POLICIES**

Please review the policies page as it contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU and additional information on the standards for acceptable netiquette important for online courses.

**FIU CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Concerns, procedures and sanctions about academic honesty are articulated in the FIU Code of Academic Integrity which was adopted by the Student Government Association on November 28, 2001. The following Pledge from the FIU Student Handbook specifically discourages plagiarism:

As a student of this university:
1. I will be honest in my academic endeavors.
2. I will not represent someone else’s work as my own.
3. I will not cheat, or will I aid in another’s cheating.

The links to tutorials and websites listed here provide information and techniques for the prevention of plagiarism.

**COURSE PREREQUISITES**

For information about prerequisites, click here.
This online section does not require an on-campus meeting and/or exam.

TEXTBOOKS

El Arpa y la Sombra
Alejo Carpentier
Publisher: Siglo XXI, 1999
[Or any other edition]

Click here to buy your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.

Trilogía Americana
José Sanchis Sinisterra
Publisher: Editorial Cátedra, 1996
[Or any other edition]

Click here to buy your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.

Daimón
Abel Posse
Publisher: Booket, 2006
[Or any other edition]

Click here to buy your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.

EXPECTATIONS OF THIS COURSE

This is an online course, meaning that most of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional course; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- Review the How to Get Started information located in the course content.
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self introduction in the appropriate discussion forum.
- Take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard.
- Interact online with instructor/s and peers and keep up with all assignments.
- Review and follow the course calendar.
COURSE COMMUNICATION

Communication in this course will take place via messages.

The message feature is a private, internal Blackboard only communication system. Users must log on to the blackboard system to send/receive/read messages. There are no notifications in Blackboard to inform users when a new message has been received; therefore, it is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

This is the best method to communicate with your instructor privately.

COURSE DETAILS

1. THE INVENTION OF AMERICA: Christopher Columbus
   - A- History: Cristóbal Colón, Cartas, Diarios (selection)
   - C- Poetry: Rubén Darío, “A Colón” (El canto errante) -OPTIONAL
   - D- Films: 1) Juan de Orduña, *Alba de América*AND 2) Ridley Scott, *1492: Conquest of Paradise*

2. THE DISCOURSE OF FAILURE: Cabeza de Vaca
   - A- History: Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios*
   - B- Novel: Abel Posse, *El largo atardecer del caminante* - OPTIONAL
   - C- Drama: José Sanchis Sinisterra, *Naufragios de Alvar Núñez o La herida del Otro*
   - D- Film: Nicolás Echevarría, *Cabeza de Vaca*

3. THE DISCOURSE OF REBELLION: Lope de Aguirre
   - A- History: Francisco Vázquez, *El Dorado*
   - B- Novel: Abel Posse, Daimón
   - D- Drama: José Sanchis Sinisterra, *Lope de Aguirre, traidor* – OPTIONAL

DISCUSSION FORUMS

Keep in mind that forum discussions are public, and care should be taken when determining what to post.

PPT PRESENTATIONS

Students will create a Power Point presentation and will submit it to the instructor through the Assignments area. After being reviewed, the instructor will deliver the presentation to the rest of the class through the “Informes” area. Topics will be assigned by the professor during the second week of classes and will be related to the weekly assignments.

FILM REVIEWS

They will consist of a 1-page (double-space) analysis (2 pages for graduate students) of each of the five required films. Reviews will be graded according to the rubric included in the Reference section of Course Content. Please do
not start writing a film review without having at least read one of the several articles the instructor has posted on the film you are reviewing.

**FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL**

1) The proposal topic itself must be relevant to the course (it should address one or several aspects related to issues covered in class); 2) The proposal must be at least one page, typed, double spaced; 3) The contents of the proposal include your (a) general area of research or (b) a question that you wish to research and (c) any specific goals you have for the paper; 4) The instructor must approve the research topic before students begin researching and writing.

**FINAL PAPER**

Extension: 5 pages + 4 secondary sources (undergraduates) OR 8 pages + 6 secondary sources (graduate students).

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

It is imperative that all students meet the deadlines set in this syllabus. There will be a grace period of one week immediately following the official due date. However, papers turned in during the grace period will be marked as LATE and will be subject to an automatic one-step reduction of grade (e.g., a grade of A will become an A-). No papers will be accepted after the grace period has ended. More than three missing deadlines will result in the student failing the course.

**GRADING**

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Course Calendar

LESSON 1- CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS (HIS WRITINGS)
June 27 - July 3
- Print the syllabus and read it thoroughly, especially the explanations about each coursework component.
- Find the respective icons for each of the course components in the Blackboard homepage and familiarize yourself with the contents of each icon.
- Read introduction and chapter 1 of Beatriz Pator’s *Discurso narrativo de la conquista*
- Read selection of Columbus’ writings (“Carta a Luis de Santángel” and selections from his *Diarios*)

LESSON 2- CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS IN FICTION AND FILM #1
July 4 - July 10
- Comments on Columbus’ writings in the DF are due on Monday, July 4 @ 23:55 EST.
- Read *El arpa y la sombra* (OR *Los perros del paraíso*)
- View *Alba de América* (DVD)
- Film Review (*Alba*) is due on Sunday, July 10 @ 23:55 EST.

LESSON 3- CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS IN FICTION AND FILM #2
July 11 - July 17
- Continue reading *El arpa y la sombra* (OR *Los perros del paraíso*)
- View *1492: Conquest of Paradise* (DVD)
- Film Review (1492) is due on Friday, July 15 @ 23:55 EST.
- Comments on *El arpa y la sombra* in the DF are due on Sunday, July 17 @ 23:55 EST.

LESSON 4- CABEZA DE VACA
July 18 - July 24
- Read Cabeza de Vaca’s *Naufragios*
- View Cabeza de Vaca (DVD)
- Final Paper Proposal is due on Friday, July 22 @ 23:55 EST
- Power Point Presentation is due on Friday, July 22 @ 23:55 EST
- Comments on *Naufragios* in the DF are due on Sunday, July 24 @ 23:55 EST.

LESSON 5- CABEZA DE VACA IN FICTION AND FILM
July 25 - July 31