

Spanish 6322.501
Contemporary Mexican Literature
SPRING 2018
Dr. Antonio Moreno

Mexican Literature and Culture: The Construction of Communities in a Time of Radical Change.

Office: MB # 4152
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REQUIRED TEXTS

- Novels:
 - Bellatin, Mario. *Salón de belleza*. Lima, Perú: J. Campodónico, 1994.
 - Villoro, Juan. *El disparo de argón*. Madrid, España: Alfaguara, 1994.
 - Toscana, David. *Santa María del Circo*. México, D.F.: Plaza y Janés, 1998.
 - López Fernández, Alberto. *Los perros de Cook Inlet*. México, D.F.: Umbral, 1998.
 - García González, Julieta. *Vapor*. México, D.F.: Joaquín Mortiz, 2004.

OTHER MATERIALS

- Critical texts (Materials on electronic reserve available on course site):
 - Bonacic, Dánisa. "Comunidades fracasadas en imaginarios no referenciales: Una lectura de las imágenes sociales en Salón de belleza de Mario Bellatin". *Inti: Revista de Literatura Hispánica*: 73-74. (2011 Spring-Fall), pp. 159-170.
 - Galván, Delia V. "Alegoría, resonancias y lo grotesco en Santa María del circo". *Hispanic Journal*: 24.1-2 (2003 Spring-Fall), pp. 203-11.
 - Havard, Tim. "El disparo de argón by Juan Villoro: A Symbolic Vision of Power, Corruption and Lies". *Hipertexto*: 6. (2007 Summer), pp. 99-0108.
 - Roberts-Camps, Traci. "The Female Body as a Makeover Project in Vapor, by Julieta García González". *Con-Textos: Revista de Semiótica Literaria*: 19.39 (2007 July-Dec), pp. 157-166.
- Essays on contemporary Mexican literature, debates and cultural context references (Materials on electronic reserve available on course site):
 - Aguilar Rivera, José Antonio. "El sonido y la furia: Crítica de la persuasión multicultural". *Revista de Teoría y Filosofía del Derecho*, núm. 12 (abril 2000), pp. 53-73
 - Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo. "Proyecto nacional y proyecto civilizatorio". *México profundo. Una civilización negada*. México, D.F.: Conaculta, 2001. 217-246.
 - Monsiváis, Carlos. "Paisajes de la cultura: entre un diluvio de chips y un laberinto de paradigmas". *Los desafíos del presente mexicano*. Coord. Francisco Toledo y Enrique Florescano. México, D.F.: Taurus, 2006. 161-191.
 - Aguilar Rivera, José Antonio. "El laberinto de las identidades". *Los desafíos del presente mexicano*. Coord. Francisco Toledo y Enrique Florescano. México, D.F.: Taurus, 2006. 195-222.

- Theoretical texts about the concept of community (Materials on electronic reserve available on course site):
 - Anderson, Benedict. *Comunidades imaginadas. Reflexiones sobre el origen y la difusión del nacionalismo*. Trad. Eduardo L. Suárez. México, D.F.: F.C.E., 2011.
 - Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernidad líquida*. Trad. Mirta Rosenberg. Buenos Aires: F.C.E., 1999.
 - Maffesoli, Michel. *El tiempo de las tribus. El ocaso del individualismo en las sociedades posmodernas*. Trad. Daniel Gutiérrez Martínez. México, D.F.: Siglo XXI, 2004.

RECOMMENDED DICTIONARIES , MEXICAN JOURNALS AND MAGAZINES

- Platas Tasende, Ana María. *Diccionario de términos literarios*. Madrid : Espasa, 2000.
- *Diccionario de la lengua española* (RAE) y *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas*. Access these dictionaries at the following link: <http://www.rae.es/rae.html>
- *Diccionario hipertextual, inverso y lematizado basado en el diccionario de la RAE*. Access these dictionaries at the following link: <http://recursosdidacticos.es/goodrae/>
- Reforma: <http://www.reforma.com/>
- La Jornada: <http://www.jornada.unam.mx>
- El Universal: <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/noticias.html>
- Letras Libres: <http://www.letraslibres.com/>
- Nexos: <http://www.nexos.com.mx/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION: *The Construction of Communities in a Time of Radical Change* will explore the novels which mirrored, on the one hand, the formation of alternative communities back to the State; and secondly, the cultural dynamics that arise in a period of economic and political crises. Most of your direct contact with me will be during our class meetings although I will be holding “virtual” office hours in addition to my regular office hours. You may, of course, email me whenever you want at moreno_j@utpb.edu I will check messages daily and will respond immediately. In terms of the reference, this course covers both the last decade of the 20th century and the first of the 21st century.

How much time students can expect to spend working on class materials.

- ✓ Students should expect to put in 6 – 9 hours per week outside of class, studying or doing assignments.
- ✓ Students will spend approximately 45 hours per semester in class and 90 hours outside of class, for a total of 135 hours.

The COURSE is divided into five modules:

Module I: The students will be able to respond in discussions and in writing, using personal, literal, interpretative, and evaluative stances, to works of essay about the political and cultural context of Mexico in the 1990s.

Module II: The students will be able to locate, assess, and summarize information from specific sources about the concept of community. In addition, the students will be able to participate in discussions about the different meaning and approaches of community.

Module III: On the completion of the module, the student will be able to identify and discuss context of the novel *Salón de belleza* (Mario Bellatin, 1994)). In addition, the students will be able to identify and explain the significance of the essential literary elements of novels (i.e. character, setting, conflict, plot, climax, resolution, theme, tone, and point of view). Finally, the students will be able to identify and explain the significance of community, and also the way in which the characters build their community and the dynamics that the community proposes.

Module IV: On completion of the module, the student will be able to describe and compare context in the novels *El disparo de Argón* (Juan Villoro, 1994)) and *Santa María del Circo* (David Toscana, 1998). In addition, the students will be able to identify and explain the significance of the essential literary elements of novels (i.e. character, setting, conflict, plot, climax, resolution, theme, tone, and point of view). Finally, the students will be able to identify and explain the significance of community, and also the way in which the characters build their community and the dynamics that the community proposes.

Module V: The students will extend their abilities to identify the effect created by the communities of the novels *Los perros de Cook Inlet* (Alberto López Fernández, 1998) and *Vapor* (Julieta García González, 2004). At the same time, taking into account the similarities and differences between both novels, the students will recognize and appreciate the way that the characters stimulate their imagination to found communities.

The first module consists of readings that explore the political and cultural context of Mexico in the 1990s. The second module is organized based on the concept of community. The third module is composed of the novel *Salón de belleza*. The fourth module consists of the novels *El disparo de Argón* and *Santa María del Circo*. The fifth module consists of the novels *Los perros de Cook Inlet* and *Vapor*. Our readings, viewings, and discussions will seek answers to several crucial questions:

- What is a community at the end and beginning of the century in Mexico?
- What are those features key?
- What function are imagination and feelings in the construction of communities?
- The community can replace the concept of nation?
- A nation is a set of communities different?
- What function plays the social class, race, religion, gender, sexuality, and language at the time of creating a community?
- Are they solid or liquid communities?
- What kind of values fosters the communities?

GOALS:

- Promote discussion and critical thinking.
- Fiction shows political dysfunctions.
- Stimulate oral and written communication in Spanish.
- Human beings, despite the strong individualism as a brand of contemporary culture, will never leave an animal community and gregarious.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

In this class we will read five novels, theoretical essays and papers whose authors scrutinize the cultural manifestations of the nineties in Mexico. In this class we will also write two papers, 10 pages of each

long. Though each novel will be read and discussed for its own literary merits, we will always link the discussion back to the main topic of this course objective: the creation of communities.

At the end of this course, the student should be able to:

- ✓ Students will have an informed understanding of key frameworks, concepts, arguments, topics, questions, and history informing Mexican Literature. Discuss the cultural and historical forces driving common fictional representation of the Mexican literature.
- ✓ Understand the different phases in the interpretation of the Mexican Culture, citing specific examples of literary production written during the nineties, and the beginning of the 21st century, with an eye to the contemporary political or socio-cultural concerns of their authors.
- ✓ Student will improved his/her ability to express ideas in clear and logical ways -- both in written and oral forms.
- ✓ Students should be able to respond critically to all course material, using, analysis, close reading, comparison and evaluation.
- ✓ Students should be able to analyze Mexican Literature by drawing upon the many cultural, theoretical, and gendered analysis covered in this class.
- ✓ Think, discuss, and write about abstract topics in Spanish with increased fluency and ease of

EVALUATION

Spanish 6322

1 Research essay (15%) & Thesis Statement activity (5%)	25%

2 Research essay (15%) & Thesis Statement activity (5%)	25%

Presentation (2)	15%
Forums (12)	15 %

Participation	20%

	100 %

Grading Scale

A=90-100
B=80-89
C=70-79
D=60-69
F=59 and below

COURSE COMPONENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

A. (2) Research essay (dates specified in the calendar; topics and instructions will be indicated by Dr. Moreno).

You will need to write two-research essay for this class. The topic of the first essay will be on the construction of communities in the novel *Salón de belleza* (Mario Bellatin, 1994). The second essay will be on a topic of your choice and the topic will be researched thought the course. Essays will be written in different stages closely monitored by me:

- 1) Thesis Statement Activity: You will need to justify the topic in the context of the course. You will also need to explain what you expect to learn and which questions you is trying to answer by researching and writing this essay.
- 2) First draft and peer evaluations. You will share a first draft of the essay with an assigned peer and become a peer reviewer for one of your classmates in turn. Peer reviewers will provide comments on content and organization, and will highlight passages and/or arguments that are difficult to follow or understand. As far as it is possible, you will be paired with a classmate working on similar topics or issues, so you can exchange approaches and ideas.

B. Discussions (dates specified in the calendar; topics and instructions posted in CANVAS). All students in the class will have to lead discussion on a topic assigned by me. The student will have to direct two discussions throughout the semester: 1) the first discussion will be based on one of the essays about Mexican cultural context and/or the concept theoretical community 2) the second discussion will be one of the novels assigned for this course. The student will prepare questions (where necessary) in order to encourage discussion among classmates and professor, highlighting both the ideas and concepts raised in the essays, as the aesthetic aspects and key ideas from the novels.

C. Participation: Class participation is **essential** in the form of contributions to class discussions. Such contributions will be evaluated as to **quantity** and **quality**. **Learning is not a passive activity**; you must demonstrate that you are thinking and generating ideas from the material given. Readings are to be fully digested at home in order for you to get the most out of them during class online discussion. Simply stating that you "didn't understand" is not a sufficient excuse for not participating in class discussions. You can improve your participation by preparing questions and/or comments about the readings and by sharing them during general class discussion and in group or pair activities. Due to the interactive nature of this course, this may be the element most crucial to your interest and, therefore, to the class's success.

ATTENDANCE

Regular class attendance is critical for your success. **The maximum number of absences is 4 (no participation)**. All absences, excused or unexcused, will be counted as absences. Each absence over the maximum will result in your final grade being lowered one-half letter grade (e.g. A>AB). If you must be absent one day, you are responsible for both the material covered that day as well as the work for the following class. **Be sure to request e-mail addresses, Skype account, and phone numbers from two peers.**

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Acts of academic dishonesty may include but are not limited to the following:

- *Cutting and pasting material from another paper or a web page and submitting it as one's work.*
- *Quoting or paraphrasing extensively from a document without making proper references to the source.*
- *The illegitimate use of materials in any form during a quiz or an exam.*
- *Copying answers from the quiz or examination paper of another students.*

- *Plagiarizing (submitting as one’s own ideas the work of another) or falsifying materials or information used in the completion of any assignment which is graded or evaluated as the student’s individual effort.*
- *Submitting the same work for more than one course without the consent of the instructors of each course in which the work is submitted.*

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE / STUDENT CONDUCT:

The following are the rules for FACE TO FACE PARTICIPATION behavior—violation of these rules may result first in temporary suspension from the class, then a consultation with the Dean of Student Affairs, and finally expulsion from the class:

- A. Be on time in class.
- B. Do not make it obvious that you do not wish to work with a certain person, or demonstrate a poor attitude towards the class and our activities. This is a highly interactive class, and you are expected to participate weekly.
- C. Do not disrespect the opinions, abilities or questions of your classmates. Everyone is working at a different level—show patience and kindness with your classmates as they are engaged in the learning process.

Course Calendar.

Expectations of students: I expect you to

- ✓ Keep up with the material covered every week
- ✓ Complete your homework and quizzes on time every week
- ✓ Produce a project report reflecting your own work and submitted on time
- ✓ Participate actively and courteously in the forums
- ✓ Abide by the standards of academic honesty and student code of conduct
- ✓ Seek help (homework forums) when you don’t understand a topic
- ✓ Aspire to enjoy learning about statistics – yes you can and I’ll do my best to help!

Expectations of the instructor: You can expect me to

- ✓ Provide comprehensive learning material on time every week
- ✓ Provide scheduled live online office hours
- ✓ Provide an ongoing help forum, check it at least three times a week and respond to student postings
- ✓ Create questions for forum that reflect the stated learning expectations for the course

Introduction: Classroom Session

<i>Enero 8</i>	Topic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This activity is important to know each other and make personal presentations. ➤ We'll talk about the expectations of the course, and the importance of the subject of the course. <p style="text-align: center;"><u>We will focus on two objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ While we still not know the theoretical approaches of the concept of community and its political, linguistic, social, cultural, psychological implications, etc., we will try to propose definitions and examples the concept of community based on our own cultural experiences.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We will make a historical recount of Mexico in over a century. Not important if we don't remember distant or recent historical events that occurred in Mexico, the readings will enrich us our historical background. ➤ Mexico: before and after the Decade of the nineties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronology. Political episodes. Cultural events. Economic crises. Other important issues.
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Module 1

- ❖ After each reading, a respective forum will be open to discuss the content.
- ❖ The content of the reading is to broaden your background about Mexico.
- ❖ Golden rule to participate in the forum: read the texts before class.

4 Readings	Dates of analysis	Assignments
Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo. "Proyecto nacional y proyecto civilizatorio". <i>México profundo. Una civilización negada</i> . México, D.F.: Conaculta, 2001. 217-246.	15 de enero-22 de enero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Analysis and discussion ❖ Contribute to the discussion two questions about reading.
Monsiváis, Carlos. "Paisajes de la cultura: entre un diluvio de chips y un laberinto de paradigmas". <i>Los desafíos del presente mexicano</i> . Coord. Francisco Toledo y Enrique Florescano. México, D.F.: Taurus, 2006. 161-191.	29 de enero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Analysis and discussion ❖ Contribute to the discussion two questions about reading.
Aguilar Rivera, José Antonio. "El sonido y la furia: Crítica de la persuasión multicultural". <i>Revista de Teoría y Filosofía del Derecho</i> , núm. 12 (abril 2000), pp. 53-73	5 de febrero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Analysis and discussion ❖ Contribute to the discussion two questions about reading.
Aguilar Rivera, José Antonio. "El laberinto de las identidades". <i>Los desafíos del presente mexicano</i> . Coord. Francisco Toledo y Enrique Florescano. México, D.F.: Taurus, 2006. 195-222.	5 de febrero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Analysis and discussion ❖ Contribute to the discussion two questions about reading.

Module 2

- ❖ After each reading, a respective forum will be open to discuss the content.
- ❖ The content of the reading is to clear doubts, enriching your theoretical horizon, and familiarize yourself with the concept of community.
- ❖ Golden rule to participate in the forum: read the texts before participating in the discussions.

- ❖ The expectation of the instructor is that students will log on a minimum of three times every seven days.
- ❖ In terms of quality my expectations are simple. Responses should be well written in Spanish (please spell-check!) and clearly address the issues being discussed.

3 Readings	Dates of forums	Assignments
<p>Anderson, Benedict. <i>Comunidades imaginadas. Reflexiones sobre el origen y la difusión del nacionalismo</i>. Trad. Eduardo L. Suárez. México, D.F.: F.C.E., 2011.</p> <p>Three chapters of this book of essays will be discussed in the span a week working and a half.</p> <p>1. Introduction</p> <p>2. Cultural roots.</p> <p>3. The origin of social consciousness</p>	<p>12 de febrero-19 de febrero</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Analysis and discussion ❖ Contribute to the discussion two questions about reading.
<p>Bauman, Zygmunt. <i>Modernidad líquida</i>. Trad. Mirta Rosenberg. Buenos Aires: F.C.E., 1999.</p> <p>One chapter:</p> <p>1. The Community.</p>	<p>26 de febrero</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Analysis and discussion ❖ Contribute to the discussion two questions about reading.
<p>Maffesoli, Michel. <i>El tiempo de las tribus. El ocaso del individualismo en las sociedades posmodernas</i>. Trad. Daniel Gutiérrez Martínez. México, D.F.: Siglo XXI, 2004.</p> <p>Note: Two chapters of this book of essays will be discussed in one session.</p> <p>1. The emotional community.</p> <p>2. The underground power.</p>	<p>5 de marzo</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Analysis and discussion ❖ Contribute to the discussion two questions about reading.

Module 3

- ❖ After each reading, a respective forum will be open to discuss the content.
- ❖ We will discuss the literary elements of this novel: character, setting, conflict, plot, climax, resolution, theme, tone, and point of view, etc.
- ❖ We will identify and explain the significance of community, and also the way in which the characters build their community and the dynamics that the community proposes.
- ❖ Golden rule: read the novel class.

1 Readings (Novel)	Dates of forums	Assignments
Bellatin, Mario. <i>Salón de belleza</i> . Lima, Perú: J. Campodónico, 1994. Note: The students will analyze this novel and discuss in the span of two weeks working.	12 de marzo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Analysis and discussion ❖ Find and make connections between this novel, taking as starting point the themes of building communities and disease as a postmodern plague, and other possible novels or films. Similarities? Differences? What kind of conflicts facing the characters? founding communities is part of the interest of the characters?

First Paper

Submit a Thesis Activity	Submit a Final Draft
19 de marzo	26 de marzo

Workshop for Structuring the Research Paper (10 pages)

- ❖ In the section Writing Workshop, in the index of CANVAS., you can find the instructions you have to follow while you are writing your first paper, with an extension of 5 pages.
- ❖ Your paper should follow the instructions.
- ❖ You have to develop a draft of the paper about *Salón de belleza*.
- ❖ Sent the Professor a **Thesis Statement** activity, in order to justify your arguments.
- ❖ The professor must read your justification.
- ❖ The professor will help you to improve the style, grammar, and argumentation of your paper.
- ❖ Remember: without the activity of **Thesis Statement**, your paper will not be accepted.
- ❖

The Thesis Statement Checklist

- ✓ Does my thesis sentence attempt to answer (or at least explore) a challenging intellectual question?
- ✓ Does the thesis statement address the topic given to you? Will it allow you to fully explore and discuss all aspects of the essay prompt?
- ✓ Is the point I'm making one that would generate discussion, or is it one that would leave people asking, "So what?"
- ✓ Is my thesis too narrow? Is it a "dead-end" statement?
- ✓ Is my thesis too vague? Too general? Too broad? Should I focus on some more specific aspect of my topic?
- ✓ Does my thesis indicate a direction and structure for my paper?
- ✓ Is the language in my thesis vivid and clear? Is it formulaic, or is it engaging and interesting?

Module 4

- ❖ After each reading, a respective forum will be open to discuss the content.
- ❖ We will discuss the literary elements of this novel: character, setting, conflict, plot, climax, resolution, theme, tone, and point of view, etc.
- ❖ We will identify and explain the significance of community, and also the way in which the characters build their community and the dynamics that the community proposes.
- ❖ Golden rule to participate in the forum: read the novel before participating in the discussions.
- ❖ The expectation of the instructor is that students will log on a minimum of three times every seven days.
- ❖ In terms of quality my expectations are simple. Responses should be well written in Spanish (please spell-check!) and clearly address the issues being discussed.

2 Readings	Dates of forums	Assignments
Villoro, Juan. <i>El disparo de argón</i> . Madrid, España: Alfaguara, 1994.	19 de marzo—26 de marzo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Analysis and discussion ❖ Contribute to the discussion two questions about reading.
Toscana, David. <i>Santa María del Circo</i> . México, D.F.: Plaza y Janés, 1998.	2 de abril—9 de abril	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Analysis and discussion ❖ Contribute to the discussion two questions about reading.

Second Paper

Submit a Thesis Activity	Submit a Final Draft
16 de abril	30 de abril

Workshop for Structuring the Research Paper **(10 pages)**

- ❖ Your paper should follow the instructions.
- ❖ You have to develop a draft of your second paper about one of the four novels of the course, except *Salón de belleza*.
- ❖ Sent the Professor a **Thesis Statement** activity, in order to justify your arguments.
- ❖ The professor must read your justification.
- ❖ The professor will help you to improve the style, grammar, and argumentation of your paper.
- ❖ Remember: without the activity of **Thesis Statement**, your paper will not be accepted.
- ❖

The Thesis Statement Checklist

- ✓ Does my thesis sentence attempt to answer (or at least explore) a challenging intellectual question?
- ✓ Does the thesis statement address the topic given to you? Will it allow you to fully explore and discuss all aspects of the essay prompt?
- ✓ Is the point I'm making one that would generate discussion, or is it one that would leave people asking, "So what?"
- ✓ Is my thesis too narrow? Is it a "dead-end" statement?
- ✓ Is my thesis too vague? Too general? Too broad? Should I focus on some more specific aspect of my topic?
- ✓ Does my thesis indicate a direction and structure for my paper?
- ✓ Is the language in my thesis vivid and clear? Is it formulaic, or is it engaging and interesting?

Module 5

- ❖ We will discuss the literary elements of this novel: character, setting, conflict, plot, climax, resolution, theme, tone, and point of view, etc.
- ❖ We will identify and explain the significance of community, and also the way in which the characters build their community and the dynamics that the community proposes.
- ❖ Golden rule to participate in the forum: read the novel before participating in the discussions.
- ❖ The expectation of the instructor is that students will log on a minimum of three times every seven days.
- ❖ In terms of quality my expectations are simple. Responses should be well written in Spanish (please spell-check!) and clearly address the issues being discussed.

2 Readings	Dates of forums	Assignments
López Fernández, Alberto. <i>Los perros de Cook Inlet</i> . México, D.F.: Umbral, 1998.	16 de abril-23 de abril	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Analysis and discussion❖ Contribute to the discussion two questions about reading.
García González, Julieta. <i>Vapor</i> . México, D.F. : Joaquín Mortiz, 2004.	30 de abril	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Analysis and discussion❖ Contribute to the discussion two questions about reading.

Please print and sign this last page. Make sure to turn it in next class for credit.

I hereby certify that I have carefully read the SPANISH 6322/701 (**Contemporary Mexican Literature**) syllabus in its entirety for SPRING 2018. I understand the contents of this syllabus and the requirements for this class. By signing this document I agree to abide by its terms and conditions. I understand that it is my responsibility to complete the assignments of this course, to study the course material and to attend each class meeting on time. It is also my responsibility to be well informed of any changes to the syllabus and the tentative schedule as the instructor reserves the right to amend the terms, conditions and dates in them as he sees fit at any point during the semester. I also understand that it is my right to ask the instructor, at any time, for clarification of any assignment or rule for this course. In addition, I am also aware that it is forbidden to use the phone during class, unless it is an emergency.

Signature _____ Print _____

Name _____ Date _____