

**Stony Brook University**  
**SPN 435 | Topics in Latin American Literature from the Colonial Period to the Present**  
**Cosmic Blood: Scientific Discourses in Spanish American Prose**

Fall 2013

MW 5:30PM-6:50PM

Melville Library E4315

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Office Hours: N-3013 MW 10:30AM-12:00PM or by appointment

**Course Description**

This course investigates the role of scientific discourses in the prose (fiction and essays) of contemporary Spanish America. The texts we will read intervene in the public debates regarding the modernization of the Hispanic nations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and oftentimes provide a 'diagnosis' to a perceived cultural or racial 'malaise'. The central aim of this course is to familiarize students with the canonical texts that deeply influenced political, social, and intellectual movements of this period and to provide a critical framework with which to understand these debates in context. The role of 'blood' as a racial and cultural marker and the 'cosmic' identification of a people will be central themes that guide our analysis of the literary and cultural texts that sought to bring Latin America into a new era of science, order and progress.

**Prerequisite**

Successful completion of SPN 312 and 321 or their equivalent

**Literary Works and Essays**

Available at Bookstore

Lucio V. Mansilla, *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*

Eugenio Cambaceres, *En la sangre*

Horacio Quiroga, *Historias de amor, de locura y de muerte*

J. L. Borges, *Ficciones*

Selections Posted on BlackBoard

Alexander von Humboldt, *Views of Nature*

Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Facundo*

José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel*

José María Ramos Mejía, *Las multitudes argentinas*

Carlos O. Bunge, *Nuestra América*

Alcides Arguedas, *Pueblo enfermo*

José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica*

Leopoldo Lugones, *Las fuerzas extrañas*

**Evaluation Criteria**

1. Participation in class	20%
2. Oral Presentation	10%
3. Quizzes (4 total)	20%
4. Position Essay (4 pages)	20%
5. Final Essay (8-10 page research paper)	30%

## Evaluation Description

1. **Participation in class:** Means coming to class (attendance), being prepared and willing to discuss course materials, giving constructive criticism to classmates, and contributing to class discussions. Each student may miss up to 3 days of class without penalty, beyond this 1 point will be deducted from the student's final grade per day absent.
2. **Oral Presentation:** Each student will give a 10-minute presentation that expands our discussion of a particular literary text. By utilizing sources found outside of class, the student will bring to bear new perspectives than those we have already seen and think critically about discussions we have already had. This research may be used toward your final essay.
3. **Quizzes:** These will be short answer responses regarding the course material covered to date. One quiz will be administered for each Part of the course.
4. **Position Essay:** This is a 4-page analysis of a text or topic studied in class or closely related to the topics studied. It must present a clear thesis expressing your opinion/position regarding the topic, and include a detailed analysis supporting this thesis. External sources may be used, but are not necessary.
5. **Final Essay (8-10 page research paper):** A research project that develops a critical approach to one of our readings and which incorporates at least 3 secondary sources (1 critical, 1 historical, and 1 theoretical). Must be formatted according to MLA guidelines and include a Works Cited page.

## Americans with Disabilities Act

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

## Academic Integrity

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/>

## Critical Incident Management

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.

## Course Schedule

### Part I: Voyages of Science

- Week 1 M 8/26 Course Introduction  
W 8/28 Humboldt, *Views of Nature* BB
- Week 2 M 9/2 No Class-Labor Day Holiday  
W 9/4 D. F. Sarmiento, *Facundo* BB
- Week 3 M 9/9 Lucio V. Mansilla, *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* (I) (pp. 1-66)  
W 9/11 Mansilla, *Excursión* (II) (pp. 125-192)
- Week 4 M 9/16 Mansilla, *Excursión* (III) (pp. 193-303)  
W 9/18 Mansilla, *Excursión* (IV) (pp. 333-343; 374-378; 391-436)

### Part II: The Romance of Science

- Week 5 M 9/23 Romantic and naturalist literature in Spanish America  
**Quiz 1**  
W 9/25 Jorge Isaacs, *María* (film on BB—watch before class)
- Week 6 M 9/30 Eugenio Cambaceres, *En la sangre* (I) (pp. vii-17)  
W 10/2 Cambaceres, *En la sangre* (II) (pp. 18-54)
- Week 7 M 10/7 Cambaceres, *En la sangre* (III) (pp. 55-96)  
W 10/9 Cambaceres, *En la sangre* (IV) (pp. 97-126)

### Part III: The Positivist Essay

- Week 8 M 10/14 Positivism in Spanish America  
**Quiz 2**  
W 10/16 José María Ramos Mejía, *Las multitudes argentinas* BB
- Week 9 M 10/21 Carlos O. Bunge, *Nuestra América* BB  
W 10/23 Alcides Arguedas, *Pueblo enfermo* BB  
**Position Essay Due in Class**
- Week 10 M 10/28 J. E. Rodó, *Ariel* (I) BB  
W 10/30 Rodó, *Ariel* (II) BB
- Week 11 M 11/4 José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica* (I) (pp. 43-67)  
W 11/6 Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica* (II) (pp. 68-80)

### Part IV: Science Fiction

- Week 12 M 11/11 Science Fiction in Spanish America  
**Quiz 3**  
W 11/13 Horacio Quiroga, *Cuentos de amor, de locura y de muerte* (I) (“El infierno artificial,” “El almohadón de pluma,” “A la deriva”)
- Week 13 M 11/18 Quiroga, *Cuentos* (II) (“El perro rabioso,” “Los Mensú,” “Yagualí”)  
W 11/20 Leopoldo Lugones, *Las fuerzas extrañas* BB
- Week 14 M 11/25 J. L. Borges, *Ficciones* (I) (“Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius,” “La lotería en Babilonia,” “Las ruinas circulares,” “Examen de la obra de Herbert Quain”)  
W 11/27 No Class-Thanksgiving Holiday
- Week 15 M 12/2 Borges, *Ficciones* (II) (“El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan,” “La biblioteca de Babel,” “El Sur”)  
**Quiz 4**  
W 12/4 Conclusions  
**Final Essays Due in Class**