

Spring 2018  
Stony Brook University  
Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature  
College of Arts and Sciences

**SPN 312 Introduction to Literary Studies**

Tues. & Thurs. 1:00-2:20, Frey 112  
This course satisfies the DEC category G & Skill 3  
This course satisfies the SBC category HFA+, SPK  
Course Instructor: Joseph M. Pierce  
Section: 01

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 3:00-4:00PM, or by appointment.

Instructor contact information: Melville Library N3013, joseph.pierce@stonybrook.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

**Introduction to Literary Studies**

This course will introduce students to major works of prose, poetry and film by contemporary Latin American writers and artists. In addition, it seeks to develop critical skills of literary and cultural analysis with regard to these works, and to improve students' writing and speaking abilities. Finally, it will situate major currents in Latin American social thought with contemporary concerns regarding class, race, gender, sexuality, and colonialism. Thus, this course interrogates more than simply what literature is, or how one studies it, but how literature and the literary circulate through and in doing so shape the contemporary moment.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Introduce students to the diverse histories, cultures, societies, economies and political systems of modern Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Explore the historical, cultural, literary, and visual representations of diverse Latin American populations.
- Analyze literary and cultural texts about these populations to learn how literature and visual representations, as objects of study of the Humanities, convey information that enriches and adds complexity of meaning to our understanding of a given object or social/ historical event.
- Learn how fiction constructs a world of its own to be analyzed on its own terms, at the same time that it relates to, comments about and influences the society to which it belongs.

Required Texts (available at Stony Brook Bookstore/Amazon.com):

Julio Cortázar, *Clases de literatura*. Berkeley. 1980 (this is also available as a .pdf on Bb)

Manuel Puig, *El beso de la mujer araña*

Additional readings available on Blackboard in .pdf format.

Attendance: Consistent attendance and thoughtful participation are crucial to your success in this class. Arriving late causes a disruption, and will reflect negatively on your participation grade. After three absences your grade will be lowered by a half point and so on successively for further

unexcused absences. If you have more than 6 absences, your final grade will be an F. Attendance will be taken in each class, please ensure that you sign in if you arrive late.

Participation: To receive an A for participation you must have excellent attendance, come prepared, and participate actively and thoughtfully in class discussions. If you participate occasionally and with little preparation or insight, you will receive a B. If you rarely participate in class, you will receive a C; if you hardly contribute, are distracted, and often miss class, you can expect an F in this category.

Position Essays: You will be responsible for writing 4 short essays that rehearse and hone your skills in literary interpretation. Each of these essays will take the form of a 2-page analysis (double-spaced) of a literary text or texts that we have studied in class, but each will have a different prompt meant to guide your analysis. No late work will be accepted, and essays should be printed (and stapled) and turned in at the beginning of class (MLA format!!!).

Discussion Board Diary: Once per week, you will ‘react’ to an assigned reading/material. (What literary themes do you recognize? What formal elements can you identify? What voices, textures, rhythms, do you sense? How does this work make you feel? What ‘message’ is the author trying to convey? What would Cortázar say about it?, etc.) This should be done before class and posted on Blackboard on our course Discussion Board. Being active on the discussion board, such as commenting on other people’s reactions will earn you participation points (this is especially useful for you shy folks). The point of this is to ensure that you have thought about each text before we discuss it in class. If you weren’t able to post before class, you should do so after. You don’t have to write much, no more than 200 words (about half a page). Questions and doubts are encouraged and equally valid as statements of appreciation or analysis. This will be graded as complete/incomplete (i.e. for full credit you must complete 10 entries—I am not grading you on the quality of your questions, but whether or not you posted them), help me out by numbering each entry, please.

Oral Presentation: Each student will prepare a 7-minute conference style presentation on a topic designed in consultation with the professor. These mini-conferences (panels) will be read or delivered extemporaneously, but may not use audio-visual support (sorry). There will be two panels for each of these class days and each panel will be followed by a Q&A session. Each panel will have a theme (1. The Fantastic, 2. The Real, 3. Music and Humor, and 4. Sensuality). You will sign up for a panel on March 1. Your presentation should form the basis of and include the central claim for your final paper, described below. In 7 minutes you should be able to read 2-3 pages. Practice and time it out. I will limit each presentation to 7 minutes precisely.

Final Paper: This wouldn’t be a literary analysis course without some sustained literary analysis. You have the opportunity to showcase your skills and ideas in the final presentation, and to hone those ideas based on audience feedback. You will finish the course by completing a 6-page essay (double-spaced). No more, no less. The trick here is that you must compare one text that we have read in class to one text that we have not. Yes, you have to find another literary text (novel, short story, poem, film, song, etc.) for comparison. You should use your final oral presentation as a point of departure, but you must move beyond that text into the unknown. These final essays will be due by email on the day of our scheduled final exam, which is Tuesday, May 15 (by 5PM).

Evaluation criteria:

- In-class Participation: 10%
- Position Essays (4): 30%
- Discussion Board Reactions (10): 30%
- Oral Presentation: 10%
- Final Paper: 20%

Grading System

100-93	A	79-77	C+
92-90	A-	76-73	C
89-87	B+	72-70	C-
86-83	B	69-67	D+
82-80	B-	66-60	D
		59-0	F

**DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services (631) 632-6748 or <http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/dss/>. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities/asp>.

**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 instance of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. 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, and/or inhibits students' ability to learn.

**TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM:** Our policy will be:

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## MEETING SCHEDULE

- January 23** Course Introduction: What is “Literature”? What is “Life”? Can Literature be Life? Can Literature be Medicine? [Can this be a Title?]
- January 25** Julio Cortázar, “Los caminos de un escritor” (pp. 15-25)
- January 30** Julio Cortázar, “Los caminos de un escritor” (pp. 25-41)
- February 1** Juana Manuela Gorriti, “Yerbas y alfileres” (1867)  
Justo Sierra, “La sirena” (1869)
- February 6** Julio Cortázar, “El cuento fantástico I: el tiempo” (43-70)
- February 8** Esteban Echeverría, “El matadero” (1871)
- February 13** Julio Cortázar, “El cuento fantástico II: la fatalidad” (pp. 71-106)
- February 15** Leopoldo Lugones, “Yzur” (1906)  
Carlos O. Bunge, “Pesadilla Drolática” (1907)
- February 20** Horacio Quiroga, “El invierno artificial” and “El perro rabioso” (1917)  
**Position Essay 1 Due**
- February 22** Julio Cortázar, “Casa tomada” (1946)
- February 27** Poetic Interlude: Roque Dalton
- March 1** Julio Cortázar, “El cuento realista” (pp. 107-148)  
**Sign up for Panels**
- March 6** Miguel Cané, “[En el fondo del río](#)” (1884)  
Francisco Sicardi, “[Un anónimo más](#)” (1907)
- March 8** Visual Interlude: Social Realism, Mexican Muralism, and the “Real”.  
**Position Essay 2 Due**
- March 13 & 15** No Class Spring Break
- March 20** Juan Rulfo, “No oyes ladrar a los perros” (1953)
- March 22** Jorge Luis Borges, “El Sur” (1944)
- March 27** Julio Cortázar, “Musicalidad y humor en la literatura” (149-180)  
**Position Essay 3 Due**

- March 29** Manuel Puig, *El beso de la mujer araña* (Ch. 1-4)
- April 3** Manuel Puig, *El beso de la mujer araña* (Ch. 5-8)
- April 5** Manuel Puig, *El beso de la mujer araña* (Ch. 9-12)
- April 10** Manuel Puig, *El beso de la mujer araña* (Ch. 13-16)
- April 12** Sonic Interlude: Jazz, Funk, and Rock en Español  
**Position Essay 4 Due**
- April 17** Julio Cortázar, “Erotismo y literatura” (249-278)
- April 19** Roberto Bolaño, “Llamadas telefónicas” (1997)  
**Workshop Final Paper Ideas (in class)**
- April 24** JuanCarlos López, “Y los pulpos soñaron con los arcángeles” (2007)
- April 26** Claudia Salazar Jiménez: “Ciber proletaria” (2017)
- May 1** **Conclusion: Panel I (The Fantastic and The Real)**
- May 3** **Conclusion: Panel II (Music, Humor, and Sensuality)**
- May 15** **Final Papers due via email by 5PM**