

Spring 2018

Stony Brook University

Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature

College of Arts and Sciences

SPN 435 Topics in Latin American Literature from the Colonial Period to the Present

Tuesday & Thursday 11:30AM-12:50PM, Melville Library N4006

This course satisfies the SBC category ESI and HFA+

Course Instructor: Joseph M. Pierce

Section: 01

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 3:00-4:00PM, or by appointment

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Monsters, Cannibals & Cyborgs

What makes us human and what are the limits to our humanity? For that matter, who counts as “us” in the previous sentence? This course discusses the question of the human by interrogating three key figures: the monster, the cannibal, and the cyborg. We will do so by reading 19th, 20th, and 21st century Latin American fiction in conjunction with medical, criminological, and theoretical texts in an effort to understand how monstrosity intersects with the development of national identity, gendered bodies, sexual practices, race, and humanness from the colonial period to today. By focusing the course around figures and figurations of monstrosity, one central aim is to show how the monster develops, transforms, and endures in cultural production. That is, this course looks at the life and afterlife of monsters, what makes them monsters, and what makes us, too, monstrous. A second goal will be to interrogate the formal qualities that make art, literature, and film monstrous. Thus, we are interested in not simply what a monster is, but how monstrosity can be expressed. Another way of framing this question, then, is not what a monster looks like, but what does a monster see when it gazes upon us?

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Introduce students to a range of mythological, religious, fantastical, and scientific writing in Latin America.
- Explore historical, cultural, literary, and political contexts for the representation of monstrosity, including issues related to race, class, gender, and sexuality.
- Develop analytical skills for reading literary and cultural texts that take the monstrous as an object.
- Develop and practice monstrous writing.

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

Juan José Saer, *El entenado* (1983)

Mayra Santos Febres, *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* (2000)

All other readings will be 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 daily, so please ensure that you sign in each class, otherwise you will be considered absent.

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.

Blog Posts: Since this course focuses on honing your ability to interpret literary and cultural texts, you will be required to write a blog post that analyzes one text from each section of the course (three in total). This assignment is one of concision and creativity. Each post should be no less than 100 words and no more than 200. Really. Your aim is to interpret the text in an original and innovative way, paying special attention to its literary form, sociocultural context, or political importance. This means that you do not summarize the text, but ask questions of, with, and through it. These blog posts must actively engage with our ongoing class discussions and be posted by 5PM the day before we discuss the work in class. We will make a course calendar specifically for this requirement that includes instructions on how to upload the post to our course blog. These posts will serve to open each class day.

www.monstruosycanibales.wordpress.com

Critical Analysis: You will write a detailed analysis (1,500 words) of one of the texts that we read/view this semester. This may be based on a previous blog entry, but must also incorporate at least two critical sources from outside of class. These sources must be peer-reviewed academic articles or published books or chapters. They must not be the first thing that comes up on Google—i.e. a blog post by crazypants347 on mermaids—but serious scholarship. Please see the Course Bibliography for examples and as a point of departure. You will bring your critical analysis (printed out) to class on March 27. A classmate will then read and provide feedback on your essay (likewise, you will read and comment on a classmate's essay) by March 29. You will then revise your essay and bring the final draft (printed out) to class on April 5.

Final Project: Our goal as a class is not just to read about monsters, but to create as monsters. In pairs or groups of three, you will construct an archive of one historical or contemporary monster (broadly conceived). In essence, you will be producing a contemporary bestiary. These monstrous archives should be produced bilingually—in English and Spanish—and pay special attention to how monstrosity figures, is figured, and transfigures over time. Each group should provide an abstract of your project by March 1, and be prepared to discuss it in class. We will workshop ideas in class on that day. We will unveil our new bestiary on the last day of class, which will be open to the public. Each group should be prepared to describe (without notes) the origin, method, purpose, and results of your research in under 5 minutes.

Detailed instructions will be provided for all assignments, which should rigorously follow MLA style. I will send them back to you if the formatting is crazy. I'm not kidding.

Evaluation criteria:

Blog posts (3): 15% (5% each)

Critical Analysis: 25% (20% text, 5% commentary)

Final Project: 50% (10% abstract, 35% textual/visual archive, 5% in-class presentation)

Participation: 10%

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:

MEETING SCHEDULE

Part I: Monsters

- January 23** Course Introduction: Myth, Monstrosity, and the History of Latin America
Cristóbal Colón, *Diarios de abordo* (selection)
Tesoro de Covarrubias, “Monstro”
Susy Shock, “Reivindico mi derecho a ser un monstruo” (2008)
- January 25** Homer, *The Odyssey*, Book XII (The Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis)
Diego Gutiérrez and Hieronymous Cock, “Americae sive quarte orbis partis nova et exactissima” (1562)
Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels* (1573-85) (pp. 1-150)
- January 30** Topic 1 Sirens
Justo Sierra, “La sirena” (1869)
Carlos O. Bunge, “La sirena (tríptico)” (1907)
Manuel Mujica Lainez, “La sirena (1541)” (1950)
- February 1** Mayra Santos Febres, *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* (2000) (pp. 1-66)
- February 6** Mayra Santos Febres, *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* (2000) (pp. 67-168)
- February 8** Mayra Santos Febres, *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* (2000) (pp.169-233)
Lia la novia, *performances* (2014-15)
- February 13** Topic 2: Vampires, Zombies, and other Creatures
Juan Montalvo, “Gaspar Blondín” (1858)
Juana Manuela Gorriti, “Yerbas y alfileres” (1867)
- February 15** Carlos O. Bunge, “Pesadilla Drolática” (1907)
JuanCarlos López, “Y los pulpos soñaron con los arcángeles” (2007)
- February 20** Francisco de Veyga “Invertido profesional imitando a mujer honesta” (1902)
Naty Menstrual, “Mala hiedra” (2009) and “Yo quisiera ser vampira” (2010)
- February 22** Persephone Braham, “The Monstrous Caribbean” (pp. 17-47)
- February 27** Allison P. Sellers, “Yemoja: An Introduction to the Divine Mother and Water Goddess” (pp. 131-149)
- March 1** Conclusion Part I: From The Monsters Out There to the Monsters Within
Lino Arruda, “I still” (in class)
Final Project Abstract Due In Class

Part II: Cannibals

- March 6** Carlos Jáuregui, *Canibalia* (pp. 47-102)
- March 8** Carlos Jáuregui, *Canibalia* (pp. 102-131)
Michael J. Horswell, *Decolonizing the Sodomite* (pp. 68-80)
- March 13 & 15** No Class Spring Break
- March 20** Surekha Davies, “Spit-roasts, barbecues and the invention of the Brazilian cannibal” (pp. 65-108)
- March 22** Manuel Mujica Lainez, “El hambre (1536)” (1950)
Esteban Echeverría, “El matadero” (1871)
- March 27** Juan José Saer, *El entenado* (1983) (pp. 1-39)
Critical Analysis Draft Due In Class
- March 29** Juan José Saer, *El entenado* (1983) (pp. 40-120)
Comments on Critical Analysis Due In Class
- April 3** Juan José Saer, *El entenado* (1983) (pp. 121-193)
- April 5** Conclusion Part II: (Neo)Colonial (In)digestion
Empaná de pino (2008, Dir. Wincy) (watch before class)
Critical Analysis Final Draft Due In Class
- ## Part III: Cyborgs
- April 10** Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto” (pp. 291-324)
- April 12** Leopoldo Lugones, “Yzur” (1906)
Horacio Quiroga, “El invierno artificial” and “El perro rabioso” (1917)
Claudia Salazar Jiménez: “Ciber proletaria” (2017)
- April 17** Mario Bellatin, *Salón de belleza* (1999) (pp. 1-37)
- April 19** *Sleep Dealer* (2008, Dir. Alex Rivera) (watch before class)
- April 24** Paul Preciado, *Testo Yonqui*, “La era farmacopornográfica” (2008) (pp. 25-46)
- April 26** Claudia Rodríguez, *Cuerpos para odiar* (2013-14) (pp. 1-44)
- May 1** Claudia Rodríguez, *Cuerpos para odiar* (2013-14) (pp. 45-99)
- May 3** **Conclusion Part III: Presentations of *Figuraciones Monstruosas***