

**Comparative Literature 710 N**  
**Fall 2014**  
**Tu and Th 2:30pm – 3:50pm**  
**Conference Room, 159 George Street**  
**Prof. Luiz F. Valente**

**Office: Meiklejohn House, 159 George Street, Room 202**  
**Office Hours: Mondays, 2:00pm-3:00pm and Thursdays, 4:00pm-5:00pm**

**A COMPARATIVE INTRODUCTION TO THE  
LITERATURES OF THE AMERICAS**

**SHORT COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Considers the common links between the diverse literatures of North and South America, approached in relation to one another rather than to Eurocentric paradigms. Focuses on the treatment of such topics as the representation of the past and the self, the role of memory and the imagination, the nature of literary language, and the questions of alienation, colonialism and post-colonialism, communication versus silence, and fiction versus history in the works of selected writers from North and Latin America, including García-Márquez, Faulkner, Donoso, Bombal, Rosa, Cortázar, Lispector, Munro, Morrison, Doctorow, and DeLillo. Enrollment limited to fifteen.

**LONG COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The United States and Latin America share a self-conscious preoccupation with recording their unique multi-cultural reality and establishing their “New World” identity, while, at the same time, attempting to respond to and renew their European heritage. The result of this productive struggle is a unique synthesis of the old and the new, of regionalism and universalism, of tradition and innovation. Not surprisingly, in seeking to establish their independent identity, the literatures of the Americas are often marked by a search for new forms of expression. Formal experimentation is seldom, however, an end in itself. On the contrary, these literatures are in many ways “traditional” in their sensitivity to the delicate balance between the individual and the community, their concern for moral values, and their compassionate awareness of the drama of the human condition. This course will focus on the treatment of such issues as the representation of the past and the self, the role of memory and the imagination, the nature of literary language and the questions of alienation, colonialism and post-colonialism, communication versus silence, and fiction versus history in the works of selected writers from North and Latin America. Students will participate actively in class discussion, present one oral report, and write two short papers. Theoretical materials will be introduced as needed. The course will conclude with a final project (interpretive, historical or creative).

## **PRIMARY TEXTS**

Gabriel García-Márquez (COLOMBIA), *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981)

William Faulkner (USA), *As I Lay Dying* (1930)

José Donoso (CHILE), “Paseo” (1959)

Maria Luisa Bombal (CHILE), “The Tree” (1941)

João Guimarães Rosa (BRAZIL), selected stories

Julio Cortázar (ARGENTINA), *Blow-Up and Other Stories* (1968)

Clarice Lispector (BRAZIL), *Family Ties* (1960)

Alice Munro (CANADA), *Runaway* (2004)

Toni Morrison (USA), *Beloved* (1987)

E.L.Doctorow (USA), *Sweet Land Stories* (2004)

Don DeLillo (USA), *Cosmopolis* (2003)

### **September 4**

Introduction

Clarice Lispector (1920-1977), “The Chicken”

### **September 9**

Gabriel García-Márquez (1927-2014), *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*

### **September 11**

Gabriel García-Márquez, “Balthazar’s Marvelous Afternoon,” “Big Mama’s Funeral”  
(handout)

### **September 16**

William Faulkner (1897-1962), *As I Lay Dying*

### **September 18**

William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*

### **September 23**

William Faulkner, “Noble Prize Acceptance Speech” (handout)  
Gabriel García-Márquez, “The Solitude of Latin America” (handout)

### **September 25**

José Donoso, (1924-1996), “Paseo” (handout)  
Maria Luisa Bombal (1910-1980), “The Tree” (handout)

### **September 30**

João Guimarães Rosa (1908-1967), “The Third Bank of the River,” “Soroco, His Mother  
His Daughter,” (handout)

### **October 2**

João Guimarães Rosa, “A Woman of Good Works,” “A Young Man Gleaming White,”  
“No Man, no Woman” (handout)

### **October 7**

João Guimarães Rosa, “The Thin Edge of Happiness,” “Treetops,” (handout)

**First paper due**

### **October 9**

Julio Cortázar (1914-1984), *Blow-Up and Other Stories*: “Blow-Up,” “Axolotl”

### **October 14**

Julio Cortázar, *Blow-Up and Other Stories*: “Continuity of Parks,” “House Taken Over”

### **October 16**

Julio Cortázar, “The Night Face Up,” “The Gates of Heaven”

**October 21**

Clarice Lispector (1920-1977), *Family Ties*: “Love,” “Family Ties”

**October 23**

**NO CLASS**

**October 28**

Clarice Lispector, *Family Ties*: “The Imitation of the Rose,” “Daydreams of a Drunk Woman”

**October 30**

Clarice Lispector, *Family Ties*, “Preciousness,” “The Buffalo”

**November 4**

Alice Munro (1931---), *Runaway*

**November 6**

Alice Munro, *Runaway*

**November 11**

Alice Munro, *Runaway*

**Second paper due**

**November 13**

Tony Morrison (1931---) *Beloved*

**November 18**

Tony Morrison, *Beloved*

**November 20**

E. L. Doctorow (1931---), *Sweet Land Stories*

**November 25**

E. L. Doctorow, *Sweet Land Stories*

**November 27**

**THANKSGIVING**

**December 2**

Don DeLillo (1936---), *Cosmopolis*

**December 4**

Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*

**December 9**

**Conclusion**

**Assignments and procedures**

1. Course participants are expected to read all the assigned material for each class and to be prepared to discuss it.
2. The course has a Canvas site, which should be consulted regularly for announcements and additional assignments.
3. The full course syllabus can be found under “Pages” on the course Canvas site.
4. Two short papers (6-8 pages) will be due to the writing fellow on October 7 and November 11.
5. Each student will make a short oral presentation about one of the fictional texts .
6. A final project (critical, historical or creative) will be due on Friday, December 12 at 4:00pm.

## E-MAIL COMMUNICATIONS

Although you are free to email me at any time, please understand that I prefer **not** to conduct advising sessions about complex matters by e-mail. I believe good advising requires face-to-face communication. E-mail is good for short answers to short questions. **Thus, I would love to see you during my office hours.**

I often shut off my e-mail on weekends so as to focus on my private life and my own writing. Though love my job and am deeply committed to my students, I do have a life and people who need my attention beyond my classroom and university office. **So, I ask you for patience if I don't reply to an email you send me during the weekend. You'll hear from me during the work week.**