

UCLA
MS5135 MWF 9-9:50 a.m.
Comparative Literature 1D Syllabus
Professor Ryan Kernan
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Great Books from the World at Large Narrative, Geography, and the Foundational Fictions of World Citizens: Performativity, Sexuality, and the Post-Colonial Subject

Course Objectives:

- To help you read texts at a college level. “Read,” in this sense, means a deep engagement with the text where you not only recognize what is explicit on the page, but also formulate your own understandings of how the work conveys meanings. You’ll better learn to think of each work both in terms of its parts and as a whole. This requires a lot of careful re-reading and brainstorming on your part.
- To write papers quickly and efficiently at a college level. Writing essays, especially in an exam setting, demands a mastery of standard written English, an understanding of the accepted form for a composition, and the ability to present, within that form, a well-reasoned argument based on one’s reading of the text. You should buy a copy of the English Style Sheet at the UCLA bookstore (about \$1). A great handbook to buy is the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.

Close Reading :

This is the “meat and bones” of what we’ll be focusing on all quarter. A close reading pays detailed attention to the particular elements of a text’s language and relates those elements of language to the larger issue of how the text conveys meanings to the reader. The elements we will look at include things like word choice, sentence construction, imagery, narratology, prosody, and other figures of language. Examining these elements helps us to arrive at a deeper understanding of a text, and helps us to explore how the author uses language to convey nuanced understandings of the text’s crucial issues (social, political, philosophical, familial, etc.).

Discussion :

Your discussion section is a place for exploration, a space where—if we come prepared— we can all benefit from each other’s insights and backgrounds. You should never be afraid to ask a question during a lecture or discussion. Exploring texts can be difficult, and fascinating exchanges about literature depend on a variety of opinions. Discussion is meant to clear up any confusion you might have about our texts or assignments, and should also (ideally) promote insightful and inflammatory debate! Most of the time, I’ll be able to stay after class to answer questions that we don’t get to during lecture, and you should also (in all of your classes for the rest of your academic life) take advantage of office hours! Office hours allow you to get one on one help with any difficulties you encounter. The most important thing—during lecture, during discussion, and during office hours—is to create an atmosphere of mutual respect between you and your classmates so that everybody has an equal chance to participate and learn. *AND LASTLY, DON’T INTERRUPT OR TALK OVER YOUR PEERS, AND SHOUTING DOWN SOMEONE ELSE’S ARGUMENT DOESN’T MAKE YOURS MORE CONVINCING.*

Exams and Grading :

- ! Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will count for 25% of your total class grade.
- Final Exam: The final exam will count for 45% of your total class grade.
- ! Discussion: Your insightful participation in discussion will count for 20% of your total class grade.
- ! Presentations: The oral presentation that you will present in your discussion sections will count for 10% of your total class grade. The presentation should be about five to ten minutes long, should reflect a deep engagement with a particular text, and should spark exciting class-discussion of the text or texts in question.
- ! Absences: Don't miss section! Every unexcused absence will lower your total participation grade by 25%.

Schedule of Classes :

Week 1) Foundational Fictions: Narrative and National Identities in the Americas

- ! Monday, September 29: Echeverría, Esteban. "The Slaughter House"
- ! Wednesday, October 1: Echeverría, Esteban. "The Slaughter House"
- ! Friday, October 3: Echeverría, Esteban. "The Slaughter House"

Week 2) César Vallejo's Tripartite Genealogy: Envisioning Self, Sex, and Peru

- ! Monday, October 6: Vallejo, César. The Black Heralds "The Black Heralds," *Swift Soffits, Divers, Of The Earth*
- ! Wednesday, October 8: Vallejo, César. The Black Heralds *Imperial Nostalgias, Thunders, Songs of the Hearth*
- ! Friday, October 10: Vallejo, César. The Black Heralds

Week 3) The Shining Path and Mario Vargas Llosa's Detective Fiction: Investigating Political Geographies

- ! Monday, October 13: Vargas Llosa, Mario. Death in the Andes Chapters 1 and 2
- ! Wednesday, October 15: Vargas Llosa, Mario. Death in the Andes Chapters 3 and 4
- ! Friday, October 17: Vargas Llosa, Mario. Death in the Andes Chapters 5 and 6

Week 4) The Shining Path and Mario Vargas Llosa's Detective Fiction: Investigating Political Geographies

- ! Monday, October 20: Vargas Llosa, Mario. Death in the Andes Chapters 7 and 8
- ! Wednesday, October 22: Vargas Llosa, Mario. Death in the Andes Chapters 9 and 10
- ! Friday, October 24: Midterm Exam

Week 5) From Slave Port to Ocean Resort: The Self as Produced in the Wreckage of Empire

- ! Monday, October 27: Kincaid, Jamaica. A Small Place Part I
- ! Wednesday, October 29: Kincaid, Jamaica. A Small Place Part II
- ! Friday, October 31: Kincaid, Jamaica. A Small Place Part I and II

Week 6) The Ethics of Others and Exiles: Self as Response and Responsibility and the Other

- ! Monday, November 3: Farah, Nuruddin. Gigs Part 1
- ! Wednesday, November 5: Farah, Nuruddin. Gigs Part 2
- ! Friday, November 7: Farah, Nuruddin. Gigs Part 3

Week 7) Exilic Identity and The Ethics of Others: Farah and Derrida

- ! Monday, November 10: Farah, Nuruddin. Gigs Part 4
- ! Wednesday, November 12: Farah, Nuruddin. Gigs Part 5
- ! Friday, November 14: Farah, Nuruddin. Gigs Part 6

Week 8) Conflicting Testimonies: Performing Realities Beyond the Self

- ! Monday, November 17: Akutagawa, Ryūnosuke. Rashomon: And Other Stories- “In a Grove”
- ! Wednesday, November 19: Akutagawa, Ryūnosuke. Rashomon: And Other Stories- “Rashomon”
- ! Friday, November 21: Akutagawa, Ryūnosuke. Rashomon: And Other Stories- “The Dragon”

Week 9) Trauma or Television? The Cinematic as Allegory of the Modern Condition

- ! Monday, November 24: Kurosawa, Akira. RASHOMON
- ! Wednesday, November 26: Kurosawa, Akira. RASHOMON
- ! Friday, November 28: (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Week 10) The Authenticity, Aspirations, and Air-Sickness of Adopted Identity

- ! Monday, December 1: Lispector, Clarice. Selected Cronicas “A Dialogue,” “Learning to Live,” “Supernatural Life,” “The Egg and the Chicken Part I,” “The Egg and the Chicken Part II,” “Five Stories on a Single Themes”
- ! Wednesday, December 3: Lispector, Clarice. Selected Cronicas “The Princess I,” “The Princess II,” “The Princess III,” “The Princess VI,” “The Princess V,” “Racing Against the Typewriter,” “Correct Assumptions,” “Living Jelly,” “The Gratuitous Act,” “To Good to be True,” “Refugee”
- ! Friday, December 5: Lispector, Clarice. Selected Cronicas “Without Any Warning,” “Fear of the Unknown (Extract),” “Playing with Mercury,” “The Sloth,” “Buying a Pig in a Poke,” “What is Anguish?” “The Obedient I,” “The Obedient II,” “What Love Can Lead To,” “Submission to the Process,” “More than Simple Word Play”

Week 11) Final Exam- Friday, December 12, 2008 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM