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SPNS 432.01: Latin American Literature and Film - Between Inequality and Hope

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Latin American Literature and Film: Between Inequality and Hope

SPNS 432
Spring 2016

Professor Clary Loisel

Liberal Arts 428

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Class Location: LA 207

Class Meeting Times: T/R 12:40-2:00

Office hours: MWF 10:30-11:10 and

T/R 2:00-2:45 (and by appointment)

Announcements:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>

If you are a student with a disability and wish to discuss reasonable accommodations for this course, please contact me immediately via an office visit to discuss the specific course accommodations you wish to request. Please be advised that I request you to provide a letter from Disability Services for Students verifying your right to reasonable modifications. If you have not yet contacted Disability Services located in Lommasson Center 154, please do so in order to verify your disability and to coordinate your reasonable modifications. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at www.umt.edu/dss/.

You are cordially invited to attend "Spanish Table" This is an excellent opportunity to practice your spoken Spanish and to meet new friends. Please contact Kelly Noe for more information: kelly.noe@mso.umt.edu; 243-2976.

Required Texts:

Gran Mantel by Pablo Neruda

Capitanes de la arena by Jorge Amado

Macario and *Es que somos muy pobres* by Juan Rulfo

Los invasores by Egon Wolff

Hora de la estrella by Clarice Lispector

Casa en Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

I will send you scanned versions of all readings **EXCEPT** *Casa en Mango Street*. You can order a copy of this book from Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, etc.

Required Films:

Captains of the Sands / Capitães da areia

Hour of the Star / Hora da estrela

City of God / Cidade de Deus

All movies are “On Reserve” at the Circulation Desk in the Mansfield Library. You may also check to see if they are available on-line via Netflix, Hulu or YouTube. These films should also be in stores like Hastings or Crazy Mike’s.

Course Description:

What can be done to help alleviate poverty? How can Latin American film and literature help give us some of the necessary tools to transfer theory into practice? How specifically does poverty affect children, adolescents, and young adults? What is the intersection of inequality and hope? What is the role of the study of humanities (i.e. Latin American film and literature) at UM to help combat “real world” issues? These are some of the principle questions we will address in this class.

Goals:

- To raise our consciousness level about those who are less fortunate than we are.
- To suggest ways in which we can all work towards reducing/eliminating poverty
- To recommend how UM should respond to poverty on a local, national, and international level
- To improve spoken and written Spanish
- To do significant research on poverty in Missoula and to apply general concepts about poverty from the readings and films to the Missoula community
- To learn to work together in small groups
- To participate in a group project and explain orally your particular area of interest

I will do my best to schedule a visit to the Missoula Food Bank and to the Poverello Center. This will be an **OPTIONAL** excursion. The University of Montana has nothing to do with this visit and does not assume any liabilities. Should you choose to participate, you will do so as an independent citizen of Missoula and NOT as a UM student. This visit is **NOT** for extra credit; it is for concerned citizens to become aware of important social issues and perhaps to become involved in trying to alleviate poverty and/or homelessness.

Outcomes:

- To become knowledgeable about important literature and film from Latin America (and in the case of *Casa en Mango Street*, the US). Since Brazil is one of the most important countries in Latin America, we will read several works translated into Spanish from Portuguese and watch several films in Portuguese with English subtitles.
- To become familiar with several broad concepts of literary history during the twentieth-century in Latin America
- To speak and write intelligently in Spanish about said works
- To gain a (more) global perspective about the world in general

Attendance:

Class participation is essential for this course. Students who show evidence of thoughtful preparation and who listen attentively and participate enthusiastically should do well in this class. Students are responsible for class work and assignments they miss. Please get the phone number from at least two of your classmates during the first week of classes. That way, if you have to miss class, you can find out exactly what happened that day. After talking to your friend and reviewing his/her notes, please come and see me if there is something that you still do not understand. Please do not call or e-mail me and ask what happened in class and/or what the homework is.

Active Participation/Preparation:

Because time is limited and in-class discussion vital, the student is expected to read assignments carefully (this means several times) before each class. It is often helpful to scan the text once before engaging in a close reading. Read the introductory passages, skim the main body, and search for the author's main points and conclusions, identifying particularly interesting or challenging sections. Formulate the questions that you want to ask of the text, and then return to a careful reading, concentrating on the points that you have outlined. Do not be afraid to consult your dictionary, particularly on the second reading. Jot down your reactions to and questions about the text, so that you can bring them up in the class discussion. I will often indicate certain questions to ask of the text at the end of the preceding class, but do not hesitate to present your own ideas and questions to me and to the rest of the class for general discussion.

Response Cards: Please see the separate handout. I will e-mail you a copy.

Quizzes:

There will be reading quizzes to make sure that the student is prepared for class.

There are no make-ups for the quizzes. For any one you miss, I will substitute whatever grade you make on your research paper on poverty for your missing quiz grade(s).

Assessment: The course is structured so the student regularly receives feedback to achieve the stated outcomes. Progress toward the stated outcomes is assessed using the following criteria:

Active participation/preparation:	5%
Response Cards:	5%
Quizzes:	5%
Three Film Analyses; each worth 10%	30%
Writing Assignment on <i>Los invasores</i> :	10%
Writing Assignment on <i>Casa en Mango Street</i> :	10%
Seven Page Research Paper on Poverty in Missoula:	15%
One Page Letter (in English):	5%
Group Presentation:	10%
Final "Oscar" Presentation:	5%

Grading Scale:

A: 96-100; A-: 90-95
B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83
C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73
D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63
F: below 60

Writing assignments: (I will give more specific instructions in class).

- Two Film analyses in Spanish: one on *City of God*, the other on *Hour of the Star*. Each will be between three and four pages.
- A creative or scholarly writing assignment on *Los invasores* (2-3 pages in Spanish).
- A prequel, chapter, or additional chapter to *Casa en Mango Street* (1-2 pages in Spanish)
- Research report on poverty in Missoula in Spanish (seven pages plus "Works Cited")
- Letter (one page in English) to President Engstrom, Mayor John Engen and the Missoulian about how the Missoula community and/or the University of Montana should respond to poverty in Missoula, in the US, and in the world.

Group Presentations:

We will begin the group oral presentations on **April 14**. Each group may have up to three (possibly four) members. We will have two presentations a day to insure that everyone gets equal time. **Once you have committed to a certain date, you may NOT change it unless you are willing to accept a fifteen-point penalty.** You will decide on a topic in consultation with me. The topic of your presentation **must** pertain to some contemporary global and/or international theme related to poverty inspired by your reading and viewing of the literature and film from this class. Possible topics could include a report on how the wars in the Mid-East affect families and especially children. You are only limited by your imagination. You **MUST** check with me before you begin. I

encourage each of you to socialize with as many other students in the class as possible to learn about different interests. Each group will have a general topic, but it will be up to each member of the group to explain and analyze some aspect of the topic in greater detail. The most important component of each member's presentation is a strong, solid thesis statement. You should be able to fill in the blank of the following statement with a well-crafted, cogent commentary: "The point of my presentation is to _____." Please understand that you are trying to convince the audience of your point of view. This means that you will need evidence to support your argument. In other words, your presentation is much more than just your personal opinion. You need to analyze and synthesize. Be sure that you have at least three sources (an article, a book, a review, an essay, etc.) on which you can rely. Each member of the group must turn in a written bibliography the day that (s)he presents. You will also need an insightful conclusion. Plan your talk so that you can offer a well thought out summary that highlights the major points of your presentation. It will be helpful to think of your presentation as the oral version of the kind of paper you normally write in a literature/film class. Feel free to use Power Point, posters, photos, artwork, or other props during your presentation. Each group member must talk for 7-8 minutes. I might have to change the number of members in each group depending on how many students are in the class. On the day of your presentation, each student **MUST** turn in a detailed outline to me and to each of your classmates before you begin. You are required to use handouts, photos, posters, and/or props, etc. Each student will be graded on 1) Organization (intro, body, conclusion) (20%), 2) Interest developed/audience response (10%), 3) Audiovisual materials/handouts, etc. (10%), 4) Bibliography (10%), and 5) Content (this includes grammar and vocabulary) (50%). If you are absent the day of your presentation, you **MUST** provide a **documented, verifiable excuse** to be allowed to do a makeup presentation. **No exceptions.**

Individual Presentation to take place on the day of the final exam:

Each student will prepare a five minute "Oscar" oral closing argument (NO NOTES/NO NOTHING) on topics like "Lead Character—Male," "Lead Character—Female," "Best Use of Symbolism," "Best Setting," "Best Director," etc. I will explain this presentation in much greater depth as we approach May. In general: for whichever award you select, explain and support your choice. The best commendations will reflect careful understanding of what makes each choice "outstanding" and/or especially notable, and will include selective and strategic textual or cinematographic support. You may also include comparisons or references to other "nominees" that may have been in the running for each award.

Cell Phone Notice: You do not have to turn off your cell phone completely. You are, however, **REQUIRED** to put in on mute or vibrate. If your phone "rings" in any manner, (i.e. a song, etc.), I will ask you to leave class immediately. You will receive a five-point deduction from your course grade (which is only known after you complete the final exam) for each incident. In other words, should you bring your cell phone to class and it goes off and your course grade at the end of the semester is 92, I will deduct five points

leaving you with an 87. Should the incident happen again, I will deduct another five points, and so on. It's a shame that I have to do this, but there have been so many cases of cell phones going off in my class, I have decided to try to put an end to it.

Tentative Calendar of Events

- Jan. 26: **Introduction to the course.**
28: Continuation of Introduction. Please read "Gran Mantel" by Pablo Neruda. I will send you a scanned version of this poem.
- Feb. 2: Discuss the movie: *Capitães da areia*
4: Novel: *Capitanes de la arena*; 7-79

9: *Capitanes de la arena*; 80-144. **Movie analysis of *Capitães da areia* due.**
11: *Capitanes de la arena*; 145-167

16: *Capitanes de la arena*; 168-251
18: *Capitanes de la arena*; 252-273

23: Discuss the movie *Cidade de Deus*
25: Library visit to research (child) poverty in Missoula
- Mar. 1: *Macario*. El enlace del cortometraje de *Macario* de Joel Navarro es así: <https://vimeo.com/151444973>. Please watch the video before coming to class. **Movie analysis of *Cidade de Deus* due.**
3: *Es que somos muy pobres*

8: *Los invasores*; Act I, 126-166
10: *Los invasores*; Act II, 166-190

15: Discuss the movie *Hora da estrela*
17: Novel: *Hora de la estrella*; 9-29. **Writing assignment on *Los invasores* due.**

22: *Hora de la estrella*; 30-81
24: *La casa en Mango Street*; 3-25. **Movie analysis of *Hora da estrela* due.**

29: *La casa en Mango Street* 26-95.
31: *La casa en Mango Street*; 96-112
- Apr. 5: **Spring Break. No class.**
7: **Spring Break. No class.**

12: **Research paper on poverty in Missoula due.** Class time may be used to work on your group presentation.

14: **Group Presentations. Writing assignment on *La casa de Mango Street* due.**

19: **Group Presentations. One page letter in English to President Engstrom and John Engen due.**

21: **Group Presentations**

26: **Group Presentations**

28: Dr. Robert Stone's visit

May. 3: Visit by special guest (hopefully!)

5: Conclusion. Course evaluations.

Final Exam: Plan to meet in this classroom from **1:10-3:10 on Tuesday, May 11.** Please do **not** ask if you can take the final early. Please make travel plans accordingly. **This is the day and time you will make your "Oscar" presentation.**

**Grade Sheet
SPNS 432
Spring 2016**

Student: _____

Active Participation/Preparation: (5%)

_____ = _____

II. Reading Quizzes: (5%)

Total numerical amount: _____ divided by the number of quizzes
_____ x .10 =

III. Response Cards: (5%) _____

_____ = _____

IV. Writing Assignments:

Film Analyses:

Captains of the Sands: x .10 = _____

City of God: _____ x .10 = _____

Hour of the Star: _____ x .10 = _____

Los invasores: _____ x .10 = _____

Casa en Mango Street: _____ x .10 = _____

Research Paper: _____ x .15 = _____

Letter: _____ x .05 = _____

V. Group Presentation: (10%) = _____

VI. Individual Presentation: (5%) = _____

Total: = _____

Cell phone penalty?

Course Grade: _____