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Spring 2009  
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Turnitin.com: CLASS ID: 2550278  
PASSWORD (lower case): history

## **Novels and History: Latin American History in Contemporary Fiction**

**On-line VISTA course**  
**English 3396 sec. 32226**  
**History 3396 sec. 28604**

The Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes has asserted that the real historians in Latin America are its novelists. We will examine this premise by reading a number of novels by contemporary Latin American writers, and discussing the historical events and personages depicted therein. Our interest is in how these novelists dramatize the history of their regions, and how their fictional versions illuminate our understanding of the "real" history of Latin America.

The streaming videos of class lectures and discussion were recorded last year, with the exception of the first and last lectures, so there may be some topical information that does not relate to you, but the content of the lectures is relevant to your reading. The lectures to be watched each week are noted by each week's assignment, below.

Requirements for the course and grading procedures are described at the end of the syllabus. There are no face-to-face meetings for this course.

### **Required Texts:**

Eduardo Galeano (Uruguay): *Genesis, Faces and Masks, Century of the Wind*

These are the three books in the trilogy called *Memory of Fire*. They come in separate volumes, or in a single volume; either edition is fine.

Carlos Fuentes (Mexico): *The Buried Mirror*

Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia): *The General in his Labyrinth*

Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia): *Of Love and Other Demons* (out of print; order online)

Mario Vargas Llosa (Peru): *The Storyteller*

Elena Garro (Mexico): *Recollections of Things to Come* (out of print; order online)

Laura Esquivel, *Like Water for Chocolate*

### **Visual Materials:**

"Galleries" of art and illustrated lectures are to be found at  
<http://www.class.uh.edu/classes/zamora>

During the semester, in the weekly folders and in the streaming lectures, you will be directed to specific galleries and illustrated lectures in conjunction with your reading for that week. The top three rectangular galleries in both the right and left columns are relevant to this course. The illustrated lectures are below the galleries.

Posted on our VISTA site under Web Paper Projects are web sites created by students in previous semesters. (Online students are not required to create a web paper.) In the weekly folders, you will be directed to view web papers relevant to your reading for that week.

**First week:**  
January 20-23

**Introduction to the course**

Octavio Paz, "Mexico and the United States," on our VISTA site  
(lectures: [Introduction, 1 and 2](#))

**Second week:**  
January 26-30

**The Americas, Pre-Contact Indigenous Cultures to 1700**

Eduardo Galeano, *Genesis* (first volume of *Memory of Fire*) (lectures [3 and 4](#))

**Reading Quiz 1:** Prepare to discuss the thematic and/or historical links among 4 passages from Galeano's *Genesis* that you have selected in advance.

CLOSED BOOK: Know the place and year of the 4 passages that you have selected in advance (do not consult your book during the quiz); list them on the quiz by place and date, describe their contents, and link them according to the thematic of historical relations that you see among them. The relations among the 4 passages must be developed in at least three paragraphs, in which you explain how they are related and what their relations signify within the context of *Genesis*.

You are also responsible for the passages discussed on the streaming videos.

40 minutes, timed: available Thursday 10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

**Third week:**  
February 2-6

**The Americas, 1700 to 1900**

Eduardo Galeano, *Faces and Masks* (second volume of *Memory of Fire*) (lectures [5 and 6](#))

**Reading Quiz 2:** Same format as Quiz 1: Prepare to discuss the thematic and/or historical links among 4 passages from Galeano's *Faces and Masks* that you have selected in advance.

You are also responsible for the passages discussed on the streaming videos.

CLOSED BOOK: 40 minutes, timed: available Thursday  
10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

**Fourth week:**  
February 9-13

**The Americas, 1900-1984**

Eduardo Galeano, *Century of the Wind* (third volume of *Memory of Fire*) (lectures 7 and 8)

**Reading Quiz 3:** Same format as Quizzes 1 and 2. Discuss the thematic or historical links among 4 passages from Galeano's *Genesis* that you have selected in advance.

You are also responsible for the passages discussed on the streaming videos.

CLOSED BOOK: 40 minutes, timed: available Thursday  
10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

**Fifth week:**  
February 16-20

**Spain and the Conquest of the Americas**

Carlos Fuentes, *The Buried Mirror*, Chapters. 1-6 (lectures 9 and 10)

**Images on our Vista Site:** Images, essays, and other materials

**Sixth week:**  
February 23-27

**The Baroque and the New World Baroque**

Read Carlos Fuentes, *The Buried Mirror*, Chapters. 7-11 (lecture 11)

**Images on our Vista Site:** The Baroque and the New World Baroque

**Reading Quiz 4:** *The Buried Mirror*, Chapters 1-11

CLOSED BOOK: 30 minutes, timed: available Thursday  
10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

**Seventh week:**  
March 2-6

**Colonial Colombia (Nueva Granada)**

Read Gabriel García Márquez, *Of Love and Other Demons* (lectures 12 and 13)

**Images on our VISTA site:** Baroque Angels, Levitating Virgins, and Other Miraculous Episodes.

**Reading Quiz 5:** *Of Love and Other Demons*

CLOSED BOOK: 30 minutes, timed: available Thursday  
10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

**Eighth week:**  
March 9-13

**Simón Bolívar and *el Gran Colombia***

Gabriel García Márquez, *The General in his Labyrinth* (lectures 14 and 15)

Chapter 12, Carlos Fuentes, “Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín,” in *The Buried Mirror*, pp. 245-59.

Refer back to Galeano, *Faces and Masks* (last part of lecture 15)

**Reading Quiz 6:** *The General in his Labyrinth*,  
*The Buried Mirror*, Chapter 12

CLOSED BOOK: 30 minutes, timed: available Thursday  
10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

SPRING BREAK  
March 16-21

**Ninth week:**  
March 23-27

**Indigenous Culture in Modern Peru (the Machiguenga)**

Read Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller* (lectures 16 and 17)

**Tenth week:**  
March 30-April 3

Finish *The Storyteller* (lecture: first half of 18)

**Reading Quiz 7:** *The Storyteller*

CLOSED BOOK: 30 minutes, timed: available Thursday  
10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

**Eleventh week:**  
April 6-10

**Revolutionary Mexico**

Elena Garro, *Recollections of Things to Come* (lectures: second half of 18 and 19)

Carlos Fuentes, Chapter 15, “Land and Liberty,” in *The Buried Mirror*, pp. 299-305

**Twelfth week:**  
April 13-17

Finish *Recollections of Things to Come* (lecture 20)

**Reading Quiz 8:** *Recollections of Things to Come* and  
*The Buried Mirror*, Chapter 15,

CLOSED BOOK: 30 minutes, timed: available Thursday  
10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

Return to Galeano’s *Century of the Wind* (lecture 21)

Review Readings, to begin thinking about your final paper and final exam (lectures 22 and 23)

**Thirteenth week:**

Laura Esquivel, *Like Water for Chocolate* (lecture 24)

April 20-24

**Reading Quiz 9: *Like Water for Chocolate***

CLOSED BOOK: 30 minutes, timed: available Thursday  
10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

**Fourteenth week:** Carlos Fuentes, Chapter 16, "Latin America," pp. 313-329,  
April 27-May 1 and Chapter 18. "Hispanic U.S.A.," pp. 341-355, in *The Buried  
Mirror*

**Reading Quiz 10:** Chapters 16 and 18, *The Buried Mirror*

CLOSED BOOK: 30 minutes, timed: available MONDAY  
10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

**Please take Quiz 10 as early as possible so that you will have time to concentrate on your final paper. Your final paper is due at midnight, Sunday, May 3, so taking Quiz 10 early will assure that you have adequate time to write your final paper.**

**Final Paper due by midnight, Sunday, May 3. Turn it in to Turnitin.com. No late papers are accepted.**

**Final Exam: Available between Monday, May 4, 10:00 am, through midnight, Saturday, May 9.**

**Requirements:** All reading listed on the syllabus is required, and will be covered in the reading quizzes and the final examination, along with the material covered in the streaming lectures posted on this class website. The lectures are also required. Sometimes the lecture on a particular work will not be totally done at the end of the session, and you'll need to go on to the next one, but you should be able to tell if there is some "spill over" from one lecture to the next.

**Reading quizzes are CLOSED BOOK.** Do not consult anything while taking the quizzes. They will be posted on the website as noted on the syllabus; quizzes will be posted Thursday at 10 am, to be completed by Sunday at 11:00 pm, *except* for Quiz 10, which is posted on Monday, to allow you to take it early and get to work on your final paper. There are 10 quizzes, and each one counts four points, for a total of 40 points. The first three quizzes on Eduardo Galeano's trilogy *Memory of Fire* ask for a short essay answer, as described on the syllabus, and the rest are comprised of four short answer questions on plot, character, theme, etc. All quizzes are designed to assure that you have completed the reading. The grade distribution on the quizzes is listed below.

**Please note that the quizzes are the largest percentage of your grade because they attest to your careful reading of the assigned texts. It is imperative that you prepare for them by reading carefully, taking notes on your reading and on the lectures, and attending to the visual images and other materials on the VISTA site. You cannot do well in this course if you don't do well on the reading quizzes. They are CLOSED BOOK; if there is any evidence of consulting your books or notes or other students, there will be dire consequences.**

**Missed quizzes cannot be made up at a later date for any reason. I'm sorry, but there can be no exceptions to this rule. HOWEVER, AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER, IF YOU WISH, I WILL DROP YOUR LOWEST QUIZ GRADE. This means that if you must miss one quiz, it will not affect your grade.**

**The final examination is CLOSED BOOK:** do not consult anything while taking the exam. The exam consists of essay questions and passages from the texts we have read, which I will ask you to identify and discuss. Passages will be drawn largely (but not entirely) from those passages discussed in the lectures on the DVD's that accompany this course. The visual arts discussed in the course will also be covered on the final exam. The exam will be timed to last four hours.

**Final Paper:** 5 to 7 pages of literary critical analysis on a topic that engages Magical Realism in selected work(s) of fiction **that we have read in this class**, with the possibility of extending your discussion to the visual arts and/or film. There are excellent student papers posted on the website, to give you models of A papers, and there is also a document on the home page describing the assignment. Please read it. I also advise you to consult me about your paper topic, so that I can make suggestions, and tell you if I think that your topic needs refining.. Please turn it in to Turnitin.com; class ID and password are on the heading of the syllabus.

**Turnitin.com:** I will ask you to turn in your final papers to the web site turnitin.com, to assure that your text is properly documented. Class ID and password are at the top of this syllabus.

Grades are determined as follows:

Final exam	30%
Final paper	30%
Quizzes	40%

Quizzes are calculated as follows, out of 40 total points (allowing for one dropped quiz grade, if you wish to have one dropped): A 40-33; B 32-30; C 29-27; D 26-24

Your final exam and final paper will be given a number that will translate into a letter grade, with the three letter grades weighted according to the percentage of the final grade (30% or 40%) and averaged, to determine your final grade in the course.

**Learning Outcomes:** This course is designed to teach students to read, write, speak and think more clearly about the relation between Latin American literature and history, and between fiction and fact, and how both fiction and fact are engaged in the literary works we read in this course. An important outcome of this course is the cultural awareness that comes from placing literary texts in their historical contexts. Historical events and personages are often used by Latin American writers in their literary fictions; by attending to those fictions, we will learn about historical events and authors' attitudes toward them. Exams and papers, as well as online discussion and writing assignments, are designed to support these outcomes.

