

Latinx Literatures Section 01

ENGL 166

Fall 2024 4 Unit(s) 08/21/2024 to 12/09/2024 Modified 08/21/2024

Contact Information

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Course Information

Course Description

This course surveys contemporary Latinx literatures: literature by and about diasporic peoples who are from or trace their origins to Latin America (Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean). In particular, the course centers and privileges the perspectives of those who have historically been most marginalized within dominant frameworks of Latinidad: Indigenous, Black, undocumented, and queer communities. We will read across literary forms and genres, including poetry and spoken word, journalistic and autobiographical non-fiction, comics, and young adult and literary fiction, as well as visual art/culture and film. As we discuss these works of art and literature, we will also address the relevant sociopolitical and historical contexts that shape the diverse diasporic experiences encapsulated within Latinx literatures.

Class Lecture/Discussion

Tuesday, Thursday, 9:00 AM to 10:15 AM, Boccardo Business Center 130

Office Hours

Tuesday, 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM, Faculty Offices Building 216

While I will be in my office in person, if you would rather meet via Zoom, please just let me know in advance to set that up.

If you are unable to attend my regularly scheduled office hours, don't hesitate to email me to set up an alternative appointment.

Course Description and Requisites

A survey sampling of selected authors, works, and trends in North American literature since 1945.

Prerequisite(s): Upper division standing.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Attendance

While attendance is not and cannot be graded per [University Policy F15-12](https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf>), regular attendance is vital to your learning and success in the course. I encourage you to attend as regularly as possible. We don't want to miss out on the opportunity to learn from/with you! If you are sick, or are unable to make it to class for whatever reason, you can catch up on the material you missed on our course Canvas page, via a friend/peer, and/or in my office hours or by appointment.

Preparation & Participation

We all have a responsibility and an opportunity to be an active participant in our own learning and to contribute to knowledge that we'll create together in this class! Please come prepared to do so. This means that you've completed the assigned reading for the day in advance of class; you have access to those readings during our class discussion; and you have basic materials like pen/pencil and paper.

Devices

You are welcome to use your devices (phone, tablet, laptop) for your own learning throughout the class. However, I do ask that you be present and help create a respectful and distraction-free class by using your devices for class work only during our time together.

Engaging in Class Discussion & Building Community

Our class will require participation and collaboration and will take up complex issues, such as race and ethnicity, national identity, gender, sexuality, and citizenship status. I recognize that it can be challenging to discuss some of these topics in a public space like the classroom and that we all approach these topics and the texts we read from our own unique perspectives and experiences. I encourage you to engage in these discussions to the degree you feel comfortable, to connect what we read to your own life and to the world around you, and to listen to and learn from your peers with respect and care. We will continue to discuss our collective goals around engaging in class discussion and building community throughout the semester.

Course Communication & Emails

All course materials can be found on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#). Please check both our course Canvas and your email regularly to stay up to date. For help with using Canvas see [Canvas Student Resources page](#).

Please be aware that I do not respond to emails outside of traditional business hours, M-F 9-5. I encourage you to also maintain professional boundaries around email and step away from it when you can/need. Unless it is a weekend or I am sick or away for travel, I should respond to your message within 48 hours. If you worry that I haven't seen or responded to your email, please do not hesitate to send me a follow up. I would appreciate it in fact!

When you email me, I'd appreciate it if you included a specific subject that states the purpose of your email as well as a greeting, message, and your name.

Academic Originality, Honesty, and AI

The literature we will be reading and discussing is so, so good, and it explores narratives and experiences that are often ignored, distorted, or marginalized. I want you to do justice to that literature by seriously engaging with it and developing your own original analysis of it. While you are welcome to collaborate with resources like Grammarly to edit your work, you should also ensure that you do your own round of editing to not only catch what those virtual tools might have missed but also to develop your own editorial eye. You should not at any stage of your process use generative AI like ChatGPT to generate ideas, outlines/writing structures, or language/sentences. If for whatever reason you decide to ignore this and use ChatGPT, you must properly cite and credit the information, ideas, and language that you pulled. The model that AI like ChatGPT uses to generate material is fundamentally derivative and is also known to be inaccurate/incomplete and to reproduce misinformation, biases, and stereotypes. I want to hear your original ideas, arguments, and writing that can only be achieved by engaging with the texts we're reading and the writing process! Additionally, we want to make sure that the scholars and authors whose ideas we engage with are properly cited and credited to not only recognize their labor/talents/insights but also to build our own credibility as an writer.

You should also be aware of SJSU's [Academic Integrity Policy](#), and know that, as a faculty member, I am required to report all violations of this policy to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. If I suspect that you have plagiarized material or generated content with AI, I will not grade your work and will contact you regarding future steps.

Please visit the [Student Conduct and Ethical Development](#) website for more information on academic integrity.

Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;

- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: english@sjsu.edu (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

By the end of the semester, we will have practiced and developed the following skills:

1. Identifying and discussing meaningful themes and aesthetic strategies within and across Latinx literatures;
2. Examining how Latinx authors and artists use literature and visual art to represent real-world issues, respond to various inequalities and injustices, and imagine alternative worlds and ways of being;
3. Discussing how Latinx literature represents diverse and varied diasporic experiences, identities, and histories; and
4. Analyzing Latinx literatures through an intersectional framework that attends to multiple layers of experience and disrupts monolithic, stereotypical ideas of who and what is included within Latinidad.

Course Materials

I know that purchasing course texts can be expensive and have tried to assign a diverse spread of literature while also keeping the total cost of those texts down. I encourage you to access the texts in any format that is most affordable and accessible for you. All of these required texts are available to rent or purchase from the SJSU bookstore. I also encourage you to use the SJSU and SJPL library systems.

The Undocumented Americas

Author: Karla Cornejo Villavicencio

ISBN: 9780399592706

I'm a Wild Seed

Author: Sharon Lee De La Cruz

ISBN: 9781951491055

The Poet X

Author: Elizabeth Acevedo

ISBN: 9780062662811

We the Animals

Author: Justin Torres

ISBN: 9780547844190

Library Support Staff

Peggy Cabrera (peggy.cabrera@sjsu.edu) is our subject librarian for English at the SJSU library and is incredibly knowledgeable and kind! She is there to support faculty and students in their research endeavors. If you would like additional research support for your writing assignments in this course or if you're interested in learning more about pursuing a career in library science, please email her!

Course Requirements and Assignments

Participation 15%

I encourage you to participate in class discussion not only by sharing your thoughts and asking questions but also by actively listening and creating space for others to share. I understand, however, that we all process knowledge in different ways and that our level of comfort participating in the classroom may be influenced by our own relationships to power and privilege and by our educational experiences. The graded portion of your participation will not be based on how much you talk in class but will instead be based on a series of informal pop activities that you will complete and turn-in in class about once a week. *Participation assignments will not be excused unless there is an emergency or extenuating circumstance that you communicate with me. However, each students' lowest two participation grades will be dropped.*

Group Chapter Presentations 10%

In the group chapter presentation, you and your group will take responsibility for guiding the class through the key ideas/themes, a close reading, and a short discussion of a chapter from Karla Cornejo Villavicencia's *The Undocumented Americans*. This presentation is a lower-stakes opportunity to practice and prepare for the larger group teaching facilitation assignment.

Group Teaching Facilitation 15%

The group teaching facilitation is an opportunity for you to become the teachers! Your goal is to kickstart class discussion by exploring a central theme/idea in your assigned text, illustrating it with a few close readings, and offering a few open-ended questions. Presentations will be collaborative, and groups must meet with me in office hours prior to presenting.

Image Analysis 15%

In this short analysis, you will select and analyze an image of your choice from our course readings/viewings/discussion in our "Undocumented Narratives" unit. You will practice close viewing as research methodology that can help us analyze the images and media that permeate our popular culture and shape popular understandings of Latinx people.

Close Reading Paper 20%

This paper gives you an opportunity to further develop your close reading skills as you build and support an original argument with textual evidence from and analysis of a piece of literature of your choice from the class.

Final Project 25%

In your final project, you will have the opportunity to showcase your learning throughout the semester in one of two ways. One, a research-driven analysis of a course text that contributes to an ongoing discussion within Latinx literary studies. Two, an original creative work accompanied by a short critical reflection that thinks with and through some of the central themes, concepts, and aesthetic strategies we've read and discussed in our class.

Grading Information

Participation 15%

Group Chapter Presentation 10%

Group Teaching Facilitation 15%

Image Analysis 15%

Close Reading Paper 20%

Final Project 25%

Extensions & Late Work

I am very willing to work with you if you anticipate that you may need extra time to submit your best work in an assignment. In order to avoid last-minute stress, please email me in advance of an assignment deadline to discuss an extension. If an emergency or other extenuating circumstance arises that makes this impossible, please contact me, and we can work out a solution. If late work is submitted, it will be graded at my discretion and may receive a deduction.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Note that I may adjust readings, assignments, and deadlines in the best interest of the class and our learning together. Know that I will never add more work to this schedule, and all changes will be announced with advance notice.

When	Topic	Notes
Week 1	Course Introductions	Thursday 8/22 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions• Review of syllabus• Start-of-semester goal setting
Week 2	What is LatinX?	Tuesday 8/27 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Angela Valenzuela's "Education" from <i>Keywords for Latina/o Studies</i>• Conocimiento in-class activity Thursday 8/29 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Catalina M. De Onís's "What's in an 'x'?: An Exchange about the Politics of 'Latinx'"• Terry Blas' "You Say Latino" and "You Say Latinx" webcomics

When	Topic	Notes
Week 3	Indigeneity & Coloniality in Latinx Literature	<p>Tuesday 9/3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maylei Blackwell's "Indigeneity" from <i>Keywords for Latina/o Studies</i> • Selected poems from Natalie Diaz's <i>When My Brother Was an Aztec</i> and <i>Postcolonial Love Poem</i> <p>Thursday 9/5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected poems from Natalie Diaz's <i>When My Brother Was an Aztec</i> and <i>Postcolonial Love Poem</i>
Week 4	Undocumented Narratives	<p>Tuesday 9/10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Staten Island" and "Ground Zero" from Carla Cornejo Villavicencio's <i>The Undocumented Americans</i> • <i>Optional reading</i>: Cecilia Menjívar's "Illegality" from <i>Keywords for Latina/o Studies</i> <p>Thursday 9/12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Miami" and "Flint" from Carla Cornejo Villavicencio's <i>The Undocumented Americans</i>
Week 5	Undocumented Narratives	<p>Tuesday 9/17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Cleveland" and "New Haven" from Carla Cornejo Villavicencio's <i>The Undocumented Americans</i> • <i>Optional reading</i>: Nicholas De Genova's "Citizenship" from <i>Keywords for Latina/o Studies</i> <p>Thursday 9/19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with groups to discuss chapter presentations <p>Friday 9/20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit outline for chapter presentations by 11:59 p.m. via email (see instructions on assignment).

When	Topic	Notes
Week 6	Undocumented Narratives	<p>Thursday 9/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Undocumented Americans</i> chapter presentations <p>Thursday 9/26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evelyn Nakano Glenn's "Constructing Citizenship: Exclusion, Subordination, and Resistance" • (In class) Selected spoken word poems by Yosimar Reyes, 2024-2025 Santa Clara County Poet Laureate • (In class) Selected posters from Julio Salgado's Undocuqueer project • Discuss image analysis
Week 7	UndocuQueer Narratives	<p>Tuesday 10/1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frances R. Aparicio's "Latinidad/es" from <i>Keywords for Latina/o Studies</i> • Jaime Cortez' "El Gordo" from <i>Gordo</i> <p>Thursday 10/3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jaime Cortez' "El Gordo" from <i>Gordo</i> <p>Friday 10/4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image analysis due by 11:59 p.m. via Canvas
Week 8	Latinx Intersectionality	<p>Tuesday 10/8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from Roderick Ferguson's "Introduction" to <i>One Dimensional Queer</i> • Sharon Lee De La Cruz <i>I'm a Wild Seed</i> 1-36 <p>Thursday 10/10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Lee De La Cruz <i>I'm a Wild Seed</i> pp. 37-85
Week 9	Afro-Latinx Poetics	<p>Tuesday 10/15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tanya Katerí Hernández's "Afro-Latinas/os" from <i>Keywords for Latina/o Studies</i> • Elizabeth Acevedo's <i>The Poet X</i> 1-45 <p>Thursday 10/17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabeth Acevedo's <i>The Poet X</i> 46-92 • Discuss close reading paper

When	Topic	Notes
Week 10	Afro-Latinx Poetics	<p>Tuesday 10/22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elizabeth Acevedo's <i>The Poet X</i> 95-156 <p>Thursday 10/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elizabeth Acevedo's <i>The Poet X</i> pp. 157-220
Week 11	Afro-Latinx Poetics	<p>Tuesday 10/29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elizabeth Acevedo's <i>The Poet X</i> 223-275 <p>Thursday 10/31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elizabeth Acevedo's <i>The Poet X</i> 275-356
Week 12	Writing Conferences	<p>Tuesday 11/5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one writing conferences Submit close reading practice (introduction, thesis, and one body paragraph) prior to scheduled meeting. <p>Thursday 11/7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one writing conferences held on Zoom Submit close reading practice (introduction, thesis, and one body paragraph) prior to scheduled meeting.
Week 13	Latinx Kinship in Literature and Film	<p>Tuesday 11/12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justin Torres' <i>We the Animals</i> 1-43 <p>Thursday 11/14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justin Torres' <i>We the Animals</i> 44-74 <p>Friday 11/15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close reading paper due by 11:59 p.m. via Canvas
Week 14	Latinx Kinship in Literature and Film	<p>Tuesday 11/19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justin Torres' <i>We the Animals</i> 75-125 Discuss final projects <p>Thursday 11/21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch and discuss <i>We the Animals</i> film

When	Topic	Notes
Week 15	Latinx Kinship in Literature and Film	<p>Tuesday 11/26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch and discuss <i>We the Animals</i> film <p>Thursday 11/28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class due to Thanksgiving holiday
Week 16	Final Reflections & Preparations	<p>Tuesday 12/3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final project workshop & peer review <p>Thursday 12/5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final reflections & course evaluations
Finals Week	Final Project	<p>Monday 12/16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final project due via Canvas by 11:59 p.m.