

2024-2025 SIPA Featured Course**“Latin America and the Cartographies of Violence and Hope”**

ANG 6339: Seminar on Latin America
GEA 6409: Landscapes of Violence and Healing in the Americas
SPW 5934: Special Topics Language/Literature

Professors:

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SYLLABUS

*[Please note, this syllabus is a draft schedule.
Dates and content are always subject to change by University officials.]*

Class meets: Thursdays 1:00PM - 3:40PM
Classroom: Academic Health Center 3 - 205
Office Hours: Professor Oslender: Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00PM (or by appointment), SIPA 324
Professor Fanta: Tuesdays, 12:00-2:00 PM (or by appointment), SIPA II, 241
Course website: On Canvas at: <https://canvas.fiu.edu/>

About the Seminar

Welcome to our Seminar! “Latin America and the Cartographies of Violence and Hope” is a unique seminar that integrates critical approaches from the humanities and social sciences, drawing on literature, cultural theory, critical geography and political ecology. Students will be presented with a truly interdisciplinary experience that offers a comprehensive understanding of Latin America’s complexities from multiple perspectives, preparing students in a uniquely refreshing way to engage with the region’s challenges in their future careers.

The course is structured around the twin-concepts of violence and hope. Nation-building in Latin America has been a process of violence. From the violence of the European conquest and colonization, the enslavement of Africans and their descendants, via the wars of independence, dictatorships, ethnicides, to the war against drugs and massive forced displacement, violence has

been a deeply disturbing but also creative process throughout Latin American history. In fact, Latin American political, economic, and cultural landscapes today are the direct result of these violent processes. At the same time, violence has also been resisted, fueled by sentiments of hope. The wars of independence and the numerous rebellions and revolutions maybe best exemplify these aspirations for better futures. Yet they also illustrate the entanglements of hope and violence that have characterized the political and cultural landscapes in Latin America for centuries.

Students will engage with these intertwined themes through readings of novels and testimonial writings by Latin American and Caribbean authors, as well as through the analysis of films that address violence, identity, and place in the Latin American context. Through this approach, students will map out these themes by examining where violence has been produced and its effects, while also making broader conceptual connections between various forms of violence along gender, race, and class lines. This multi-media approach will deepen students' understanding of how these issues are represented and interpreted across different forms of media.

Having this seminar co-taught by a humanities and recent Fulbright US Scholar from Colombia (Dr. Fanta) and a political and cultural geographer from Germany with long-standing research interests in Latin America (Dr. Oslender) will provide students with a truly unique learning environment of multiple perspectives. Students from the social sciences will feel encouraged to see literature as a powerful medium to explore Latin American experiences, identities, and contemporary realities, while Modern Language students will be exposed to analytical tools from critical geography and cartography to help them push their literary analysis in new and exciting directions.

Seminar Requirements

In this seminar emphasis is placed on critical engagement with the literature. This means that there will be little formal lecturing on our part. Instead, students will take an active role in the seminar, analyzing, critiquing and debating the weekly readings. The final course grade will be determined as follows. Please note: instead of a Final Paper option, students will prepare a podcast as their final product (more on that below):

Seminar Participation	20%
Weekly written analysis of assigned readings	50%
Final podcast	30%

Seminar Participation

Seminar participation constitutes a significant part of the seminar grade. Students are expected to be well prepared to discuss assigned readings. Depending on the number of students, we will have individual or small group presentations on the week's respective reading. In week 1 you will be able to put your name down for specific texts you would like to present on in class. These presentations form part of the participation assessment. Unexcused absences from class will have a negative impact on seminar participation assessment. **Seminar participation makes up 20% of the final grade.**

Weekly written analysis of assigned readings

Each week students prepare a short analysis of the assigned readings/film (around 500 words), to be submitted before the session in which the reading is discussed. This should be a summary of the reading, in which you reflect on the themes of violence and/or hope, as they are portrayed by the respective author/filmmaker. That is, you will map out these themes in the respective book/film. As the seminar progresses, your weekly analysis will become more complex, better formulated, and more far-reaching. **The weekly written analysis makes up 50% of the final course grade.**

Final podcast

For your final assignment you will create an 8-10 minute podcast that explores one or more of the central themes of the course—hope, violence, displacement, resistance—using the readings, films, and class discussions as foundational material. The goal is to synthesize the material, provide critical analysis, and present it in a way that is accessible to a broader audience. At the beginning of the seminar students will be provided with precise instructions on how to produce a podcast (see also Weekly Schedule below). **The final podcast is due on Apr 18 (Week 15); it constitutes 30% of the final course grade.**

Using Canvas

Our course is on Canvas at: <https://canvas.fiu.edu/>. Additional readings are posted here together with announcements. It is your responsibility to ensure that you know how to use this site. If you experience problems, contact Canvas support at 305.348-3630, or <https://canvas.fiu.edu/support/>.

Academic Misconduct, Cheating and Plagiarism

Academic Misconduct is defined, amongst others, as the following intentional acts or omissions:

Cheating: The unauthorized use of any materials, information, study aids or assistance from another person on any academic assignment or exercise. Assisting another student in the unauthorized use of any materials, information, study aids. Having a substitute complete any academic assignment or completing an academic assignment for someone else, either paid or unpaid.

Plagiarism: The use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is guilty of plagiarism. Any student helping another to plagiarize may be found guilty of academic misconduct.

Multiple Submission: Submitting the same or substantially the same academic work (including oral presentations) for credit more than once, including in different courses.

Penalties: Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated and dealt with according to the proceedings outlined in the Student Conduct and Honor Code. Please familiarize yourselves with this policy. Any student suspected of Academic Misconduct will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI). The suggested minimum penalty for Academic Misconduct in this class shall be zero points for the assignment in which misconduct occurred, plus one full grade deduction in the student’s final grade (i.e., if you earned a A in class, you would get a B instead, etc.).

Important Notice on the Use of Generative AI Tools in Submissions: In alignment with our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of academic honesty, we have decided that the use of generative AI tools, including but not limited to text-generating platforms such as ChatGPT, is strictly prohibited when completing and submitting your assignments. While acknowledging the rapid advancements in technology and the potential benefits they may offer, academic success is best achieved through your individual efforts, critical thinking, and creativity. Utilizing generative AI tools undermines the learning process, diminishes the value of your education, and compromises the integrity of your work.

There is an exception to this rule: Should you use AI tools that help improve your grammar and general writing skills, such as Grammarly or DeepL, then please acknowledge that in the following statement:

“I hereby declare that I have made use of the following AI tools in the preparation of my work I am submitting here: [Name of AI tool]. This tool was exclusively used to improve my grammar/writing skills. All work submitted here is mine.”

Please note that failure to correctly declare your use of generative AI tools will lead to a charge of academic misconduct (see above). If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Required Texts

The following required books are available at FIU’s bookstore. Most are also available as new or used copies through on-line booksellers. Try to get the editions cited below. We’ve chosen those that come with a useful Introduction to the work:

Alejo Carpentier (2006) [1949], *The kingdom of this world*, FSG Classics (Introduction by Edwidge Danticat)

Alfredo Molano (2005), *The Dispossessed: chronicles of the desterrados of Colombia*, Haymarket Books (Foreword by Aviva Chomsky)

Edwidge Danticat (2003), *The Farming of Bones*, Soho Press

Paco Ignacio Taibo II – ‘68: *The Mexican Autumn of the Tlatelolco Massacre*. Seven Stories Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-1609808495

Marta Traba – *Mothers and Shadows*. Latin American Bureau, 1986. ISBN: 978-0930523169

Additional article:

- Gugelberger, Georg & Michael Kearney (1991), “Voices for the Voiceless: Testimonial Literature in Latin America”, *Latin American Perspectives* 18(3), pp. 3-14

Films to Watch

Below is a short selection of films that may usefully accompany some of our readings. Please watch them in your own time before the day when the respective reading is discussed in class. The films should form part of class discussion. If available at FIU library, the library code is given here. Students are encouraged to add their film suggestions to the syllabus as we go through the semester.

- *Even the Rain*, Dir: Icíar Bollaín, 2010 NVS 36
- *Égalité for All: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Haitian Revolution*, PBS, 2009 click [here](#)
- *Birds of Passage*, Dir: Cristina Gallego and Ciro Guerra, 2018 NVS 9318
- *La Sirga*, Dir: William Vega, 2012
- [Los rubios](#), Dir: Albertina Carri, 2003
- *Amores Perros*, Dir: Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2000
- *Machuca*, Dir: Andrés Wood, 2004

WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE

(subject to adjustments)

Week 1: Jan 9

Introduction of seminar.

Reading: Gabriel García Márquez – *The Solitude of Latin America* (Nobel Lecture); [click here](#)

Week 2: Jan 16

Class discussion: Violence, Resistance, and Hope in Latin America. Prep for Course Readings.

Reading: None assigned

Film: *Even the Rain* (Dir. Icíar Bollaín)

Week 3: Jan 23

Reading: Alejo Carpentier – *The Kingdom of This World*

Documentary: *Egalité for All: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Haitian Revolution* (PBS)

Week 4: Jan 30

Gendered Violence and Trauma in the Caribbean

Reading: Edwidge Danticat – *The Farming of Bones* (First half, 156 pages) ISBN: 978-1616953492

Week 5: Feb 6

Reading: Edwidge Danticat – *The Farming of Bones* (Second half, 156 pages) ISBN: 978-1616953492

Week 6: Feb 13

Reading: Gugelberger, G. & M. Kearney (1991), “Voices for the Voiceless: Testimonial Literature in Latin America,” *Latin American Perspectives*, 18(3), pp. 3-14

Week 7: Feb 20

Reading: Alfredo Molano – *The Dispossessed: Chronicles of the Desterrados of Colombia* ISBN: 978-1931859420

Shared Reading: we will read together in class sections from this book, chosen by the instructors

Film: *Birds of Passage* (Dir. Cristina Gallego and Ciro Guerra)

Week 8: Feb 27

NO CLASS: Spring Break!

Week 9: Mar 6

Reading: Paco Ignacio Taibo II – *'68: The Mexican Autumn of the Tlatelolco Massacre* ISBN: 978-1609808495

Week 10: Mar 13

Film: *La Sirga* (Dir. William Vega, 2012)

Podcast topic proposal due

Week 11: Mar 20

Reading: Marta Traba – *Mothers and Shadows* ISBN: 978-0930523169

Film: [Los rubios](#) (Dir. Albertina Carri)

Week 12: Mar 27

Film: *Amores Perros* (Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu)

Podcast: Podcast script draft due

Week 13: Apr 3

Workshop for final assignment: Creating the podcast

Peer Review of Podcast script

Week 14: Apr 10

Reading: TBD

Podcast recording

Week 15: Apr 17

Reading: None assigned

Wrap-up of class

Apr 18: Podcast due!

Week 16: Apr 24

FINAL EXAMS WEEK

Podcast Listening Session
