Class meeting times: T & F, 11:00 a.m.-12:20 p.m
Office hours: T & F, 12:30-1:30 p.m., and by appt.
Office: Shiffman 113
Contact: jarellan@brandeis.edu

Literary fiction, visual art, music, cinema, and TV that engage with the figure of the drug trafficker, with drug trafficking networks, and with governmental responses to the drug trade, have become one of the most vibrant manifestations of contemporary Latin American and Latinx culture. From arthouse films to popular soap operas, from the narcocorrido or drug ballad to the literary genres of the narcovela and novela sicareca, artists, writers, television producers and filmmakers across North and South America have wrestled with the complex subcultural practices that develop around the narcotics trade.

In this course we focus on two regions: Colombia, particularly Medellín, during the reign of Pablo Escobar, in the 1980s and 1990s, and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands in our present century. We will explore how an artist’s perspective on the narcotics trade and the Latin American drug wars distinguishes itself, in radical and at times controversial ways, from the “official perspective” of the state as well as from the points of view of economists, political scientists, or legal scholars. We will also place contemporary artworks that focus on the drug trade, and the tumultuous debates in which they intervene, in the context of the long history of the commerce and prohibition of mind-altering and mood-altering substances in the colonial Americas.

Course Materials:

Readings (available at the bookstore):
Fernando Vallejo, La virgen de los sicarios
Yuri Herrera, Trabajos del reino/Kingdom Cons (purchase of both the Spanish original and the English edition/translation of Herrera’s novel is required)
Orfa Alarcón, Perra brava (out of print): Replacement: Juan Pablo Villalobos, Fiesta en la madriguera
Arturo Pérez Reverte, La reina del sur
* All other course materials will be available on LATTE.

Course requirements:

1) Class participation and attendance (10% of final grade)
2) Diario visceral/Visceral Diary (10%). A weekly log of brief, visceral responses to the artworks assigned for class, posted on latte once a week.
3) Creative Response (30%). A creative (i.e. non-analytical) response to an artwork assigned for class, prefaced by a brief presentation by the author and a reading of an excerpt of the creative work. (Detailed information about this assignment will be handed out in class).
4) Group creative and/or discussion activity (10%). On a rotating basis, groups formed in the first week will offer the class as a whole a prompt for one creative exercise or one well-thought out discussion question to open up our discussion of an artwork or reading. (Detailed information about this assignment and what is expected of you will be handed out in class).

5) Midterm exam (15%).

6) A final analytical paper or creative work (6-8 pages, excluding bibliography; 25%).

**Grading scale:**

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<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>98 - 100</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>94 - 97</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>90 - 93</td>
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<td>88 - 89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>60 - 63</td>
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<td>59 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

**Course Outline**

**F 09/01**
Introduction and Overview

**F 09/08**
Gerardo Naranjo, Dir., *Miss Bala*
Francisco de Hernández, “Del cacao y de la coca,” *Historia de las plantas de la Nueva España* (Read Austen article on latte instead)

**I: The novela sicaresca, narco-cinema and television in Colombia**

**T 09/12**
Fernando Vallejo, *La virgen de los sicarios*

**F 09/15**
*La virgen de los sicarios*

**T 09/19**
*La virgen de los sicarios*
T 09/26
Emilio Maillé, Dir., Rosario Tijeras

F 09/29
Narcos (Season 1, Ep. 1)
Steven Topik et al., “Introduction,” From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy

F 10/06
Narcos (Season 2, Ep. 1)
Paul Gootenberg, “Cocaine in Chains: The Rise and Demise of a Global Commodity”

T 10/10
Nicolás Entel, Dir. Sins of My Father
Gabriela Polit-Dueñas, Narrating Narcos: Culiacán y Medellín (excerpt)

F 10/13
Midterm Exam (in class)

II: Narco culture and narcoliteratura in Northern Mexico

T 10/17
Saul Schwartz, Dir., Narco Cultura
Los Tigres del Norte, “La reina del sur”; “La bala” (youtube)
Paintings by Lenin Márquez

F 10/20
Villalobos, Fiesta en la madriguera

T 10/24
Fiesta en la madriguera

F 10/27
Fiesta en la madriguera

T 10/31
Fiesta en la madriguera

F 11/03
Luis Estrada, Dir., El infierno

T 11/07
Yuri Herrera, Trabajos del reino/Kingdom Cons
III. Narco Cultures and Contemporary Media

**F 11/17**
Oliver Stone, Dir., *Savages*

**T 11/21**
Arturo Pérez Reverte, *La reina del sur*

**F 11/28**
*La reina del sur*

**T 12/01**
*La reina del sur* (Season 1, Ep. 1)
*Queen of the South* (Season 1, Ep. 1)

**T 12/05**
Rick Famuwiya, Dir., *Dope*

**F 12/08**
Conclusions and Review