INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE & CULTURE:
THE ARTS, MEDIA TECHNOLOGY, AND COMMUNITY IN LATIN AMERICA

Jerónimo Arellano
jarellan@brandeis.edu
Meeting times: M, T. & Th. 11-11:50 a.m.
Office hours: M. 12-2 a.m., and by appointment
Office: Shiffman 122

Course description:

This course casts a panoramic view on the artistic and cultural production of Latin America, from the pre-Columbian period to the globalized present. To navigate this long stretch of time, we will focus on the relationship between the arts, media technologies, and community building in Latin America. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which clashes and transitions between media—for example: the arrival of the printing press and the eradication of native media in the New World; the age of television in Latin America; or the emergence of digital media and virtual reality—have inspired Latin American artists to push boundaries, challenge authority, reflect on the challenges of an uneven technological modernity, and dream up utopian and post-utopian communities.

Four media technologies and their respective ecologies serve as focal points for this seminar: print and native media in the New World, radio in the early twentieth century, film and television in the second half of the twentieth century, and digital media/VR in the new millennium. The dialogue between these media forms and the arts will serve as a point of departure for discussions of central issues in Latin American culture, such as identity and autonomy, mestizaje and hybridity, uneven development, colonialism and neocolonialism, peripheral modernities, neoliberalism and globalization. Course materials include excerpts from chronicles, novels, short stories, and graphic novels; music; film and digital media.

Course materials available in the bookstore:

All course materials will be available on LATTE.

Course Requirements and Grading:

1. Class Participation and Attendance (10%)
2. 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 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).
3. Weekly Postings on Latte (Pass/Fail; 10%): Brief, informal responses to the readings/viewings assigned each week.
4. Two Partial Exams (in class): (20%; 10% each)
5. **Creative Response (10%)**: 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).

6. **Feedback/Commentary on Classmates’ Creative Responses (10%)**: On a rotating basis, students will write one short report/commentary engaging with the creative response of another classmate.

7. **Creative/Critical Assignments**: (30%) 3 hybrid creative/critical exercises: 1) a brief translation of an Amerindian poetry piece; 2) a short, hypothetical screen adaptation of a written text discussed in class 3) a short, hypothetical digital-media adaptation of a film or literary text discussed in class. (Instructions and details for each assignment will be discussed in class).

**Grading scale:**

- 98 - 100 = A+
- 94 - 97 = A
- 90 - 93 = A-
- 88 - 89 = B+
- 84 - 87 = B
- 80 - 83 = B-
- 78 - 79 = C+
- 74 - 77 = C
- 70 - 73 = C-
- 68 - 69 = D+
- 64 - 67 = D
- 60 - 63 = D-
- 59 and below = F

- Note: 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 Schedule:**

- **W. 01.10**
  - Introduction and Overview

**1: New World Contact Zones and Indigenous Media**

- **Th 01.11**
  - Patricia Amblin, Dir., *Popol Vuh*

- **M 01.15**
  - Icíar Bollaín, *También la lluvia*

- **W 01.17 & Th. 01.18**
  - Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone”
  - Matt Cohen and Jeffrey Glover, “Introduction,” *Colonial Mediascapes: Sensory Worlds of the Early Americas*

- **M. 01.22**
  - Heidi Brandenburg Sierralta & Matthew Orzel, Dir.s., *When Two Worlds Collide*
2: Print Culture, Syncretism, and Nation Formation

M 01.29
María Luis Bemberg, Dir., Yo, la peor de todas

W 01.31 & Th. 02.01
Gertrudis de Avellaneda, Sab (sel.)

M. 02.05
Jorge Alí Triana, Dir., Bolívar soy yo

W. 02.07 & Th. 02.08
William Acree, “Print Culture and Collective Identity”

M. 02.12
First partial exam

3: Modernisms and Modern Media in Latin America

W. 02.14 and Th. 02.15
Luis Quintanilla, Radio: Poema inalámbrico en trece mensajes (sel.)
Rubén Gallo, “Radio” (sel.)

M. 02.26
Estaban Sapir, Dir., La antena

W. 03.01 & Th. 03.02
Vicente Huidobro, Cagliostro (sel.)

M 02.05
Glauber Rocha, Dir., Entranced Earth
Julio García Espinosa, “For an imperfect cinema”

W 02.07 & Th. 02.08
Gabriel García Márquez, Cien años de soledad (sel.)

4: “Homo Sampler:” The Arts in Latin America, Pop Culture, and New Media

M. 02.12
Guillermo de Toro, Dir., Cronos
Soda Stéreo & Caifanes

W. 02.14 & Th. 02.15
Alberto Fuguet y Sergio Gómez, “McOndo”
M. 02.26  
Julio Hernández Cordón, Dir., *Te prometo anarquía*  
Punk rock in Ecuador & Peru

W 02.28 & Th. 03.01 
Roberto Bolaño, “Manifiesto mexicano”  
*Screenplay exercise*

M. 03.05 
Kléber Mendoza Filho, *Aquarius*

W. 03.07 & Th. 03.08 
Roberto Bolaño, “La nieve”  
Alejandro Zambra, “Recuerdos de un computador personal”

M. 03.12  
Alejandro Brugués, Dir., *Juan de los muertos*  
Cumbia villera

W. 03.14 & Th. 03.15  
Jorge Enrique Lage, *Carbono 14* (sel.)

M. 02.19  
Rodrigo Ordóñez, Dir., *Depositarios*

W 02.21 & Th. 02.22 
Martín Castagnet, *Los cuerpos del verano* (sel.)

M. 02.26  
*Second partial exam*

5: Latin American Digital Culture and Transmedia

W. 02.28 & Th. 02.29  
Gustavo Taretto, Dir., *Medianeras*

M. 03.09 
Belén Gache, *Wordtoys* (hypermedia)  

W. 03.11 & Th. 03.12  
Juan B. Guitiérrez, *Condiciones extremas* (hypertext)  
Transmedia exercise

6: Latin American Diasporas and Virtual Realities

M. 03.16
Cary Fukunaga, Sin nombre

W 03.18 & Th. 03.19
Yuri Herrera, Señales que precederán el fin de los tiempos (sel.)

M. 03. 23
Junot Diaz, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao (sel.)
Reggaeton and narcocorrido

Th. 03.26
Conclusions and Review