

San José State University

Spring 2015

Department of English & Comparative Literature

English 123A: Literature for Global Understanding—Americas

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| Class Days/Time: | Tu/Th 1:30 - 2:45 PM |
| Classroom: | BBC 120 |

Course Description

“Literature for Global Understanding,” which carries 3 units, is an upper-division course designed, adopted, implemented, and administered by the Department of English and Comparative Literature at San Jose State University in accordance with the University’s General Education Program Guidelines (effective Fall 2005) to fulfill SJSU Studies (formerly Advanced General Education) requirements in Area V, “Culture, Civilization, and Global Understanding.”

Students are reminded that **“Courses to meet Areas R, S, and V of SJSU Studies must be taken from three different departments, or distinct academic units.”**

Prerequisites: WST, Core GE, Upper Division Standing, completion of (or co-registration in) 100W.

Amount of writing required: 5000+ words (research paper + two essays)

“Literature for Global Understanding” focuses on the study of literature as a form of human expression in different cultures or regions of the world, and how that literary expression has developed in historical, geographical, cultural, political, international, and global contexts. In general, this course will concentrate on a particular region of the world where a body of literature and the cultures expressed by this literature can be studied coherently. The basic principle in the design of this course is the promotion of global understanding among students in relation to how other literary traditions have

developed distinctive features and identities, and how a knowledge and appreciation of other cultural traditions should have an important place in American culture and society.

Four variations of the course are offered in rotation from semester to semester:

English 123A: Literature for Global Understanding—Americas

English 123B: Literature for Global Understanding—Africa

English 123C: Literature for Global Understanding—Oceania

English 123D: Literature for Global Understanding—Asia

As one of these variations, English 123A examines the literary production and cultural heritage of the Americas dating back to the time of the Columbian contact. Issues such as conquest, colonialism, the Middle Passage, slavery, genocide, race, ethnicity, language, class, gender, religion, cultural hybridity, modernity, human rights, and indigenous movements will be exemplified in the writings of significant writers selected from Latin America and the Caribbean / West Indies area. For this semester, the major authors selected include Jorge Amado, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabel Allende, Edwidge Danticat, and Derek Walcott. A knowledge of Spanish, Portugese, French, Dutch, and other languages/ patois / dialects will be most welcome.

Students will be required to play an active role in this course by means of presentations, debates, discussions, and research. Quizzes and participation in-class activities will be part of your course grade.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

SJSU Studies / Advanced GE—Area V Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

SLO 1: Students shall be able to compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S.

This objective will be met by means of close analysis of the texts throughout the semester; student success in achieving this objective will be assessed by means of appropriate questions in the final exam.

SLO 2: Students shall be able to identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture.

This objective will be met by means of lectures, presentations, discussions, and other class interactions throughout the semester; student success in achieving this objective will be assessed by means of appropriate writing assignments.

SLO 3: Students shall be able to explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures.

This objective will be met by means of in-depth study of the texts and their contexts as students conduct library research beyond the lectures and other in-class activities. Student success in achieving this objective will be assessed by means of a research paper.

Course Goals

Consistent with the goals of courses approved for Advanced GE in Area V, “English 123A: Literature for Global Understanding” focuses on the literary expressions of the Americas in order to (1) help students appreciate literature as a form of human expression and understand how that expression has developed over time in different cultures; and (2) increase students’ understanding of how other cultural traditions have influenced American culture and society, and how cultures in general both develop distinctive features and interact with other cultures.

Students are expected to:

- (1) Gain a knowledge and understanding of the Americas through the literatures and artistic texts produced by its various cultures and peoples;
- (2) Learn to contextualize the knowledge and understanding of the Americas in terms of its interrelationships and interactions with global processes, mechanisms, and forces beyond the Americas;
- (3) Acquire, through individual as well as collaborative efforts, skills of reading, explicating, discussing, analyzing, interpreting, debating, and writing about texts pertaining to literatures and the other arts produced by cultures and peoples of Africa;
- (4) Learn to develop, as a habit of mind, a keen interest in the global processes, mechanisms, and forces that have come to shape the affairs in the Americas and in the world;
- (5) Acquire and maintain a personal tolerance and/or appreciation of the different perspectives and values offered in the literatures and artistic texts produced by cultures and peoples of the Americas;
- (6) Develop a sense of commitment to the well-being of the world by sharing cultural tolerance and appreciation with one’s own immediate community.

STUDENT LEARNING TO BE ACCOMPLISHED:

With reference to the artistic texts and literatures of the Americas included in this course, students will examine and understand how cultures and peoples of this region interact and interrelate to the rest of the world as a result of the global processes, mechanisms, and forces at work.

The specific learning objectives for students are:

- (1) Exposure to a diverse and representative variety of significant texts of literature and, where appropriate, the other arts, that support an understanding of the Americas;
- (2) Familiarity with significant writers, key texts and materials in the Americas;
- (3) Examination of the above materials in both local and global contexts, especially with regard to larger processes, mechanisms, and forces that come into play in shaping the Americas and / or the world;
- (4) Firm grasp of key issues affecting the Americas in the local and global contexts described above;
- (5) Development and mastery of reading, analytical, critical, research, and writing skills suited to the study of the course materials;
- (6) Demonstrated articulation of the understanding and mastery of the materials as well as the issues, in verbal discussions, oral presentations, writing and or appropriate formats.

Student Learning Goals of the Dept. of English & Comparative Literature

This course also helps students in the major to achieve the Student Learning Goals set forth by the Department of English and Comparative Literature in so far as they are required to develop and demonstrate the ability 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, and/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 the 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.

Note: SLO#5 will be assessed in this semester by means of a student presentation project.

Required Texts / Readings

José Martí, “Our America.” This text is available online:

http://writing.upenn.edu/library/Marti_Jose_Our-America.html

Bartolome de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies.*

Trans. Nigel Griffin. Penguin, 1992. This text is available online:

<http://www.columbia.edu/~daviss/work/files/presentations/casshort/>

Isabel Allende, *Ines of My Soul.* Harper Perennial, 2007.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *The General in His Labyrinth.* Vintage, 2003.

Jorge Amado, *War of Saints.* Random House 1993.

Edwidge Danticat. *Farming of Bones.* Penguin 1998.

Derek Walcott, *Omeros.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990

Recommended films

See course schedule for films that shed light on the reading materials.

Assignments and Grading Policy*

Course Grading Guidelines**

Students are graded on the following matrix of credits involving their critical thinking, reading, writing, research, discussions and presentations, quizzes/tests and exams, group projects, and overall performance:

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Exams | 2 X 100 points | = 200 points |
| Essays | 2 Reading Analyses X 150 points | = 300 points |
| Presentation Project | 1 X 100 points | = 100 points |
| Research Paper | 1 X 200 points | = 200 points |
| Overall Performance (Quizzes, Participation, Effort, etc.) | | = 200 points |

TOTAL = 1000 points

* For numerical score and grade equivalents see the following tables:

Table One: Essays

A- = 90 – 93; A = 94 – 96; A+ = 97 – 99

B- = 80 – 83; B = 84 – 86; B+ = 87 - 89

C- = 70 – 73; C = 74 – 76; C+ = 77 – 79

D- = 60 – 63; D = 64 – 66; D+ = 67 – 69

F or below = 0 for essays.

Table Two: Course Grade

A- = 900 – 933; A = 934 – 966; A+ = 967 – 999

B- = 800 – 833; B = 834 – 866; B+ = 867 - 899
C- = 700 – 733; C = 734 – 766; C+ = 767 – 799
D- = 600 – 633; D = 634 – 666; D+ = 667 – 669
F = 559 or below.

** Students are advised to take note of the following policy statement mandated by the Department of English with regard to grading (effective May 17, 1994):

“The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official 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.

Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC, for No Credit, shall replace D or F. In A, B, C, No Credit courses NC shall also substitute for W (for Withdrawal) because neither NC nor W affects students' grade point averages. This statement shall be included in all Department of English syllabi or greensheets.”

In addition, 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.”

Departmental Policy on Grading Written Assignments

“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. *Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:*

The “**A**” essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The “**B**” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “A” essay. The chief difference is that the “B” essay will show some slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The “C” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “B” essay.

The “D” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The “F” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

Class Policy on Late Assignments and Incompletes

1. Assignments shall be turned in when due. Penalty applies to late take-home assignments at the rate of –10%/day overdue of the actual grade earned; maximum penalty up to 100% deduction of grade earned for the work assigned. There will be no make-up for in-class assignments and quizzes. Exams must be taken at the times and dates scheduled, unless an alternative arrangement is granted by the professor.
2. Essay assignments and research papers must be printed to receive credit.
3. Incomplete course work will result in actual grade earned based on points accumulated; an "I" course grade will not be given without signing a contract with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the last instruction day.

Class Policy on Record Keeping

Keep a record of all assignments you have completed. In particular, save backup copies of your essays/papers. For future portfolio purposes, students—ESPECIALLY MAJORS in English & Comparative Literature—are advised to preserve essays/papers graded and returned to them until graduation.

Presentation Project

To meet Department Student Learning Objective #5 (“articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts”), and to enrich the learning experience in this class, students are required to make an oral presentation on an appropriate topic of their choice by focusing on the relations among culture, history, and texts. Examples of possible topics include the following:

Countries in the Americas (based on geography and/or climate and/or culture, etc.)
Americas in Ancient & Modern Times

Peoples in the Americas
Cultures, Languages, Religions, Beliefs, Practices, Customs
Relationships between the Americas & Europe / Asia / Africa / United States, etc.
Myths, folklore, storytelling, and the oral tradition
Politics in individual countries or states
Slavery; colonialism; ethnic conflicts; impact of capitalism & globalization; migrations
The Middle Passage; The Black Atlantic; The African Diaspora
Authoritarianism; Indigenous Rights Activism; Environmental Movements
Protest literature; dissident writings
Magical Realism; Ethno-poetics
Individual authors and literary texts
Films, musicians/singers; artists
Notable individuals from/of/in the Americas

Please consult with the instructor to select a topic. Each presentation will be about 10 minutes; you may use multimedia / powerpoint presentation tools. It is a good idea to provide handout materials for other students to take home to study further. **A very important point to remember: your presentation should demonstrate a strong connection between the topics/themes discussed and the appropriate literary texts that exemplify such a topics/themes.**

Classroom Protocol

1. Participation is understood to be an essential aspect of learning in this class. Absence without leave, late arrival, unauthorized breaks, early departure, and inattentiveness will be considered in my evaluation of the your participation.
2. The use of cell phones is prohibited.
3. The use of laptops for purposes inconsistent with class activities is prohibited.
4. Ingestion of food inside the classroom is prohibited.

University Policies

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/) at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

[University Policy S12-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf), <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
 - It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor's process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
 - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the

responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See [University Policy S14-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf>.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information,

follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on



Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to scan this code.)

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

The instructor reserves the right to revise this greensheet. Updates will be provided in class or by email in a timely manner or as soon as possible.

Spring 2015, Course Schedule for English 123A

| Week | Date | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines |
|------|--------------|---|
| 1 | 1/22 | Introduction to the course; Defining and Covering SLOs Student Presentation Project [SLO 5] Research Project Weekend: See movie, <i>1492--Conquest of Paradise</i> |
| 2 | 1/27 1/29 | Jose Marti, "Our America" (text provided by email) <i>Destruction of the Indies</i> (text available online / by email) Weekend: See movie, <i>Motorcycle Diaries</i> |
| 3 | 2/3 2/5 | <i>Destruction of the Indies</i> <i>Destruction of the Indies</i> Weekend: See movie, <i>Cabeza de Vaca</i> |
| 4 | 2/10 2/12 | <i>Ines of My Soul</i> <i>Ines of My Soul</i> Weekend: See movie, <i>The Mission</i> |
| 5 | 2/17 2/19 | <i>Ines of My Soul</i> <i>Ines of My Soul</i> Weekend: See movie, <i>Love in the time of cholera</i> |
| 6 | 2/24 2/26 | <i>General in His Labyrinth</i> <i>General in His Labyrinth</i> |
| 7 | 3/3 3/5 | <i>General in His Labyrinth</i> <i>General in His Labyrinth</i> . Review |
| 8 | 3/10 3/12 | Midterm Exam. Essay 1 Due <i>War of the Saints</i> Weekend: See movie, <i>Black Orpheus</i> |
| 9 | 3/17 3/19 | <i>War of the Saints</i> <i>War of the Saints</i> Weekend: See movie, <i>Romero</i> |
| 10 | 3/23 -3/27 | SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS ; see one or more of the films below: <i>City of God</i> ; <i>Black Orpheus</i> ; <i>In the Time of the Butterflies</i> |
| 11 | 3/31 | Cesar Chavez Day, Campus Closed, No Class |

| Week | Date | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines |
|-------------|--------------|--|
| | 4/2 | <i>War of the Saints</i> |
| 12 | 4/7 4/9 | <i>Farming of Bones</i> <i>Farming of Bones</i> Weekend: see movie, <i>Salvador</i> |
| 13 | 4/14 4/16 | <i>Farming of Bones</i> <i>Farming of Bones</i> Weekend: See movie, <i>Before Night Falls</i> |
| 14 | 4/21 4/23 | <i>Farming of Bones</i> <i>Omeros</i> Weekend: See movie, <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> |
| 15 | 4/28 4/30 | <i>Omeros</i> <i>Omeros</i> |
| 16 | 5/5 5/7 | <i>Omeros</i> <i>Omeros</i> |
| 17 | 5/12 5/21 | Review; Research paper Due; Conclusion to the course 5/21 (Thursday) Final Exam: 12:15-14:30 |