

## HISP 453/HISP 691 (WINTER 2023): LATIN AMERICAN POETRY

Professor Amanda Holmes

Email: [amanda.holmes@mcgill.ca](mailto:amanda.holmes@mcgill.ca)

Office: 680 Sherbrooke Street West, Room 386

Office Hours: W 11:30-12:30 or by appointment

---

This course explores the evolution of Latin American poetry through the twentieth century through a detailed look at the works of five principal poets: Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda, César Vallejo, Octavio Paz and Nicolás Guillén. Works by these authors will be complemented by secondary readings, and comparisons will be drawn with texts by other twentieth-century Latin American poets. Topics include both thematic and formal elements of poetry analysis; the representation of regional and personal identities; the political engagement of the poet and *négritude*; and the definition of poetic forms, among other topics.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

All readings available on My Courses.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS (UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS)

Participation and Reading Journal	20%
Group Presentation	20%
Short essay	20%
<u>Final essay (abstract 5%; final essay 35%)</u>	<u>40%</u>
	100%

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS (GRADUATE STUDENTS)

Participation	10%
Reading Journal	15%
Presentation	25%
<u>Final essay (abstract 10%; final essay 40%)</u>	<u>50%</u>
	100%

### Participation

Students are expected to prepare each reading assignment carefully and to **participate** actively in full class and small group discussions. Note: in an attempt to better serve the needs of the two levels of students in the class, certain Friday sessions are reserved exclusively for undergraduate students and others for graduate students (see course outline).

Students will keep a **reading journal** (maximum 300 words per entry), to be handed in on My Courses on Wednesdays each week before the beginning of class. In the journal, students are expected to present their reactions to the reading assignments *for the coming week*. Note: students may choose to miss two weeks (UG students) or one week (G students) of entries at their discretion during the course of the semester without penalty to their participation grade.

### Group Presentation

For the **presentation** (~10 minutes for UG students; ~20 minutes for G students), students will present a poem by an author not studied in the course in an in-class presentation. Students will provide the

instructor with a copy of the poem and a brief outline of the presentation at least *one week prior* to the presentation. The outline will explain the role of each student in the presentation. Reactions to these poems will be recorded by all students in their reading journals.

### Essays (undergraduate students)

- **Short essay:** students will prepare a short essay (4-6 pages) on a topic assigned by the instructor two weeks previously (Due February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023). The objective of this assignment is to allow the student the opportunity to practice writing a literature essay on poetry before producing the final paper.
- **Final essay:** By the end of this course, students will produce a final paper based on one aspect of the material covered in the semester. The final essay will be 10-12 pages, double spaced, 12-point font, following the guidelines of the *MLA Handbook*, due on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Students will choose their own topics for this assignment in consultation with the professor. An **abstract** and **bibliography** for the final essay are due on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

### Essay (graduate students)

By the end of this course, students will produce a final paper based on one aspect of the material covered in the semester. With the thought in mind that as a graduate student you are aiming towards writing publishable articles, the **final essay** will be 17-20 pages, double spaced, 12-point font, following the guidelines of the *MLA Handbook*, due on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Students will choose their own topics for this assignment in consultation with the professor. An **abstract** and **bibliography** for the final essay are due on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

All assignments will be handed in on My Courses by midnight of the due date. **Late assignments will lose three points per day late.**

### TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Discussion is the essence of class time in this course. Through discussion, students will advance as critical thinkers and enhance their understanding of the texts by engaging with them under the guidance of the instructor. The more ideas the students bring to class, the more enriching will be the class discussions. Please keep in mind that some of the material we will be studying may touch on sensitive issues for some students. Students are expected to help foster a positive classroom environment for the benefit of all.

### COMPUTERS AND TABLETS

It is strongly encouraged that students use tablets, rather than laptop computers, in this class. In class, tablets are less disruptive than computers, and they also facilitate the readings of the texts if students choose not to print the poetry. On a tablet, students are able to mark and comment on the poetry more readily.

### CLASS TIME

Students should make every effort to arrive in class on time as it is disruptive to enter a class that is already in session. Similarly, to avoid disruption to the class session, if students anticipate that they might need to leave early, please mention this to the instructor and sit close to the door to create the least commotion possible when you leave the room. Some students might have medical conditions that require

them to leave the classroom during class to take medications, etc. Please self-identify to the instructor if you have a condition that will require this, as leaving class mid-session is also disruptive.

### **ABSENCES**

As we emerge from the pandemic, colds and flus have proliferated. Students are encouraged to stay home if they are sick, and to wear a mask to class if symptoms are mild but still present. Students should contact a classmate to find out what they miss in case of an absence. They should also send the instructor a quick email if they need to miss a class. Please note that extended absences will impact the participation grade if they are not supported by a note from a medical professional.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/)) for more information).

© Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

### **HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES AT MCGILL**

Many students may face mental health challenges that can impact not only their academic success but also their ability to thrive in our campus community. Please reach out for support when you need it; many [resources](#) are available on-campus, off-campus, and online.

---

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Week 1:**

**January 4:** Introduction to the course

### **UNIT I. GABRIELA MISTRAL**

#### **January 6:**

#### **Early Poetry**

#### **Readings:**

- *Desolación*: “Los sonetos de la muerte”; Poemas de las madres

### **Week 2: January 11 and January 13<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Women in Mistral’s Poetry**

#### **Readings:**

- *Ternura*: Canciones de cuna
- *Tala*: “La fuga”; Saudade “País de la ausencia,” “Beber,” “Todas íbamos a ser reinas”
- *Lagar*: Locas mujeres—“La otra,” “La abandonada,” “La bailarina”

---

<sup>1</sup> For dates marked in purple, class time is reserved for undergraduate students.

- Cabello Hutt, Claudia. *Artesana de sí misma: Gabriela Mistral, una intelectual en cuerpo y palabra*. Purdue University Press, 2018. 1-17.
- Additional reading for graduate students: all of *Locas mujeres*.

**Reading Journal 1** due Wednesday, January 11 by 9:59am on My Courses

### **Week 3: January 18**

#### **Mistral's representation of Chile**

##### Readings:

- *Poema de Chile*: "Hallazgo" (7-13); "Valle de Elqui" (45-49); "Monte Aconcagua" (79-83); "Despedida" (243-4)

## **UNIT I. PABLO NERUDA**

### **January 20**

#### **Introduction to Pablo Neruda**

- Neruda's *Poemas de amor*: 1, 2, 5, 7, 14, 15, 20
- Loyola, Hernán. "The First Sin: Sexist." *Neruda's Sins*. Translated by Greg Dawes. Editorial A Contracorriente, 2022. 14-24.
- Graduate students: All the *Poemas de amor*

**Journal 2** due Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> by 9:59am on My Courses

### **Week 4: January 25 and January 27**

#### **Neruda's Hermetic Period and his Epic Poetry**

##### Readings:

- *Residencia en la tierra*: "Galope muerto"
- *Canto general*: "Alturas de Macchu Picchu"
- Enjuto Rangel, Cecilia. *Cities in Ruins: The Politics of Modern Poetics*. West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2010. 225-27 and 254-268.
- Graduate students: Novillo-Corvalán, Patricia. "Anti-Imperialist Commitments: Mapping Neruda's Transnational Modernist Networks." *Modernism and Latin America*. Routledge, 2017. 51-77.

**Journal 3** due Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>

### **Week 5: February 1 and February 3<sup>2</sup>**

#### **Neruda's Evolution Towards the Common Man**

##### Readings:

- *Odas elementales*: "El hombre invisible"; "Oda a la alcachofa"; "Oda al átomo"; "Oda a la esperanza"; "Oda a la flor azul"; "Oda a la intranquilidad"; "Oda a la malvenida"; "Oda a los números"; "Oda a los poetas populares"; "Oda a la tristeza"; "Oda a la pobreza"; "Oda al vino"
- Graduate students: Feinsod, Harris. "The Ruins of Inter-Americanism." *The Poetry of the Americas: From Good Neighbors to Countercultures*. Oxford University Press, 2017. 137-189.

**\*\*Short Essay** due: Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> For dates marked in green, class time is reserved for graduate students.

### UNIT 3: CÉSAR VALLEJO

#### Week 6: February 8 and February 10

##### Vallejo's Revision of Modernismo and Innovations in *Trilce*

###### Readings:

- *Los heraldos negros*: “Los heraldos negros” (24); “Setiembre” (62); “Heces” (64); “Agape” (102); “El pan nuestro” (110); “Espergesia” (160)
- *Trilce*: II, VI, XX, XXVIII, XLIV, *Trilce*
- Graduate students: Clayton, Michelle. *Poetry in Pieces: César Vallejo and Lyric Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. 50-88.

Journal 4 due Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>

#### Week 7: February 15 and February 17

##### The Human Condition in Vallejo

###### Readings:

- *Poemas humanos*: “Piedra negra sobre una piedra blanca” (380); “Hoy me gusta la vida mucho menos...” (388); “Traspié entre dos estrellas” (478); “Un hombre pasa con un pan al hombro...” (516); “Me viene, hay días, una gana ubérrima...” (520)
- *España, aparta de mí este cáliz*: “Pedro Rojas”; “Imagen española de la muerte” (598); “Masa” (610)
- Padró Nieto, Bernat. “Cesar Vallejo en la periferia invisible.” *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 287-308 (2018): 287–308.

Journal 5 due Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>

**\*\*Abstract/bibliography** due Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>

### UNIT 4: OCTAVIO PAZ

#### Week 8: February 22 and February 24

##### Introduction to Octavio Paz

###### Readings:

- *Ladera Este*: “El otro,” “Epitafio de una vieja”
- *Salamandra*: “Aquí,” “Certeza,” “Garabato”
- *Viento entero*: “Viento entero”

Journal 6 due Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>

#### Reading Week: March 1 and 3

#### Week 9: March 8 and March 10

##### History and Ruins in Paz

###### Readings:

- *La estación violenta*: “Himno entre ruinas”; “Piedra de sol” (excerpts)
- Ortega, Jorge. “Sustrato mítico en *Piedra de sol* de Octavio Paz.” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 89 (2012): 509-517.
- Graduate students: read all of “Piedra de sol”

Journal 7 due Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>

**Week 10: March 15 and March 17**

**The City and Experimentation in Paz's Poetry**

Readings:

- *Vuelta*: "Ciudad de Mexico"
- Poesía concreta: "Topoemas"; "Anotaciones/Rotaciones"
- Graduate students: Delgado Moya, Sergio. *Delirious Consumption: Aesthetics and Consumer Capitalism in Mexico and Brazil*. University of Texas Press, 2017. Chapter 3.

Journal 8 due Wednesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>

**Unit 5: NICOLÁS GUILLÉN**

**Week 11: March 22 and March 24**

**The Son in Nicolás Guillén's Poetry**

Readings:

- *Motivos de son*: the whole volume
- *West Indies Ltd.*: "La balada de los dos abuelos"; "Sabás"; "Las maracas"; "Caminando"; "Sensemayá"; "Palabras en el trópico"; "Calor"; "West Indies Ltd."
- Arnedo-Gómez, Miguel. *Uniting Blacks in a Raceless Nation*. Bucknell University Press, 2016. Read chapter 3.

Journal 9 due Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Weeks 12. March 29 and March 31**

**Colonialism and Capitalism in Guillén**

Readings:

- *El gran zoo*: the whole volume
- Graduate students: Cruz, Ailén. "Nicolás Guillén's *El Gran Zoo* and His Biopolitical Legacy in Three Twenty-First Century Bestiaries from Mexico, Argentina, and Spain." *Hispania* 105.3 (2022): 343–359.

Journal 10 due Wednesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>

**Week 13. April 5 and April 13**

**Conclusion**

**\*\*Final Essay** due Thursday, April 13th.

\*\*In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.