

UC San Diego | Dept. of Ethnic Studies  
ETHN 139/LTEN 180: Chicana/o Literature in English  
Spring 2018 | Instructor: M. Hidalgo, Ph.D.  
MWF 3-3:50pm in Warren Lecture Hall (WLH) 2115

**Email:** mhidalgo@ucsd.edu

**Office Hours:** MW 12:45-1:45pm + by Skype appt.; please email at least 24 hours in advance to schedule office hours visit

**Office Hours Location:** The Loft (Price Center)

**Ethnic Studies Office Mailbox:** Social Science Building (SSB), 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Dear Students,

Welcome to this section of ETHN 139/LTEN 180, "Chicana/o Literature in English." My name is Melissa Hidalgo – you can call me "Profe Hidalgo" or "professor" or "Dr. Hidalgo" – and I'm your instructor. I'm thrilled to be teaching a Chicana/o literature course back here at UCSD, where I earned my Ph.D. in Literature in 2011. I've chosen novels and plays by some of my favorite 'all-stars' of classic Chicana/o literature (the writers didn't use "Chicanx" back then) from the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. I'm excited to read them again with you all in these next 10 weeks. It will fly by.

**Consider this letter the course Syllabus.** The bullet points below contain the classroom procedures, policies, and other important 'ground rules' for our class. I've linked important University policies and procedures in our TritonEd pages. Please review those pages, particularly the parts about cheating (don't do it!), student conduct, and campus emergencies.

- First things first. This **course provides an introduction to the literature in English by key Chicano and Chicana writers** from the Movimiento era through the millennium. We will read and critically explore 'canonical' Chicana/o literary works by Oscar Zeta Acosta, Helena María Viramontes, Ana Castillo, John Rechy, and Cherríe Moraga. Collectively and individually, these writers help us understand the historical, social, and political contexts that gave rise to Chicana/o/x literary production in the decades that following the movimiento era of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In our exploration of the works' themes, such as activism, racism, immigration, gender and sexuality, education, families, cultural nationalism, and identities, we will also spend lots of time 'close reading' and discussing the literary strategies and other techniques of the works themselves. Our overall goals are threefold: to read a selection of contemporary Chicana/o literature by key writers; to understand Chicana/o literature, and all literature, as cultural products in relation to others; and to explore the meanings of "Chicano/a literature" as a field of academic inquiry and critical scholarly engagement.
- You will have to **buy five books** for this class:
  - 1) Oscar Zeta Acosta, *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* (1973) (Vintage, 1989)
  - 2) Cherríe Moraga, *Heroes and Saints and Other Plays* (1994, West End)
  - 3) John Rechy, *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez* (1991) (Grove Press, 2001)
  - 4) Ana Castillo, *The Guardians* (Random House, 2008)
  - 5) Helena María Viramontes, *Their Dogs Came with Them* (Atria Books, 2008)

Please buy/bring your own PAPERBACK copies of these books for class. I understand the temptation and convenience of Kindles and other PDF readers for books. However, we will be doing the close reading, notetaking, annotating, and other 'hands-on' learning through literary texts, so PAPERBACK copies of these primary literary texts and objects of our study are highly recommended.

- You will also **access the following e-books** available through **UCSD Library** online. Simply search Roger for the following:
  - 1) Calderón and Saldívar, eds., *Criticism in the Borderlands: Studies in Chicano Literature, Culture, and Ideology* (Duke UP, 1991)
  - 2) Brady, *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space* (Duke UP, 2002)
  - 3) Yarbrow-Bejarano, *The Wounded Heart: Writing on Cherrie Moraga* (UTexas, 2001)

All other required reading and material will be posted on TritonEd under "Content."

- Speaking of **notetaking**: please refrain from using laptop computers and handheld devices for notetaking in this class. Studies show that students retain more information when they are required to listen and pay attention to lectures and discussion and write down pertinent information. Plus, I find the tapping of a keyboard distracting. Bring your text, a notebook, and pen/pencil for the work we'll do together.
- Also, please **stow away your phones** and other iDevices, and refrain from surfing the web, checking/responding to emails, texting, and other non-course-related uses of electronic devices—I see you! Phone-peeking/tapping not good for your participation grade.
- Starting Week 2, my **office hours** are MW 12:45-1:45pm at The Loft (Price Center). If you'd like to see me in office hours, please **email me at least 24 hours ahead of time to schedule an appointment**. If you have a schedule conflict and cannot make my regular OH (and also because I don't live locally and I'm only on campus on the days I teach), I also offer Skype sessions (24-hr email notice also applies).
- When emailing me, please include the course number, your name, and a **clear subject** in the subject line. Practice **good email etiquette** by including an **appropriate address** (for example, "Dear Professor Hidalgo," or "Hello, Professor") and a clearly conveyed message. If you begin your email with "hey" or write to me like ur texting ur bff (wtf!) or posting on IG, I will #not reply to u.
- In order to **pass this class**, all students must complete and submit the following **graded assignments**: 1) critical book reflections (25 points); 2) a research-based midterm assignment (25 pts); and a final paper with proposal (30 pts.) Attendance and participation (including homework, short 'pop assignments,' study/disc. questions, & in-class activities) are worth 20 points, for a grand total of **100 possible points** for the class. For each assignment, I will post a handout detailing requirements, criteria, due

dates, and other information. You can find all your assignments in a folder under “Content” in TritonEd.

- Because lots can happen in 10 weeks, timelines and material are **subject to change**. If I do make changes, I will announce it in class and post it on TritonEd; I will also update the syllabus to reflect these changes. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes to our game plan.
- As for **attendance**, everyone gets **one ‘freebie’ absence**. You don’t have to explain to me your ‘freebie.’ After your one ‘freebie,’ I will deduct one participation/attendance point for every absence thereafter, unless you have a documented excuse. If you have a situation or emergency that comes up or will otherwise impact your participation in this class, please let me know sooner rather than later to discuss your options.
- Good attendance also means **arriving on time!** I value our limited classroom time together, and I would hope you all do, too. Constant tardiness (or leaving early) is just as harmful to your grade as missing class, and in small classrooms like ours, it’s especially disruptive. Since our class meets only for 50 minutes, if you plan to be more than **20 minutes late**, please note that you will be **marked absent**.
- In this class, there are many ways to earn **participation** points. Regular involvement in **class discussion** and **group participation** in activities are usually the most common. When you do say something in class, make sure it’s a contribution: ground your insights, questions, and comments in the course materials; engage with your classmates in productive ways that advance or expand the conversation. **Stay on topic**. If you are a shy person and do not feel as comfortable as others speaking in class, you can make up for this by stopping by my **office hours** for a chat, which also counts toward participation. You may also **email** me your questions or observations about the readings or lectures; **post questions** or comments for your classmates on TritonEd discussion boards; or bring something to **‘share’ in class** and connect to the material; etc.
- There are many UCSD campus policies governing **student conduct**, and we ask that everyone adhere to the university's expectations for student conduct. Ethnic slurs, anti-immigrant, classist, racist, sexist and homophobic remarks, and religious diatribes/hate speech will not be acceptable commentary for this course, and appropriate action will be taken if these things occur. Students will be held to the university-wide policies established for Student Conduct.
- **Want to major (or minor) in Ethnic Studies?** Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of “interest,” yet have no information about the major or minor and don’t realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, government and politics, journalism, education, public health, social work, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor at

UCSD, please contact Mónica Rodríguez de Cabaza, our Ethnic Studies Undergraduate Advisor, at 858-534-3277 or ethnicstudies@ucsd.edu

If you have any questions about any of the above, please let me know. I encourage your active participation and inquiries. We are reading Chicana and Chicano literature in this class, but this does not mean you have to be Chicana or Chicano (or a Literature or ETHN major) to read and engage the texts meaningfully – we aren't English people from the Elizabethan era, we're not teenage wizard boys, but we still read and meaningfully engage Shakespeare & *Harry Potter*! As your instructor, my main goals for this class are threefold: 1) to present a compelling variety of texts that engage you in thoughtful contemplation of what we call "Chicano/a literature"; 2) to expand your critical thinking, writing, and communication skills; and 3) to help you be better readers and appreciators of literature, Chicana/o and all.

Happy spring reading!

-profe mhidalgo.

P.S. This is a reading-intensive course. I expect everyone to stay on top of the reading and complete each book we read/study in class, along with the occasional scholarly/critical essay. We can get through five books in ten weeks with steady work. But let's also enjoy these readings and the time we have together with these *chingón* and *chingóna* Chicana and Chicano writers.

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### COURSE READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Complete all reading and assignments before the day they are listed.  
Critical essays and additional material TBA.

#### Week 1

- M 4/2 First day. Course introduction. "What is Chicano/a literature?"  
**HW:** Read Syllabus letter; purchase books (Acosta and Viramontes up first!)
- W 4/4 Course overview: authors and works. Introducing the Brown Buffalo.
- F 4/6 **VIEW:** *The Rise and Fall of the Brown Buffalo* (56 mins) (PBS)  
Note: class will not meet today; instead, watch the documentary above online, available at pbs.org, and complete the homework assignment for Monday. **[Film link and hw posted in TritonEd.]** PBS link to *Brown Buffalo* film expires 4/21.

#### Week 2

- M 4/9 Discuss film, *The Rise and Fall of the Brown Buffalo* (PBS, 2018).
- W 4/11 **ACOSTA**, *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* (1973) (Introduction by Hunter S. Thompson and Ch. 1-4).

F 4/13      **Finish reading** *Revolt of the Cockroach People* (Ch. 5-Afterword) over the weekend. Complete reading & discussion questions for next week.

Week 3

M 4/16      Acosta, *Revolt of the Cockroach People*

W 4/18      **DUE: Critical Book Reflection 1-Acosta** (submit hard copy in class)  
Lecture: Introduction to Viramontes; East L.A. Chicano/a movements, then and now: connecting Acosta's *Revolt* and Viramontes's *Dogs*.

F 4/20      **Finish reading** Viramontes, *Their Dogs Came with Them* (2007), Part I (Chs. 1-5) and Part II (Ch. 6-8). Complete reading & discussions questions.

Week 4

M 4/23      **VIRAMONTES**, *Their Dogs Came with Them* (Pt. I, II)

W 4/25      Viramontes, *Their Dogs* (Pt. III, Chs. 9-12)

F 4/27      **Finish reading** *Their Dogs Came with Them* (Pt. IV, Chs. 13-16; Pt. V, Ch. 17). Complete reading & discussion questions.

Week 5

M 4/30      Viramontes, *Their Dogs Came with Them* (Pts. IV, V)

Brady (e-book), *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies* (Introduction, p. 1-12)

W 5/2      **DUE: Critical Book Reflection 2-Viramontes** (hard copy in class)  
Review Midterm research assignment.

F 5/4      **Midterm Assignment.**  
Upload to TritonEd by midnight tonight. Start reading Castillo, *The Guardians*.

Week 6

M 5/7      Castillo, *The Guardians* (2008)

W 5/9      Castillo, *The Guardians*

F 5/11      **Finish reading** *The Guardians*. Study & disc. q's for Mon.

Week 7

M 5/14      Castillo, *The Guardians*

W 5/16      **DUE: Critical Book Reflection 3-Castillo** (hard copy in class)  
Introduction to John Rechy & *Amalia Gómez*

F 5/18      **Finish reading** Rechy, *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez* (1991)

Week 8

M 5/21      Rechy, *Amalia Gómez*

W 5/23      Rechy, *Amalia Gómez*; and Rechy (essay), “The Outlaw Sensibility: Liberated Ghettos, Noble Stereotypes, and a Few More Promiscuous Observations” (1991)

F 5/25      **DUE: Critical Book Reflection 4-Rechy** (upload to TritonEd by midnight tonight.) Also, review list of final paper prompts.`

Week 9

M 5/28      MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY. CAMPUS CLOSED. Read Moraga. Last one!

W 5/30      Moraga, *Heroes and Saints and Other Plays* (1994)

F 6/1      **Finish reading** Moraga, *Heroes and Saints and Other Plays*. Complete the assignment to prep for our ‘staged readings’ of the plays in class next week; characters/parts to be assigned (participation points!)

Week 10

M 6/4      **In-class staged readings of Moraga plays.**

W 6/6      Last class meeting: discuss Moraga and retrospective of course. Sign up for Skype conferences.

**DUE (TritonEd): Critical Book Reflection 5-Moraga** (upload by midnight)

Also: please email me your **Final Paper Proposal** by 8am Friday morning ahead of your Skype conference.

F 6/8      No class. FINAL PAPER SKYPE CONFERENCES (email proposals first!)

FINALS WEEK

F 6/15      **Final paper due; upload to TritonEd by 12 noon F 6/15.**

~~~~WANT/NEED EXTRA CREDIT?

^^^^^^^^^Earn up to 5 points. Ask me how.