Kafka and the Absurd
Overview:

In this class, we will explore the literary family tree of Kafka. First, we will familiarize with his tropes, figures, narrative spaces, and forms of the infinite. The discussions will be directed, for the most part, to find the elements that contribute to the production of the Kafkaesque, the absurd and the abject. We will also refer to the absurd as a form of literature that contains a form of social critique, and thus evaluate its potential use for our own writing practices. We will also explore the work of other writers that have been influenced by Kafka, such as Clarice Lispector, and Samuel Beckett and Borges.

Goals:

Gain a better understanding of the work of Kafka, and the elements that contribute to the creation of his distinct style, as well as to see how this style has been mobilized in the work of other writers.

Course Expectations:

1) Acquire a good command of the works under study.

2) To gain understanding of the major concepts introduced by the work of Kafka, and to apply them to a comparative analysis of the work of Beckett and Lispector.
3) To be able to creatively engage the Literary Absurd on the creative pieces assigned, and the final assignment.

**Readings**

I offer a scanned copy of all the readings, yet, my scanning job is not perfect, the texts are readable but you will see my fingers. If you want to buy your own copy of the books, here is what we will read (the main books). I usually make available for students a folder with “supplementary readings” or I add these throughout the semester (these are non-mandatory readings) to encourage your learning process, but if you are researching something specific, you should let me know and I will see how I can be of assistance.

**Week 1**

Getting acquainted with Kafka. Brod, Max, *Franz Kafka: A Biography*

**Week 2**

Kafka: *The Trial*

**Week 3**
Kafka: *Metamorphosis*

**Week 4**

Kafka: *The Castle*

**Week 5**

Michael Haneke’s *The Castle*

**Week 6**

*Writing Activities*

**Week 7**

Samuel Beckett: *Waiting for Godot*

**Week 8**

Samuel Beckett: *Waiting for Godot*

*Writing Activities*

**Week 9**
**Spring Break**

**Week 10**

**Writing Activities**

**Week 11**

Clarice Lispector: *The Passion According to G.H.*

**Week 12**

Clarice Lispector: *The Passion According to G.H.*

**Writing Activities**

**Week 13**

**Writing Activities**

**Week 14**

Kafka: “Before the Law”

**Week 15**
Preparing Portfolio

Week 16: Final Portfolio

Bibliography


Clarice Lispector: *The Passion According to G.H.*
**Communication:**

If you have any questions, you can always email me. I will get back to you within 48 hours during weekdays, though it may take longer over the weekend. My emails are pcucurellalavin@utep.edu / paulacucurella@gmail.com

**Late Work Policy & Operating Time Zone:**

This is the kind of course where much of the material is generated by your timely participation; I cannot accept late work. If you turn in a poem, an activity, or a discussion by posting late, I will not give you credit for it. Take careful note of the due dates of assignments on the Course Calendar. All assignments are due on Mountain Standard Time.

**Blackboard:**

You should prepare your readings according to our class calendar. However, you will also receive weekly specific instructions regarding how to address the assigned texts and writing prompts for your weekly reading reports, and so it is your responsibility to check your Blackboard to find out the following week updates. I also send closing remarks addressing the comments on the discussion board and re-directing the discussion to the texts and topics under scrutiny. I will post these closing remarks at the end of each week on the Announcements page on blackboard, but you will also receive a notification via email. Please read these emails. You will find supplementary bibliography and echoes of your own commentaries in other writer’s works in these emails. These emails are addressed to everybody but directed to you personally.

**Weekly Reading Responses and/or Creative Assignments:**

Reading responses are critical analyses of a specific text that tells the reader what a particular text means to you. Every week you will be asked to write a short
By enrolling in this course, you join a community requiring intellectual integrity. When you write your name on an assignment, you take credit for the work contained, whether that be an entire text or only a sentence. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty demonstrate a disrespect of the community and will not be tolerated. Penalties for cheating and plagiarism range from an F on a particular assignment to an F for the course, depending on the situation.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (i.e.: Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please make arrangements with me as soon as possible. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, please discuss this in confidence with me and/or the director of the Disabled Student Services. Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor and The Disabled Student Services Office at The University of Texas at El Paso. All discussions and documentation are kept confidential.