

**SPAN 4320, Popular Culture in Spain and Latin America**  
**Zombies in Latin America: Undead Readings of Culture and History**

**Summer I 2018**

**Professor:** Dr. Sara Potter

**Classroom and Schedule:** Education Building 309

**Class Schedule:** MTWRF 9:20am-11:30am

**Office:** Liberal Arts 231

**Phone:** 915.747.7039 (email is best)

**Email:** [sapotter@utep.edu](mailto:sapotter@utep.edu)

**Office Hours:** After class or by appointment

**Texts:**

- Cabiya, Pedro. *Malas hierbas*. Zemí Book, 2011.
- Lauro, Sarah Juliet. *The Transatlantic Zombie: Slavery, Rebellion, and Living Death*. Rutgers UP, 2015

All other texts—book chapters, academic articles, YouTube clips, films, etc.--will be scanned and posted on Blackboard OR available online. It is your responsibility to obtain these texts and to read them carefully before each class. **If there are any problems finding a text, or with the format, please let me know immediately. Showing up to class and informing me that the text could not be found is not acceptable.** Some films are not available online, so they will be screened in class. You will be expected to have a working knowledge of the academic databases available through the UTEP library (JSTOR, Project Muse, MLA International Bibliography, etc.). We will have an orientation session at the library during the first week of class to ensure that everyone is familiar with the resources UTEP offers.

\*If you have not done so already, please make sure you can access online books and journal articles from the UTEP library (lib.utep.edu). There is a signup process that can take a day or two to be approved, so please do this as soon as possible to ensure that you have access to these important resources. For more information please visit the following page: <http://libanswers.utep.edu/a.php?qid=57186>.

**Course Description:**

Stretched to the point of breaking, the early twenty-first century zombie means everything and nothing...or does it? If we follow Sarah Juliet Lauro's reasoning in her 2015 book *The Transatlantic Zombie*, the zombie is a disturbingly flexible receptacle of meaning; as such, context matters a great deal as we theorize this particular monster. "At various points," Lauro observes, "the zombie is [. . .] a metaphor, a symbol, an allegory, a figure, and an icon" (4). In this class, we aim to discuss different ways that the zombie figure interfaces with, critiques, and informs our understanding of transatlantic literatures and cultures.

Our focus will largely be on texts and cultural products from Spanish-speaking Latin America. However, it is impossible to talk about this articulation of the undead without also acknowledging its origins in, and its appropriation from, the Haitian Revolution and its folklore. These Haitian roots lie at the foundation of any manifestation of the zombie, a fact that often destabilizes and complicates the figure's presence in contemporary popular culture in Hispanic America and beyond. Given this troubled history, we will examine how the zombie figure, in most of its forms, interfaces with notions of race, colonialism, and/or, more recently, neoliberalism. As such, we will be reading history and theory of the zombie alongside short stories, novels, films, plays, and graphic novels to deepen our understanding of both the zombie and the issues, questions, and fears that are revealed by its presence.

**Course Objectives:**

Students will familiarize themselves with various currents and movements in 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> c. Latin American history and politics through the representation and mediatization of the zombie in theoretical, literary, and popular (non-canonical, non-literary) texts. This will be underpinned by a solid understanding of the zombie's cultural and religious roots in the Haitian Revolution and (arguably) in Africa, and students will be able to explain how the use and appropriation of the zombie has proven both productive and problematic on a continental and global scale.

### **Attendance, Late Arrivals, and Participation:**

Attendance is particularly important during a short, condensed summer session, as is punctuality. For the next four weeks, we are forming a community of readers, writers, and thinkers, and as such it is vitally important to be mentally and physically present. Part of this attendance grade involves a short and informal one-on-one meeting with me early in the Summer I session (that is, by **Wednesday, June 20, 2018**). This is part of your attendance grade and is required for all students, even if you have taken classes with me before. I am happy to work with your schedules to make this possible, as these meetings are a place for you to tell me about yourself, your studies and interests, your expectations, hopes, and/or concerns for the class, and anything else that is important for me to know.

**Attendance policy:** If you are absent an excessive number of times during the drop period—two consecutive absences or three sporadic ones—from the first day after the end of late registration (Monday, June 11) through the last day for faculty to drop students (Friday, June 29), you risk being dropped from the course. I will not do this without contacting you first; students who simply stop coming to class will not be automatically dropped but will instead earn an F in the course. Once the last day for faculty to drop students has passed, your course grade will drop two percentage points per absence once you have reached two absences. (3 absences is 2% off; 4 absences is 4% off, etc.)

Late arrivals/early departures also carry penalties for purposes of dropping or lowering the course grade: two late arrivals equal one absence, two early departures equal one absence, and one late arrival plus one early departure equal one absence. It is *extremely* important to be on time for class to take full advantage of the time we have together, especially in a condensed summer course.

### **Course Policies and Descriptions of Assignments:**

- **Mini-pruebas** are given at the beginning of each class. They are multiple choice or short-answer questions that cover the most basic points of each day's assigned readings (or films). 10 pts x 15 mini-pruebas: **150 pts**.
- **Reflections** are short (1 page or less), informal written responses to the assigned texts for a particular day. Some will be open-ended; others will have specific topics or questions to consider. These may prove useful ways to explore and develop ideas for presentations or essays. They are due by midnight on the day they are assigned (by email). 10 pts x 15 reflections: **150 pts**.
- **Midterm, Friday June 22:** In-class, short answer/essay questions, open book/note. **200 pts**.
- **Presentation:** Each student will be tasked with researching and presenting a primary text to the class, providing greater context and facilitating class discussion. 10-15 minutes, visuals and/or handouts recommended. If music or film clips are used, they may not take up more than two minutes of the presentation. Any PowerPoint, Prezi, or other presentations must be emailed to me the day before your presentation as well as any handouts so that I can make copies for the class. Please limit your handout to one page (two-sided). **200 pts**.
- **Final Exam:** This will be a 6-8 page research essay on the related text(s) that are chosen in consultation with the professor, though at least one primary text must come from the syllabus. You will be expected to consult academic resources (scholarly articles, book chapters, and books) to inform and support your arguments and analyses.

- **Proposal + Preliminary Bibliography, Monday, June 18:** The proposal is a one-page (two sides, max 500 words) document in which you propose your argument (thesis statement), topic, and the text(s) you intend to analyze, as well as a minimum of three (3) academic resources (articles, etc.) that will support your argument. NB: The bibliography (MLA format/style) is required but does *not* form part of the word count. **50 pts.**
- **Outline, Wednesday June 27:** This outline will include your thesis statement, itinerary or roadmap (how you plan to support your thesis in the paper that follows), and the topic sentences and sub-arguments for each paragraph. Also include any changes in/additions to the bibliography. **50 pts.**
- **Taller de escritura, Friday July 6.** Bring the COMPLETE final essay to class for a writing workshop. You will have until **midnight on Monday, July 9** to turn in the version you brought to the workshop as well as the revision that incorporates (or at least carefully considers) your classmate's comments, suggestions, and/or questions. **50 pts.**
- **Final Essay (+ versión del taller)** must be turned in **by email** to [sapotter@utep.edu](mailto:sapotter@utep.edu) before midnight on Monday, July 10. Whatever reaches me is what I will grade, so please be sure you label your versions properly. I will write you to confirm that the essay has reached me and is legible (i.e., the file can be opened and you remembered to attach it to the email). **150 pts.**

#### Grade Distribution

Mini-pruebas: 15%

Reflections: 15%

Midterm: 20%

Presentation: 20%

Final Project: 30%

Total: 100%

#### Important dates to keep in mind:

UTEP's Summer 2018 Academic Calendar:

<http://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/registrar/Academic%20Calendars/academic-calendar.html>

Monday, June 11: Summer 1 & Full Term classes begin; last day to register

Wednesday, June 13: Summer 1 Census Day

Wednesday, June 18: Summer Full Term Census Day

**Wednesday, June 27: Summer 1 Drop/Withdrawal Deadline**

**Wednesday, July 4th Independence Day Holiday – University closed**

Friday, July 6: Last day of classes

Monday, July 9: Summer 1 Final Exam

#### On Technology In Class:

I strongly encourage the use of pen/pencil and paper (ideally a notebook), and to print out the readings to allow you to mark them up as needed (also strongly recommended, as active reading will be much more interesting and yield greater comprehension of the material). Numerous studies show that it aids focus, comprehension and memory for most (though not all) students. (This is just one:

<http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away.>) Personal computers, iPads, tablets, etc., are allowed in class as long as they are used only for class-related activities (reviewing texts, taking notes, etc.). Please turn off or silence all cell phones, beepers, or anything else that goes off, beeps, or otherwise makes noise. Any student caught doing otherwise (texting, checking email, etc.) will be asked to put away the distracting device and will lose participation points as well.

#### A Note on Campus Carry:

Those who have a Concealed Handgun License (CHL) may now legally have their guns in our classroom as long as they are kept concealed. Open carry remains prohibited on campus. In other words, none of us should ever see (or be able to tell that there is) a gun at UTEP, but if you feel someone is intentionally letting their gun be visible, **call campus police (915-747-5611) or 911**. I recommend you **leave your cell phone on SILENT** not only to minimize disruption to our normal learning environment but also to make sure-- in the very unlikely event of an active shooter-- that Miner Alerts can be received without tipping off an active shooter that could be in the building. For more information on campus carry, see <http://sa.utep.edu/campuscarry/>; for more information on overall campus safety, see <http://admin.utep.edu/emergency>.

### Grading Scale:

A = 100-90    B = 89-80    C = 79-70    D = 69-60    F = 59-0

### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP). It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents another persons' words or ideas as ones' own. This most frequently happens when someone quotes part of a text written by someone else, either verbatim or paraphrased, without proper citation. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Please consult the Handbook of Operating Procedures ([admin.utep.edu/hoop/](http://admin.utep.edu/hoop/)) for the complete university policy on academic dishonesty. You may also consult with Dr. Catie McCorry-Andalis, the Assistant Dean of Students, by calling 915-747-5648 or emailing [cmandalis@utep.edu](mailto:cmandalis@utep.edu).

### Students with Disabilities

If you have or believe you have a disability, you may wish to self-identify. You can do so by providing documentation to the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS, <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>) located in the Student Union Building East, Room 106. They may be reached by phone (915-747-5148) or e-mail ([cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu)). If you have a condition that may affect your ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency or that may cause an emergency during class, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with me and/or the CASS.

### Calendario

#### Semana 1 (orientación en la biblioteca TBA)

lunes 11/06: De la Mexplotación al zombi poshumano

- introducción a la clase, historia zombi 101, actividades de conocimiento, revisar el prontuario y las expectativas, establecer los textos y las fechas para las presentaciones
- Comenzar: *Santo contra la magia negra* (YouTube o DVD en reserva, 93 min.)
- **Reflexión 1:** ¿Qué es un zombie?

martes 12/06: Fundamentos teóricos

- Leer: Lauro & Embry, "A Zombie Manifesto," 24 pp., Terminar *Santo*
- **Reflexión 2:** ¿Cuáles son algunas formas de entender el zombie según Lauro & Embry? ¿Qué tipo(s) de zombi/zombii/zombie han observado Uds.? (Da ejemplos concretos.)

miércoles 13/06

- Leer Lauro, “Slavery and Slave Rebellion: The (Pre)History of the Zombi/e”, pp. 27-63
- Leer Alejo Carpentier, Prólogo, *El reino de este mundo*, 3 pp.
- **Reflexión 3:** Las raíces culturales, religiosas, etc. de la figura del zombi/e

jueves 14/06: El Caribe monstruoso en la literatura gótica y el cine

- Ver (en casa) *I Walked with a Zombie*, dir. Jacques Tourneur, 1943, 68 min.
- Leer Braham, “The Monstrous Caribbean”, 32 pp. (para hoy, pp. 1-4 + la sección de zombies, pp. 38-47)
- Responder a preguntas sobre la película + Carpentier + Braham
- **Reflexión 4:** Las representaciones e implicaciones del zombie caribeño

viernes 15/06

- *Malas hierbas*, Pedro Cabiya (Puerto Rico, 2010), pp. 17-67 (es aconsejable echar un vistazo también a la advertencia al lector y el índice)
- **Reflexión 5:** Preguntas y reflexiones sobre el libro, particularmente su estructura y/o ideas para el trabajo final

## Semana 2

lunes 18/06

- Leer Cabiya, pp. 69-107
- **Entregar la propuesta y la bibliografía preliminar**

martes 19/06

- Cabiya pp. 109-159
- **Reflexión 6:** Tema abierto

**miércoles 20/06 – El último día para programar la entrevista**

- Cabiya pp. 161-204
- **Reflexión 7:** Tema abierto

jueves 21/06

- Cabiya pp. 205-248, Hablar del examen parcial
- **Reflexión 8:** ¿Qué preguntas se puede esperar en el examen parcial?

viernes 22/06

- **Examen parcial:** respuestas cortas / ensayos cortos. Se permite usar libros, apuntes, etc.

## Semana 3

lunes 25 junio: Del drama al zomcom: representaciones cinematográficas del zombie caribeño

- Ver *Juan de los muertos* en clase (1h 32 min.)
- Leer “Apocalipsis revolucionario en *Juan de los muertos*, de Alejandro Burgués”, de Maribel Cedeño Rojas, pp. 276-295
- **Reflexión 8:** El género *zomcom*, lo (pos) apocalíptico, las revoluciones zombificadas

martes 26 junio

- Discutir Lauro, la película y el artículo de Cardentey Levin (más síntesis con ideas de Carpentier y Braham de la primera semana)

- Leer *Filosofía zombi*, Jorge Fernández Gonzalo, Intro + Pista I
- \*\*Antes de venir, investigar sobre la revolución cubana y los otros conflictos que menciona Juan en el monólogo que repite a lo largo de la película.
- **Reflexión 9:** preguntas/observaciones sobre *Filosofía zombi*

miércoles 27 junio: Otras historias contemporáneas

- “El hijo del coronel”, Roberto Bolaño, “El hombre que fue Valdemar”, Norma Lazo
- **Entregar el bosquejo del trabajo final + bibliografía revisada/aumentada**

jueves 28

- “La ira dentada”, Javier González Cárdenas, “Los Zetas”, Bernardo Fernández (BEF)
- **Reflexión 10:** ¿Cómo se lee el zombie mexicano contemporáneo en estos textos? ¿Cómo se encaja (o no) con los textos secundarios que hemos visto? (Lauro, Lauro & Embry, Braham, Carpentier, Fernández Gonzalo, Cardentey Levin, etc.)

viernes 29

- Leer Lauro Ch. 4, “Textual Zombies in the Visual Arts,” pp. 146-184
- Ver *Plaga zombie*, 1997 Argentina, dir. Pablo Parés y Hernán Sáez, (69 min., en clase)
- **Reflexión 11:** Síntesis entre el capítulo de Lauro + *Plaga zombie*

#### Semana 4

lunes 2 de julio: Otras revoluciones: del Caribe al Cono Sur, del poscolonialismo a las secuelas de la Guerra Sucia

- Atar cabos con *Plaga zombie*
- Leer “Las multitudes no-muertas” de Jonathan Risner, pp. 83-98, revisar Lauro
- Discutir la película/el artículo/el capítulo/sus preguntas
- **Reflexión 12:** Tema abierto

martes 3 de julio:

- Leer *Con Z de zombie*, Pedro Valencia, Acto I
- Lauro, “Zombies in Protest and Play,” pp. 189-201
- **Reflexión 13:** ¿Puede ser el zombie una figura de protesta? ¿Por qué sí y por qué no?

**miércoles 4 de julio: No hay clase**

jueves 5 de julio

- Terminar *Con Z de zombie*, Pedro Valencia, Acto II
- **Reflexión 14:** Tema abierto

viernes 6 de julio

- **Taller de escritura: Ensayo final**
- **Reflexión 15:** ¿Qué es un zombie?

#### Semana 5

lunes 9 de julio: **Entregar el ensayo final + la versión del taller + la hoja del taller por email a [sapotter@utep.edu](mailto:sapotter@utep.edu).**