Spanish 5315: Premodernist/Modernist Poetry
Poetry and/as the Formation of Latin America from the 19th c. to Modernismo

Fall 2023
Professor: Dr. Sara Potter
Class: W 5:00-7:50pm, Classroom Building 202
Office: Graham Hall 303A
Campus Mailbox: Liberal Arts 137* (likely to change soon as we relocate to Graham Hall)
Phone: 915.747.7039 (email is best)
Email: sapotter@utep.edu
Office Hours: TR 4:30-6:00pm or by appointment. May be in-person or virtual.

Texts:
- All poems and critical readings are on Blackboard in .pdf format or are available from the UTEP library as e-texts.

Recommended Secondary Texts:
- *Las convenciones contra la cultura*, Germán Colmenares (UTEP e-book)
- *19th Century Spanish America: A Cultural History*, Christopher Conway (UTEP e-book)
- *La ciudad letrada*, Ángel Rama (pdf)
- *Los hijos del limo*, Octavio Paz (pdf)
- *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America*, Mariano Siskind (pdf)

Course Description
As you may have noticed, the official course description is inaccurate as well as problematic: “Readings in the works of major Spanish poets of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, with special attention placed upon Rubén Darío and his school.” In reality, this course will address poetic texts in Spanish (or, in some cases, in Spanish translation) produced during nineteenth and early twentieth-century Latin America. While significant attention will indeed be paid to Spanish American Modernismo (1875-1921*) and the poets and poems that shaped and were formed by the movement (Darío and friends very much among them), we will also be looking at poets and poems who were at work during the so-called Century of Independence in what was becoming Latin America during the 19th century. What sorts of objectives, preoccupations, and motives fueled and sustained the poetic and political work of the Modernista poets? Which perspectives were ignored, silenced, or drowned out as part of a decades-long effort to define, establish, and claim a continental Latin American identity at the end of the 19th century when Spain was losing her grip on the last of her colonies? We will examine why the term “pre-Modernista” is misleading at best and consider the impact of technology (particularly print technology), economics, and circulation on the most canonical or influential poets or poems. Finally, we will pay careful attention to the movements and poetic voices whose work does not fall in either pre-Modernista or Modernista circles and tendencies as national borders and identities were established, disputed, and defended over the course of the 19th century.

Course Objectives
This class is an intensive survey of 19th and early 20th century Latin American poetry with attention to inspirations, influences, and aesthetic clashes in various movements from the beginning of the “siglo de independencia” to Modernismo. Poets to be studied include but are not limited to Paz, Darío, Huidobro, Vallejo, Neruda, Villaurrutia, Pizarnik, Orozco, Guillén, Morejón, and Storni. Course discussions will continually address intersecting constructions and presentations of gender, sexuality, race, class, and
They will also take into account the role of economics, systems of distribution, and print technology in shaping the canon that led up to Spanish American *Modernismo*.

**Attendance, Late Arrivals, and Participation:**
Attendance is extremely important in a class of this nature, as is participation. For the next sixteen weeks, we are forming a community of readers, writers, and thinkers, and as such it is important to be active and present. Part of your attendance grade involves a short virtual one-on-one meeting with me during the first three weeks of class (by Friday, September 15, 2023). 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, and your expectations, hopes, and/or concerns for the class in the platform that is most comfortable and accessible for you. When possible, these meetings will be in my office (Graham 303A). However, since the office is on the third floor of a building that does not have any elevators, it may not be accessible to all students. In that case, I am more than happy to meet in a different location or to hold the interview virtually (over Zoom, Teams, etc.).

**Course Policies and Descriptions of Assignments**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Active Participation in Class Discussions</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>Conference-Style Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
<td>30% (in stages)</td>
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**Expectations for Reading:**
For each text (that is, for each poem) on the course calendar for a particular day, you are expected to have a solid grasp of the following by the time you come to class: biographical information on the author, the text, its context, and a close reading of the poem itself (metrics, tropes, linguistic devices, etc.). In other words: what does the poem say and how? In what geographical, intellectual, historical, and political context? Given that understanding of the poem and its context, how do the poem and the author participate in larger-scale discussions on issues of identity, nation-building, aesthetics, etc.?

We will also be paying attention to the influence of access, economics, and distribution, such as:

- How does the poem reach its audience? How do we know?
- What access does the poet have (or not) to spheres of political, intellectual, and economic power or influence? (Once again, how do we know that?)
- What access would the audience need to have (knowledge of Greek or Roman mythology, Catholic saints or other iconography, French literature, colonial history, a language other than Spanish, names of current politicians or trends in popular culture, etc.) in reading or listening to the poem? (Keep in mind that not all audiences read/listened to the same depth or level of comprehension, nor were they expected to.)

In the case of secondary texts, you will be expected to read with and against the grain of a particular text and the analysis and information provided within. That is, the texts are intended to offer a particular analysis and/or to provide greater political, cultural, and aesthetic context, but they are not to be taken as the only perspective on the subject.

**The Role of Mini-Presentations:** During each class, I will ask a student to offer a mini-presentation on one of the poems on the calendar for that day. (That is, if there are six poems assigned, six students will present.) The expectation is that the presenter will be able to address many of the questions and considerations mentioned in the previous section and provide a springboard into a larger class discussion. This will be done at random for the sake of fairness. It is fine to work together to prepare poems beforehand, but please keep in mind that everyone is expected to have read all of the assigned poems carefully before each class.
A Note on Metrics: We will not be putting extensive emphasis on metrics, but it is still recommended to review the basis for those who are unfamiliar. Antonio Quilis’s classic *Métrica española* is a good start (see Bb), and more texts will be added to the Textos secundarios section on Blackboard over the course of the semester. I am most interested in understanding metrics as they contribute to the understanding of a particular text—for example, what knowledge of the *silva* as a structure contributes to our understanding and reading of Andrés Bello’s *Silva a la agricultura de la zona tórrida*.

Papers: You will write one conference-length paper as a midterm grade (6-8 pp./15-20 minutes max, to be read aloud in class; these will be spread out over the semester and be presented as part of the class) and one longer research paper as a final (15-20 pp.). The conference paper may lay the groundwork for the final paper, but that is not required or expected. The final paper will be broken up into parts: proposal (5%), annotated bibliography (5%), informal presentation (5%) and the paper itself (15%). This will be during the second half of the semester, with the final version of the paper due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, December 13, 2023. Further details will be posted and presentation dates assigned by the third week of classes.

Grading Scale:

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<td>A</td>
<td>100-90</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>89-80</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>79-70</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>69-60</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOOP). 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/) 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.

On Chat GPT: I really, really do not recommend using it for reasons that we will discuss in class. If you do choose to use it, however, you will need to cite it as you would any other source. You will also need to include a separate paragraph to explain to me how you used it and how it was useful (or not) as part of the assignment. *Please do not use it as a search engine or as a citation generator.* The AI will make up books, articles, and citations that do not exist. (Apologies if this seems self-evident, but I have heard and read reports of students doing this and becoming very frustrated.)
Calendario del curso
Este calendario podría cambiar según las necesidades del semestre. Anunciaré cualquier cambio en clase, por email y en Blackboard.

Semana 1, 30 agosto:
Introducción al curso.
Para leer juntos: Greatest Hits 1 (del Modernismo)
- Rubén Darío (El cisne, Salutación del optimista)
- José Martí (Dos patrias, Yo soy un hombre sincero)

Temas para explorar: estética, identidad individual, nacional y continental, formación de la noción de patria, relación con/separación del pasado colonial

Semana 2, 6 septiembre: Los Greatest Hits 2
- El cisne, La ruptura, Delmira Agustini – de Los cálices vacíos, 1913 (pp. 39-41, p. 17)
- Una noche, José Asunción Silva
- Autobiografía, Julián del Casal
- Don Juan, Esteban Echeverría – de El ángel caído, 3ª parte, pp. 141-54 (1870)
- Las campanas solariegas I y II, Julio Herrera y Reissig
- Prosa bohemia, Leopoldo Lugones
- Siskind Cap. 3, con atención particular a las pp. 103-132

Semana 3, 13 septiembre: Los Greatest Hits 3: Edición mexicana
- Salvador Díaz Mirón, “Idilio”
- Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, “Para entonces”
- Ramón López Velarde, “La suave patria”
- Laura Méndez de Cuenca, “Cineraria”
- José Juan Tablada, “Japón”
- Siskind Cap 3, con atención particular a las pp. 133-147

De la victoria… (Poesía de la independencia)

15 septiembre: …a la negociación del pasado colonial (Poesía romántica)

22 septiembre