

SPAN 4320, Popular Culture in Spain and Latin America: Monsters in Latin America

Spring 2023

Professor: Dr. Sara Potter

Classroom: Old Main 201

Class Schedule: TR 4:30pm-5:50pm

Office: Liberal Arts 231

Phone: 915.747.7039 (email is best)

Email: sapotter@utep.edu

Office Hours: TR 1:30-3:00pm or by appointment

Texts:

- Cabiya, Pedro. *Malas hierbas*. Zemí Book, 2011.
- All other texts will be available in .pdf form on Blackboard. These include:
 - Braham, Persephone. *From Amazons to Zombies: Monsters in Latin America*. Lanham, MD: Bucknell UP, 2015.
 - Lauro, Sarah Juliet. *The Transatlantic Zombie: Slavery, Rebellion, and Living Death*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2015.
 - Moraña, Mabel. *El monstruo como máquina de guerra*. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2017.
 - Weinstock, Jeffrey Andrew, ed. *The Monster Theory Reader*. U of Minnesota P, 2020

Course Description

In this class, we will discuss different ways that monsters and monstrous beings interact with, critique, and inform our understanding of Latin American literatures and cultures. While the primary focus of the course is Spanish-speaking Latin America, the course has a necessarily transatlantic nature to it as well, since it examines the exchanges and influences of ideas of monsters and monstrosity between Europe, Asia, and the Americas. The word *monster* has two meanings: the first comes from the Latin *mostrum*, as a portent—a creature that predicts something. The second meaning comes from *mostrum* also, since the root of *mostrum* is *monere*, which means to warn and also to instruct. The English word *demonstrate* and the Spanish *demostrar* both come from *monere*. In addition to the idea of the monster as something that portends or predicts something, it is a creature that grants and reveals meaning. Monsters are not, of course, unique to Latin America, nor are many of the monsters we will talk about. What *is* unique is the ways in which they are created, invented, and reinterpreted by explorers, *cronistas*, colonizers, scientists, artists, and politicians to shape what they called the New World. As a class, we will examine and interrogate how these monsters grant and reveal meaning in the creation of what is now Latin America.

Course Objectives:

Students will familiarize themselves with various currents and movements in Latin American history, politics, and popular culture through the representation and mediatization of various monsters in theoretical, literary, and popular (non-canonical, non-literary) texts. Our primary focus will be on the 20th-21st centuries, but we will also take time to look at earlier roots of Latin American monsters that date back to the colonial period. This study will be underpinned by a solid understanding of theory related to the monster in general and to specific monsters as well, keeping in mind the cultural, gendered, racial, and religious histories of these creatures in Latin America and beyond.

Attendance and Active Participation:

Regular and active participation are essential to your success in this course. By regular and active participation, I mean that you consistently do all the required readings following the syllabus, that you complete and submit all written assignments by the due date, and that you engage deeply and thoughtfully with the subject material. This means taking notes filled with comments and questions for both your

classmates and for me, considering how issues of social, political, and historical context impact the production and reception of the primary texts, and committing to having a curious mind throughout the course.

For the next sixteen weeks, we are forming a community of readers, writers, and thinkers. As such, your contributions are vitally important and greatly enrich the class for everyone. Normally, I require students to schedule a short and informal one-on-one meeting with me during the first 2-3 weeks of the semester. Unfortunately, I am having vocal issues due to a medical condition and am on partial vocal rest for at least the first two weeks of the semester, so I need to do things a bit differently this time. My main objectives here are (1) to provide space for you to tell me about yourself, your studies and interests, your expectations, hopes, and/or concerns for the class, and anything else that you would like for me to know, and (2) to make sure you know where my office is and that your first visit there is (hopefully) a stress-free one. By the end of the third week of the semester (that is, by **Friday, February 3, 2023**), I will ask you to do two things: first, respond to a questionnaire to help me learn more about you (see Google Forms link on Bb). Second, show that you know where my office is physically located (a selfie of yourself and the office sign/door is probably the easiest way to do this if I am not there when you stop by). This is part of your attendance grade and is required for all students, even if you have taken a class with me before.

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). **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. **200 pts.**
- **Midterm, Thursday March 7:** 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. **200 pts.**
- **Final Exam:** This will be a 6-8 page research essay OR a creative sequential narrative project + scholarly reflection/explanation of your work. At least one primary text must come from the syllabus, either for analysis (option A) or as an artistic inspiration (option B). 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, Tuesday, April 6:** 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 OR a one-page description of the creative project you intend to undertake and how (theme and medium--web comic, pen/paper drawing, collage, etc.). Both options require a minimum of three (3) academic resources (articles, academic book chapters, etc.) that will support your argument and/or inform your project. NB: The bibliography (MLA format/style) is required but does *not* form part of the word count. **100 pts.**
 - **Outline, Tuesday, April 20:** 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, Thursday, May 4.** Bring the COMPLETE final essay (two printed copies) to class for a writing workshop. **50 pts.**
- **Final Essay (+ versión del taller)** must be turned in either **in person** or **by email** to sapotter@utep.edu by 11:59pm on **Tuesday, May 9.** **150 pts.**

Grade Distribution

Mini-pruebas:	15%
Reflections:	15%
Midterm:	20%
Presentation:	20%
Final Project:	30%
Total:	100%

Important dates to keep in mind:

Spring 2023 – UTEP Calendar: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/registrar/Academic%20Calendars/academic-calendar.html>

- Friday, February 3: Last day for one-on-one interview
- March 13-17: Spring Break
- Thursday, March 30: Course Drop Deadline
- Tuesday, May 9: Final project due

On Technology in Class:

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.

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 (HOOP, Sect. 2, Ch. 1): <https://www.utep.edu/hoop/section-2/student-conduct-and-discipline.html>. 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. Per the HOOP: “Plagiarism is the act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and/or thoughts of another author; including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expressions or media; and presenting that material without authorization and/or the representation of that author’s work as one’s own academic work, being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program, course, or degree requirements” (1.2.3). 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. In addition to the HOOP, you may also consult the Assistant Dean of Students at the Student Union Building West, Room 102, or by calling 915-747-5648.

Calendar

NB: The course calendar is subject to change. Advance notice will be given in class, over email, and on Blackboard. Unless specifically indicated, all readings and assignments are to be prepared/completed by the beginning of the class day that they are listed on.

Semana 1

martes 17 enero: Monstruos 101

- introducción al curso, repartir/revisar el prontuario
- actividades de conocimiento

jueves 19 enero: Algunas bases histórico-teóricas

- Monster Culture (Seven Theses), Jeffrey J. Cohen, pp. 3-25
- **Reflexión 1: ¿Qué es un monstruo?**

Semana 2

Unidad I: Ansiedades de la independencia y de la modernidad* (1810-1898)

martes 24 enero

- “El matadero”, Esteban Echeverría (Argentina, escr. 1838-1840, pub. 1871)
- Braham Ch. 1. The Immanence of Monsters: From Iberia to the New World, pp. 25-51
- **Reflexión 2: ¿Qué ansiedades sociales se ven reflejados en “El matadero”?**

jueves 26 enero

- *La vorágine*, José Eustacio Rivera (Colombia, 1924), pp. 15-56 (del Prólogo hasta “Don Rafo apareció en el umbral”)
- “Monstruosidad y modernidad”, Mabel Moraña, pp. 115-118
- **Reflexión 3: ¿Qué relación hay entre lo monstruoso y lo moderno / la civilización y la barbarie? (Puede ser según Moraña, según Rivera o los dos—Uds. deciden)**

Semana 3

martes 31 enero

- *La vorágine*, Rivera, pp. 56-107 (de “Venía del ható” hasta “Y esa risa sin rostro y sin alma, sin labios que la corrigieran, sin ojos que la humanizaran, me pareció vengativa, torturadora, y aun al través de los días que corren, me repite su mueca desde ultratumba y me estremece del pavor”)
- **Reflexión 4: ¿Cómo es el lenguaje que se usa para establecer la monstruosidad en el texto de Rivera?**

jueves 2 febrero

- *La vorágine*, Rivera, pp. 107-159 (de “Más tarde, cuando la comitiva...” hasta “¡Usted es alguien! Ya seremos buenos amigos”)
- **Reflexión 5: ¿Cómo es el lenguaje que se usa para establecer los elementos (personajes, lugares, características) civilizados/modernos?**

Semana 4

martes 7 febrero

- *La vorágine*, Rivera, pp. 159-211 (de “Aquella noche incendiaban la sombra los relámpagos...” hasta “¡Quién nos hubiera dicho que nuestros destinos describían la misma trayectoria de crueldad!”)
- **Reflexión 6: ¿Qué importancia tiene la naturaleza en la novela hasta ahora? ¿Ha cambiado o evolucionado desde el principio?**

jueves 9 febrero

- *La vorágine*, Rivera, pp. 211-261 (de “Durante los días empleados en el recorrido de la trocha...” hasta “¡La noche, el motor, la tempestad!”)
- **Reflexión 7: ¿Cómo son las representaciones de género (las varias formas de ser masculino/femenino) y cómo contribuyen a la historia?**

Semana 5

martes 14 febrero

- *La vorágine*, Rivera, pp. 261-293 (de “Asomándome a la ventana del corredor, ...” hasta el final más el Epílogo (cuatro frases) en la pág. 293).
- Moraña, “Monstruosidad y nación”, pp. 118-128
- **Presentación #1: Diálogos entre Rivera y Moraña**

jueves 16 febrero

- Ver 1ª parte de *Doña Bárbara* (dir. Fernando de Fuentes, 1943) en clase (138 min.)
- Leer Braham Cap. 2, “Anthropology, Anthropophagy, and Amazons (pp. 53-87), particularmente las secciones “Ethnography and *Regionalismo*” y “*Doña Bárbara, La vorágine, and the Vagina Dentata*”

Semana 6

martes 21 febrero

- Terminar *Doña Bárbara* (dir. de Fuentes, 1943) y hablar de la película + Braham
- **Reflexión 8: ¿Qué impacto tiene Braham en tu forma de leer/entender *La vorágine* o *Doña Bárbara*?**
- **Presentación #2: Diálogos entre *Doña Bárbara* (película) y Braham**

jueves 23 febrero:

UNIDAD II, Otros devoradores: Los/las vampiros/as del Modernismo a finales del s. XX

- “Thanatopia”, Rubén Darío (Nicaragua, escr. 1893, pub. 1925 en *Impresiones y sensaciones*)
- “El vampiro”, Delmira Agustini (Uruguay, 1910, de *Cantos de la mañana*)
- “Spanish American *Modernismo*,” Cathy Jrade pp. 817-830
- **Presentación #3: Thanatopia, Darío**
- **Presentación #4: El vampiro, Agustini**
- **Reflexión 9: ¿Cuáles son las preocupaciones principales del Modernismo según Jrade y cómo se ven realizadas (si es que las ven Uds.) en uno de los dos textos?**

Semana 7

martes 28 marzo

- Braham, Cap. 5, “Vampires in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (esp. lo que tiene que ver con Quiroga y el cine)
- Clemente Palma, “Las vampiras” (Perú, escr. 1906, pub. 1913 en *Cuentos malévolos*, 2a ed.)
- Horacio Quiroga, “El vampiro” (Uruguay, 1927, de *Más allá*)
- **Presentación #5: “Las vampiras”, Palma**

- **Presentación #6: “El vampiro”, Quiroga**
- **Reflexión 10: La influencia del cine en “El vampiro” de Quiroga O La representación del deseo en “Las vampiras” de Palma**

jueves 2 marzo

- Margo Glantz, “Las metamorfosis del vampiro” (México, 1980, de *Intervención y pretexto*)
- *¡Vampiros en la Habana!* (Cuba, 1985, dir. Juan Padrón) (72 min, en clase)

Semana 8

martes 7 marzo

- *Cronos* (México, 1993, dir. Guillermo del Toro) (92 min, en casa*)
- **Presentación #7: *¡Vampiros en la Habana!***
- **Presentación 8: *Cronos***
- **Reflexión 11: ¿Qué preguntas deben estar (o crees que van a aparecer) en el examen parcial?**
- Repaso para el examen parcial

jueves 9 marzo: Examen parcial

Descanso de primavera: 13-17 marzo

Semana 9

UNIDAD III: Los muertos vivientes: Esclavitud, rebeldía y debates sobre lo (pos)humano

martes 21 marzo:

- Ver *Santo contra la magia negra* (México, dir. Alfredo B. Crevenna, 1973, 93 min., en clase)
- Lauro & Embry, “A Zombie Manifesto,” 24 pp.
- **Reflexión 12: ¿Qué es un zombie?**

jueves 23 marzo

- Terminar *Santo*, hablar de la película + Lauro & Embry
- **Reflexión 13: ¿Cuáles son algunas formas de entender el zombie según Lauro & Embry? ¿Qué tipo(s) de zombi/zombii/zombie han observado Uds.? (Da ejemplos concretos.) (O Reflexiones para el trabajo final)**
- **Presentación 9: Lauro & Embry**

Semana 10

martes 28 marzo: Propuesta + Bibliografía preliminar

- Leer Alejo Carpentier, Prólogo, *El reino de este mundo*, 3 pp.
- Ver *I Walked With a Zombie* (dir. Jacques Tourneur, 1943, 68 min., en clase)

jueves 30 marzo

- Leer Lauro, “Slavery and Slave Rebellion: The (Pre)History of the Zombi/e”, pp. 27-63
- Braham, “The Monstrous Caribbean,” pp. 1-4, 38-47
- **Reflexión 14: ¿Cuáles son las representaciones e implicaciones del zombie caribeño?**
- **Presentación 10: Lauro**
- **Presentación 11: Braham + Carpentier**

Semana 11

martes 4 abril

- Pedro Cabiya, *Malas hierbas*, (2010), pp. 17-67 (escanear la advertencia al lector y el índice)

- **Reflexión 15:** Tus preguntas y reflexiones sobre el libro, particularmente su estructura y/o ideas para el trabajo final
- **Presentación 12: Fondo histórico + esta sección del libro**

jueves 6 abril

- Leer Cabiya, pp. 69-107
- **Reflexión 16: Tema abierto**
- **Presentación 13**

Semana 12

martes 11 abril: Bosquejo

- Cabiya pp. 161-204
- **Presentación 14**

jueves 13 abril

- Cabiya pp. 205-248
- **Presentación 15**
- **Reflexión 16: Atando cabos novelísticos y teóricos**

Semana 13

martes 18 abril 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 17:** El género *zomcom*, lo (pos) apocalíptico, las revoluciones zombificadas

jueves 20 abril

- Terminar *Juan de los muertos*
- Moraña, “Zombis”, pp. 168-175
- **Investigar sobre la revolución cubana y los otros conflictos que menciona Juan en su monólogo
- **Reflexión 18:** preguntas/observaciones sobre Moraña + Brugués + Cedeño Rojas
- **Presentación 17: Juan de los muertos**

Semana 14

martes 25 abril: Otras historias contemporáneas

- “El hijo del coronel”, Roberto Bolaño
- “El hombre que fue Valdemar”, Norma Lazo
- **Presentación 18: Bolaño**
- **Presentación 19: Lazo**

jueves 27 abril

- “La ira dentada”, Javier González Cárdenas
- *Con Z de zombie*, Pedro Valencia, Acto I
- **Reflexión 19:** ¿Cómo se lee el zombie mexicano contemporáneo en estos textos? ¿Cómo se encaja (o no) con los textos secundarios que hemos visto a lo largo del semestre?
- **Presentación 20: González Cárdenas**

Semana 15

martes 2 mayo

- *Con Z de zombie*, Acto II
- **Reflexión 20: ¿Qué es un monstruo?**
- **Presentación 21: Valencia, Con Z de zombie**

jueves 4 mayo: Taller de escritura, ensayo final

Semana 16

martes 9 mayo: entregar el ensayo final + documentos relacionados antes de las 11:59pm