

## **Syllabus**

**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF MODERN AND CLASSICAL LANGUAGES  
SPAN 450 / WGSS 320**

# **Queer Voices of Latin America Literature and Culture**



**PROFESSOR:** Hugo García, PhD.



**OFFICE HOURS:**



**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is a panoramic view of Latin America's literatures and cultures from the perspective of the non-heteronormative subject. Under the label of *queer* the class assembles a heterogeneous group of voices, experiences, historical figures and fictional characters, as well as social performances whose common denominator is to challenge the patriarchal and heteronormative society. The class is a journey across the vast space of Latin America and its many nations, from colonial times to today and it includes even the territorial area of United States where we will find queer Latin American subjects fighting exclusion and isolation.

The class will include artistic manifestations and social content. When examining artistic product such as literary pieces, fiction films, and painting, we are going to devote attention to the esthetics and the cultural value of the pieces, but also to the conceptual aspect where the queer message can be embedded. When analyzing testimonial and/or biographical materials like documentaries or memoirs, the attention will be more on the sociopolitical environment of the queer voice.

### **MAIN PURPOSE:**

This class wants to enrich the Spanish curriculum with a topic that never before was included in the seminars and elective courses for Spanish majors and minors. This class strives to combine the academic instruction with the current struggle for inclusion and social justice.

**OBJECTIVES:**

In this class students will encounter wide variety of non-heteronormative manifestations and discourses that have existed in Latin America and in the United States but related to Latin American and/or Latin@ subjects. The class materials will be used for:

1. Acquire analytical skills that are essential to study literature and film;
2. Learn and apply concepts from history, philosophy, and cultural studies to decode the true meaning and implications of literary and cinematic works (for example, 'the body', 'power', 'abjection', 'the tricks of the weak', among others);
3. Recognize patterns of suppression, oppression, and exclusions in history;
4. Identify manners of control and self-control that have been put in place in different Latin American societies in order to govern;
5. Examine and explain the ideological anatomy of social injustice;
6. Evaluate different discourses of exclusion, and compare them in past and present.

**TEXTS:** This class uses a broad definition of the word "text". The materials for classes will include literary texts such as novels, short stories, poems, and memoirs, but also documentaries and fiction films, and even everyday life performance and linguistics acts. In other words, we will consider "text" all sources of information that will permit us to study and analyze the many different queer positions inside Latin American cultures and the specific place each queer character occupies in the particular relations of power.

**EVALUATIONS:**

Midterm: 25%

Final exam: 40%

Presentation: 20%

Class participation: 15%

**CLASS PRESENTATION:**

Class presentations will focus on a specific case that hasn't been included in the syllabus to be analyzed in classes. The presentation can focus on a literary work, a film, an author, a painter, etc. The requirements are

- 1.- that specific material for presentation is not part of the class discussions and
- 2.- the material is representative of a queer expression inside Latin America or in the Latin American diaspora in the US.

The student needs to give a thorough and clear analysis of the chosen topic. I highly encourage the use of visual materials in the presentation, be it through photography, fragments of movie, or any other type of resource that helps to visualize the topic and its relevance.

**EXAMS:**

There will be a midterm exam and a final exam whose goals will be to determine the depth in which the student has understood the material presented in class and is able to use the theoretical tools learned in class.

**PARTICIPATION:**

Being in class and participating in class are two different things. Each week the student will be given a participation grade that will reflect his/her involvement in class activities, discussions etc. An “A” grade in participation means you are prepared and volunteer for class participation every day, contributing to a productive classroom environment. A “B” means you are always prepared and you volunteer almost every day. A “C” means you are prepared and you only participate when you are asked a question. A “D” means it is hardly noticeable that you are in class. Coming late to class on a regular basis (once a week every week or more often), checking your cell-phone or text-messaging while in class, sleeping in class, reading the paper or doing homework while in class will earn you an F grade in participation.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING PARTICIPATION**

It is essential to participate in class discussion and analysis. And I encourage each one of you to express your own opinion and/or point of view. Each intervention in class discussion is valuable and must be respected. Our class discussions will be always based on two main principles: the desire for learning and the unconditional respect to our peers, authors, subjects, and even to fictional characters.

**GRADE SCALE:**

A	95 – 100	C	74 – 76
A-	90 – 94	C-	70 – 73
B+	87 – 89	D+	67 – 69
B	84 – 86	D	64 – 66
B-	80 – 83	D-	60 – 63
C+	77 – 79	F	0 – 59

**STUDENTS LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students will be able to:

- ◇ Converse with native and/or native-like Spanish speakers and to discuss both academic—linguistic, literary, cultural—and every-day topics in a variety of settings using phonetically accurate, syntactically-complex, and lexically appropriate language.
- ◇ Write convincingly and critically on every-day, academic, and semi-professional topics in Spanish, using a variety of formats, complex syntax, and appropriate lexical choices.
- ◇ Understand the natural speech patterns of speakers of the language in a variety of formats and on various nontechnical topics.
- ◇ Read, analyze, and interpret—both from a linguistic and a literary/cultural perspective—written texts in a variety of styles from the past and the present.
- ◇ Have a general grasp of the geographical, historical, social, and political dimensions of Spanish-speaking cultures.
- ◇ Use appropriate resources to conduct research on literary, linguistic, and cultural topics.
- ◇ Compare/contrast the literary and cultural perspectives of the Spanish-speaking world with their own.
- ◇ Compare/contrast the cultural identities of the Spanish-speaking world with their own.

## IMPORTANT LINKS:

Modern and Classical Languages Assessment Site  
[http://pandora.cii.wvu.edu/SLO/Content/122Master%20Assessment%20Plan\\_MCL.pdf](http://pandora.cii.wvu.edu/SLO/Content/122Master%20Assessment%20Plan_MCL.pdf)

Academic honesty site of WWU:  
<http://catalog.wvu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=463>

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Week 1

September Thursday 28	<b>Introduction to the class</b> Terminology for queer studies. The historical perspective; queer voices Latin America. Queer studies and queer theory in Academia.
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### Week 2

October Tuesday 3	<b>Topic: Queer Voices in Colonial Latin America.</b> Catalina de Erauso. <i>Historia de la Monja Alférez, Catalina de Erauso, escrita por ella misma</i> . (Biography of the Lieutenant Nun Catalina de Erauso, Written by Herself). First Part.
Thursday 5	Catalina de Erauso. <i>Historia de la Monja Alférez, Catalina de Erauso, escrita por ella misma</i> . (Biography of the Lieutenant Nun Catalina de Erauso, Written by Herself). Second Part.

### Week 3

Tuesday 10	(L) Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Selection of Poems and Letters. Fragments of the film <i>I, The Worst of All</i> . (1990). Director María Luisa Bembert.
Thursday 12	Documental <i>Rebel</i> . The life of Loreta Janeta Velázquez. A Cuban woman as a soldier in the American Civil War.

### Week 4

Tuesday 17	<b>The first literary gay protagonist in Spanish language.</b>  Novel <i>El ángel de Sodoma</i> , de Alfonso Hernández Catá.
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Thursday 19	<p><b>Topic: Queer performance. Between breaking and Reproducing Traditional Society. (First half of the class)</b></p> <p>Chronicle. The infamous case of the all men ballroom dance in Mexico City, November 20, 1901. Poetry and engravings by José Guadalupe Posada.</p> <p><b>Topic: Tough men; queer performance. (Second half of the class)</b></p> <p>Novel <i>Hombres sin mujer</i>, (<i>Men Without Women</i>) by Carlos Montenegro. (first part)</p>
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### Week 5

Tuesday 24	Novel <i>Hombres sin mujer</i> , ( <i>Men Without Women</i> ) by Carlos Montenegro. (second part)
Thursday 26	<p><b>Topic: Queer men and Macho Revolutions</b></p> <p>Short story “Espuma y nada más”, (“Foam and Nothing Else”) by Hernando Téllez.  Short story “El cojo” (“The Cripple”), by Jesús Díaz.  Short Story “El lobo, el bosque y el hombre nuevo” (“The wolf, The Forest, and The New Man”), by Senel Paz.</p>

### Week 6

Tuesday 31	Documental <i>Conducta impropia (Improporper Conduct)</i> (1984) Directors Néstor Almendros and Orlando Jiménez Leal.
November Thursday 2	<b>Midterm Exam</b>

### Week 7

Tuesday 7	<p><b>Topic: Can gangs and narco traffic be queer?</b></p> <p>Film <i>La virgen de los sicarios</i>. (<i>Our Lady of Assassins</i>) (2000)  Written by Fernando Vallejo  Directed by Barbet Schroeder</p>
Thursday 9	<p>Analysis and discussion of the film in class.</p> <p><b>Submit. First Draft Final Research Project. .</b></p>

### Week 8

Tuesday 14	<p><b>Topic: Sappho in other islands.</b></p> <p>Short stories book <i>Con la boca abierta (With an Open Mouth)</i>, by Odette Alonso.</p>
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Thursday 16	<b>Topic: The Search for Identity. The Queer Voice in Times of Post-History.</b>  Novel <i>La patografía</i> , by Ángel Lozada. (First part)
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### Week 9

Tuesday 21	Novela <i>La patografía</i> , de Ángel Lozada. (Second part)
Thursday 23	Thanksgiving.

### Week 10

Tuesday 28	Novel <i>La patografía</i> , de Ángel Lozada. (Third part)
Thursday 30	Documental <i>Muxes. Authentic, Intrepid Seekers of Danger</i> . Director Alejandra Islas.

### Semana 11

Diciembre Martes 5	Final Project
Jueves 7	Final Project

The Final Project will be submitted on December 15.

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### General Bibliography for Queer Studies

- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York & London: Routledge, 2010.
- Foucault, Michel. *Historia de la sexualidad*. Ciudad de México: Editorial Siglo XXI, 2001. 3 vols.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Basic Books, 2000.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex. Body and Gender from The Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Patton, Cindy and Benigno Sánchez-Eppler, Eds. *Queer Diasporas*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2000.
- "Part Seven. Gender Studies, Gay/Lesbian Studies, Queer Theory." Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Malden, MA, & Oxford: Blackwell. 2000. Pp. 675-776.
- Wilchins, Riki Anne. *Read my Lips. Sexual Subversion and the End of Gender*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrands Books, 1997.

### Queer Film Studies

- Subero, Gustavo. *Queer masculinities in Latin American cinema: male bodies and narrative representations*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2014.
- Foster, David William. *Queer issues in contemporary Latin American cinema*. Austin: University of Austin Press, 2003
- Venkatesh, Vinodh. *New Maricón cinema. Outing Latin American film*. Austin: University of Texas, Press. 2016

### Social and Cultural Studies

- Bergmann, Emilie L. and Paul Julian Smith. *Entiendes?: queer readings, Hispanic writings*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
- Bleys, Rudi. *Images of ambiente: homotextuality and Latin American art, 1810-today*. London-NY: Continuum, 2000.
- Corrales, Javier and Mario Pecheny. *The politics of sexuality in Latin America: a reader on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010.
- Dorenkamp, Monica and Richard Henke. *Negotiating lesbian & gay subjects*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Lizárraga, Xabier. *Una historia sociocultural de la homosexualidad*.
- Lumsden, Ian. *Machos, maricones, and gays: Cuba and homosexuality*. Temple University, 1996.
- Manrique, Jaime. *Maricones eminentes. Arenas, Lorca, Puig y yo*. (Ed. Síntesis, 2000)
- Molloy, Sylvia y Robert McKee Irwin. *Hispanisms and homosexualities*. Durham, Duke University Press, 1988.
- O'Donnell, Katherine and Michael O'Rourke. *Queer masculinities, 1550-1800: siting same-sex desire in the early modern world*. Basingstoke [England] and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Quiroga, José. *Tropics of desire: interventions from queer Latino America*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Sifuentes-Jáuregui, Ben. *Transvestism, masculinity and Latin American literature: Genders share flesh*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Vicente García, Luis Miguel. Cuadernos del Minotauro, 2005, Issue 1, pp. 149-152.

### Queer Studies Programs.

Queer Studies Western Washington University.  
[http://catalog.wvu.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=12&poid=5535&returnto=2525](http://catalog.wvu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=12&poid=5535&returnto=2525)

Queer Studies Yale University

<http://lgbts.yale.edu/>

Queer Studies University of Oregon <https://admissions.uoregon.edu/majors/queer-studies>

Queer Studies University of Wyoming  
<https://www.uwyo.edu/gwst/queer-studies/>