



Course FA-38

LITERARY AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS IN SPANISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES

(45 class hours)

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Language, literature, as well as culture in general, constitute the key aspects of the identity of peoples; it is for this reason that, in order to learn a foreign language, having knowledge of the culture associated with it also gains relevance: knowing who, what, when and why (in terms of political, religious, education-related, historical, geographical, etc. issues), knowing about (events, developments, and social concerns), as well as knowing how (that same society acts, speaks, and manifests itself).

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Course is to bring students into contact with the existing range of Spanish-speaking communities by providing them with real, thorough knowledge regarding their literary and cultural traditions, while also furnishing information on:

Their values and beliefs. How they are manifested.

What makes up life on a day-to-day basis, as well as their customs.

Their popular traditions.

What is sought as a result is that students develop:

A tolerant and open-minded attitude toward other cultures.

A thinking-person's attitude toward social and cultural similarities and differences.

The ability to become involved in an intercultural milieu.

Empathy toward people from a wide range of different cultures.

Real skills in dealing with how culture and society are seen to interact.

METHODOLOGY

This Course has been conceived of with highly practical intentions in mind, while deliberately tendering to students communicative and cultural interaction within real contexts.

Students will feel part of their own learning process by becoming involved in, and participating actively in, the undertaking of assignments such as visits to embassies, consulates, cultural centers and fairs, culinary demonstrations, as well as interacting with documentary screenings, photographic materials, movies, commercials, television or radio programs, or performed readings, etc., which will constitute a key stimulus to the keener understanding of specific aspects of the literary and cultural mosaic that is indeed the Hispanic world.

Key representative aspects (locations, society, music, dance, cinema, cuisine, together with other modes of cultural expression) of a number of countries (Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Peru and Argentina) will be dealt with, within the framework of an open, flexible schedule, due to which the choice of venues, as well as the order of presentation of syllabus items may tend to vary



depending on how class sessions tend to develop, or in terms of how interests and circumstances pan out.

SYLLABUS

1.- Culture and Hispanic Traditions: General Notions

2.- North America

2.1. Mexico

2.1.1. Locations: Cascadas de Hierve el Agua (Boiling Water Falls, Mitla Valley, Oaxaca),

Las Barrancas del Cobre (Copper Canyon, Chihuahua), El Nevado de Toluca (the Toluca snow-topped stratovolcano, State of Mexico), Las Pozas de Xilitla (The Xilitla Pools, San Luis Potosí), Las Cascadas Agua Azul (Blue Water Falls, Palenque, Chiapas), Cenotes (Cenotes Sinkhole Pool, Yucatán), Las pirámides de Chichén Itzá (The Kukulcan Pyramid Temple, Yucatán), Natural Springs and Plaster-like Dunes at Cuatrociénegas, Coahuila, the Underwater Art Museum, Cancún, Quintana Roo.

2.1.2. Society: religious, education-based, historical and political concerns.

2.1.3. Music and Dance: Mariachis, ranchera folk ballads, corrido-style historical

transmission, well-know singers, etc.

2.1.4. Cinema: Guillermo del Toro, Alejandro González Iñárritu. Festivals.

2.1.5. Further Forms of Cultural Expression: Unique forms of oral and written communication.

2.1.6. Gastronomy: enchiladas (savory wraps with chili sauce), tacos (maize wraps with fillings), fajitas (grilled meat on tortilla base), empanadas (stuffed pasties), quesadillas (grilled cheese wraps), chile (chili peppers), etc.

3.- Central America

3.1. Costa Rica

3.1.1. Locations: National Parks, Puerto Viejo (Old Port), the Nesting Turtles in Tortuguero, La costanera Sur (Southern Coastal Highway), Talamanca and the Bribri Indigenous Reserve, Chirripó Hill National Park, the Poás Crater Volcano, Monteverde, Cocos Island National Park.

3.1.2. Society: los Ticos (out-and-out Costa Ricans), la “Pura vida” (“On top of the world!”), the country without an army, the Tarrazú Valley coffee plantations, three cultures harmonizing when it comes to what a Costa Rican lifestyle is all about: Central Valley lifestyle, Guanacaste pampa lifestyle, and Afro-Caribbean lifestyle.

3.1.3. Music and Dance: El Punto Guanacasteco (the traditional folkloric national dance), El tambito (the Tambito in 3/4 rhythmic style), the dance called Los amores de Laco (“The Loves of a Costa Rican ‘Don Juan’-Type”), the Masquerade tradition ; Los “topes” Horseback Parade, popular bullfights ‘Costa Rican style’ (“a la tica”), the horse-hoof “parrandera” rhythm, the concussion idiophone musical instrument called ‘la marimba’.



3.1.4. Cinema: Hilda Hidalgo, Miguel Alejandro Gómez, El cuarto de los huesos (the documentary The Bones Room), El Baile Y El Salón (The Dance Number and the Ballroom), Donde duerme el horror (The Accursed).

3.1.5. Further Forms of Cultural Expression: Unique forms of oral and written communication.

3.1.6. Gastronomy: the 'gallo pinto' rice and beans dish, Costa Rican style, the banana and rice 'casado' dish, the meat-and-veg 'olla de carne' stew, tamales (plantain-leaf pork wrap), pejibaye (peach palm nuts), the 'chan' sage-seed health drink.

3.2. Guatemala

3.2.1 Locations: Atitlán Lake, Tikal National Park, Guatemala City, Mixco (Pork Crackling and Chocolate Capital), the Historical Town of Villa Nueva, Petapa (its Hills and Mountain Ranges), Tikal (Maya Center), the Archaeological Sites of Nakum and El Zotz.

3.2.2. Society: The Four Cultures (Maya Culture, Ladino Mixed-Blood Culture, the Xincan Culture, and the Afro-Garífuno Culture), Guatemala, the self-named "land of forests" ("la tierra de los bosques"), Rigoberta Menchú, Defender of Indigenous Rights, September 15 (Independence from Spain), November 1st, All Souls Day and the Giant Kite Festival in Santiago Sacatepéquez, "Rabin Ajau" (The Monarch's Daughter Investiture) in Cobán.

3.2.3. Music and Dance: traditional Maya music, the concussion idiophone musical instrument called 'la marimba', the Rabinal Achí theatrical dance, the Micos Creation Dance, the Death-to-the-foreman Little Bull Dance (Danza del Torito), the Kidnapped-Daughter Mah Nim Guacamayo Dance (Baile Mah Nim), the Dance of the Conquest (Baile de la Conquista), the Yurumen Dance, or the Coming of the Garífuno Ethnicity (Danza Yurumen), the Xojol Canti Snake Dance, the Devils' Cosmovision Dance (Danza de los Diablos).

3.2.4. Cinema: Ícaro International Film Festival, Marcos Machado and UFOs in Zacapa (Ovnis en Zacapa), Short Cortázar's Nightmare (La pesadilla de Cortázar), Ixcanul (Beneath the Ixcanul Volcano), Co-production Hunting Party

3.2.5. Further Forms of Cultural Expression: Unique forms of oral and written communication.

3.2.6. Gastronomy: El Jocón chicken-in-sauce dish, grilled-meat hurrasquito, red plantain-leaf henmeat/porkmeat wrap (Tamal colorado), Guatemalan-type canapes (Tacos guatemaltecos), stuffed chili peppers, pasty delicacies (empanadas de manjar), Guatemalan milk-aiz drink (Atol de elote), stuffed maize wraps (Chuchitos), Guatemalan-style mixed-meat stew (El Pepián), maize-based toasties Guatemalan style (Tostadas guatemaltecas), turkey soup Guatemalan style (El Kaq 'ik), fried banana in chocolate (Los Plátanos en mole)

4.- The Caribbean

4.1. Cuba



4.1.1. Locations: Havana, the historical city of Camagüey, Pinar del Río, the Cigar Capital, the natural environment, etc.

4.1.2. Society: the figure of José Martí, tobacco, coffee, sugar cane, automobiles, the new economic receptivity, baseball, la Bodeguita del Medio (the Half-Way House Bar in Old Town Havana), the ethnic mix, religious syncretism, the Granma newspaper, Cuban Television, etc.

4.1.3. Music and Dance: Copacabana Seafront Hotel Complex, Ballet in Cuba, 'the Son' Songand-Dance style, salsa dance style, traditional poetry-song trova/ balladeer style, street music, etc.

4.1.4. CINEMA: pre-revolution Cinema, post-revolution Cinema, post-Cold War Film, directors, and actors, festivals.

4.1.5. Further Forms of Cultural Expression: Unique forms of oral and written communication.

4.1.6. Gastronomy: privately-owned restaurants (los paladares), Spanish cuisine, Afro-Caribbean cuisine (shredded meat dish Cuban style [ropa vieja], chicken-and-rice Cuban style, frijole beans, typical "Cuban sandwich", rice and black beans congrí, mincemeat hash [picadillo], etc.).

4.2. Puerto Rico

4.2.1. Locations: the Arecibo Radio-Telescope, Black Toro State Forest, the Bioluminescent Lagoons, the cities of Caguas, Jayuya, Ponce, and San Juan, Tamarindo Beach,.

4.2.2. SOCIETY: mix of Taíno, Spanish and African cultures, Christmas Season carousing (parrandas), the San Sebastian Street festivities, the jíbaro countryfolk, the Night of San Juan, under Spain until 1898 / under USA since 1898.

4.2.3. Music and Dance: the Puerto Rican lute (el cuatro), Puerto Rican salsa-step, barrel-drum rhythm (la bomba), reguetón/reggaetón hip-movig dance, Marc Anthony, Jennifer López, the coquí-frog symbol of Puerto Rico, the mountain folk's jíbara music.

4.2.4. Cine: Benicio del Toro, Andrea and Lorenzo, short The Other (El otro), The Condemned (Los condenados).

4.2.5. FURTHER Forms of Cultural Expression: Unique forms of oral and written communication.

4.2.6. Gastronomy: Fried bananas and meat (Mofongo), pork roast, small-size cod fritters (bacalaitos fritos), chicken stew, fritters, rissoles (alcapurrias), rice with pigeon peas, coconut blancmange (tembleque).

5.- América del Sur

5.1. Perú

5.1.1. Locations: the Machu Picchu Citadel, Coricancha (the Inca Temple of the Sun), Cuzco (the Inca Capital), the Nazca Lines, the Northern Fortress of Kuelap, the capital Lima, Trujillo and its historical center, Arequipa (the White City), the Amazon River, the jungle, Lake Titicaca in the Andes, etc.



5.1.2. Society: A multi-ethnic community, the Inca Empire, social classes, the tribes of the jungle, the Pachamama (Mother Earth), Sun worship, the oldest newspaper of the nineteenth century, "El Comercio", still in circulation, long-running soap operas (las telenovelas), etc.

5.1.3. Music and Dance: La cumbia light salsa-rock rhythm, alternating 6/8 3/4 guaracha rhythm, the Andine Huayno dance, Andean music, Creole folk singing, rap and Peruvian rock, etc.

5.1.4. Cinema: Lima Film Festival- Latin American Cinema Gathering, Rosa Chumbe, Así nomás (Just So), El último guerrero chanka (The Last Chanka Warrior), well-known actors and actresses (Ismael La Rosa, Diego Bertie, Miguel Alejandro Roca, Martha Figueroa Benza, Hertha Cárdenas).

5.1.5. Further Forms of Cultural Expression: Unique forms of oral and written communication.

5.1.6 Gastronomy: Ground maize wrap (humitas), schnapps and lemon cocktail (pisco sour), marinated fish (ceviche de pescado), meat-on-a-skewer (anticucho), Creole pasty (tamal criollo), quinoa protein grain, yellow potatoes in creamy suace Huancaíno style, Peruvian-style chicken fricassee (aji de gallina), peanut-flavored meat-and-potato stew (carapulcra), etc.

5.2. Argentina

5.2.1. Locations: Patagonia, Iguazú Falls, the Río de la Plata estuary, Buenos Aires, the coastal city of Mar del Plata, the city of Salta, National Parks, etc.

5.2.2. Society: the two-part movie El Ché (Ché, the Argentine, and Ché, the Guerilla), the narrative poem with the figure of the gaucho, Martín Fierro, the yerba mate tea tradition (el mate), the gaucho cowboy as national symbol, football (Boca Juniors vs River Plate), las madres de la Plaza de Mayo (the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo), the national flag, Italian Argentines vs. Galicians, etc.

5.2.3. Music and Dance: El Tango as musical genre and dance form, the milonga popular ballad style, well-known singers (Andrés Calamaro, Carlos Gardel, Gustavo Cerati, Axel, Fito Páez, Diego Torres, Mercedes Sosa, Los Fabulosos Cadillacs, Charly García), collective dance styles, individual dance styles, dances for couples, picaresque/humorous dances, the wooer's dance (la cueca), the kerchief-in-hand couple's dance (la zamba), the humorous could-be-interrupted, innuendo-based dance style (el gato), the so-called rural version of the tango (la chacarera), the ceremonious gavotte-style dance (la condición), and the minuet-picaresque mixed style of dance (el cuando)

5.2.4. Cinema: Elsa and Fred, 7th Floor (Séptimo), Babel, Son of the Bride (El hijo de la novia), The Secret of Their Eyes (El secreto de sus ojos), directors (Lucrecia Martel, Carlos Sorín, Daniel Burman), actors and actresses (Ricardo Darín, Cecilia Roth, Leonardo Sbaraglia, Joaquín Furriel), The Mar de Plata International Festival of Independent Film, The Roberto Di Chiara International Short Film Contest

5.2.5. Further Forms of Cultural Expression: Unique forms of oral and written communication.



5.2.6. Gastronomy: shortcakes (las “masitas”), dough types (las “facturas”), pasties (las empanadas), Argentinian roast (el asado argentino), well-cooked meat stew (carbonada), layered pastries (alfajores), lardy cakes (medialunas), bun filled with beef-pork suasage (choripán), green delish (chimichurri), semi-crusty dough base (fainá), meat, potato and maize stew (locro), etc.

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The Bibliography included below is of a general nature only. More specific bibliography will be provided with regard to each syllabus item as the Course evolves.

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CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Each final grade will be based on the following distribution of percentages:

- 25%: Mid-Semester Examination.
- 25%: End-of-Semester Examination.
- 25%: Weekly assignments and exercises undertaken.
- 25%: The degree of active participation during class sessions, as well as during extramural activities.