LIT 367E Nobel Prizes in Spanish and Latin American Literature: A Critical Approach

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 5:00-5:30, or by appointment

Course Description
Annually since its foundation, the Nobel Prize in literature has awarded the contributions of men and women from many different languages and cultures. However, its history is one of controversy: major authors have been ignored by the Swedish Academy. The study will be carried out from a critical and comparative perspective within a historical and literary context. The Generation of 1927, Post-Spanish Civil War narrative or Magical Realism among other great literary tendencies will be included.

Course Goals and Methodology
The aim of this course is to analyze the life and the works of the Spanish and Latin American Literature Nobel Prize Winners and the Academy’s reasons for its choices.

The methodology of the course will be based on lectures that will have both a theoretical component and a practical component. On the one hand, the instructor will give a set of lectures. On the other hand, students are expected to participate in in-class debates and activities about a number of readings.

Learning Objectives
Through this course, students will:

- Be able to develop and carry out research projects, to articulate them within appropriate conceptual and methodological frameworks, and to locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information.
- Acquire familiarity with a wide range of literary terms and categories relating to literary history, theory, and criticism, including figurative language and prosody.
- Demonstrate an ability to grasp and synthesize ideas in literary form and use literary terms in historical contexts.
- Appreciate cultural differences as they are mirrored in social, artistic and literary artifacts originating in different national and geographical traditions.
- Be able to recognize and appreciate the importance of major literary genres, subgenres, and periods in different traditions.
- Acquire familiarity with the nature of the canon and of canon-formation, including issues of culture, history, race, ethnicity, and gender.

Required Texts
All materials will be provided by the professor during the course (selections of texts, theory, videos, power points, websites etc.). However, students are responsible for
getting their own copy of the following books (we recommend that you get the following editions before the start of the course):


We will be looking at these texts at the start of the course, so please make sure you have the copies by then.

**Recommended webs:**

- Links and recommended sources on the official website: www.nobelprize.org

**Additional readings:**

- De la Cruz, Sor Juana. *Answer by the poet to the most illustrious Sister Filotea de la Cruz* (1691). Translated by William Little (2008).
- Domke, Joan. *Education, Fascism and the Catholic Church in Francos’s Spain*. Loyola University, Chicago: 2011.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

**Participation:** Oral participation will be very important for success in this course. The goal is that every student actively participates in every class meeting. Students’ attendance will be checked daily. For this reason, it is very important to read the texts before classes begin (if you don’t, you may feel lost and/or may be doing your
classmates a disservice by not being sufficiently familiar with a text so as to effectively contribute to discussions).

After each unit, students will take a quiz (a multiple-choice test) about the corresponding texts, in which they must demonstrate their acquired understanding of the subject matter (approx. every two or three classes).

Likewise, on-time submission of all written assignments and active involvement in class discussions will be graded as part of the participation grade.

**Participation Grading Rubric:**

(10-9) Demonstrates excellent preparation. Contributes to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students’ points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way. Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement. Turn in homework on time.

(9-8) Knows readings well, have thought through implications of them. Offers interpretations and analysis of material (more than just facts) to class. Demonstrates good involvement in class discussions. Turn in homework on time.

(8-7) Prepared questions. Knows content of readings, but does not show much evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them deeply.

(7-6) Offers straightforward information without elaboration, or does so very infrequently (perhaps once a class). Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on. Demonstrates sporadic involvement. Turn in homework on time.

(6-5) Read at least one of the readings per week. Responds when called on but does not offer much. Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion. Incomplete homework.

**Oral Presentation:** A 15-20 min. group oral presentation (2 students). Must be based on any aspect of one of the works studied in the class. Choose a topic which reflects your personal interests. Topics may include the cultural setting of the work and related issues, a thematic focus, characterization techniques and style, interpretation of particular themes or elements, an introduction to a writer, a commentary on the use of a particular image, idea, or symbol, or a comparison of two passages or two works. The presentation will be graded based on your understanding of the work and organization of your ideas.

**Exams:** The midterm exam and final exam will consist of multiple choice, questions about material presented in the lectures which is summarized in the power points and questions to be developed by students based on readings from the lessons.

**Final Essay:** At the end of the semester, students must turn in an essay about the following topic: “Nobel Academy Member for a Day”. Essays must be turned in typewritten, double-space, Times New Roman, font size 12, with a length of 7–8 pages.
(including bibliography). The professor will explain the rules and policies of the essay at the beginning of the course. Spelling errors in submitted essays will not be permitted. Regarding the students’ bibliography, all sources should be specified with total clarity. The use of Wikipedia as a source will not be permitted. If there is any doubt about how to attribute or cite sources, please consult with the professor. We will follow the MLA Style.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Participation (20%)
- Final Essay (25%)
- Oral Presentation (10%)
- Mid-term Exam (20%)
- Final Exam (25%)

Grading Rubric:

(10 - 9) Demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the most important information and there are no errors. Many details are provided. Organization is coherent.

(9 - 8) Display a good knowledge of the most important information and there may be a few minor errors*. Many details are provided. Organization is coherent.

*Minor errors: your grade will be lowered 0.5 points (aprox.). For example: “Alfred Nobel was fascinated by literature, especially by English poems. His favorite writers were* Mary Shelley and Lord Byron (romantic poets)”. (*It’s Percy, not Mary.)

(8 - 7) Good knowledge of the most important information but there are several minor errors and/or one major error*. Some details are provided. Organization is coherent.

*Major error: your grade will be lowered 2.5 points (aprox.). For example: “Alfred Nobel trusted collectivity and government to change the world “* (*He trusted individuals.)

(7 - 6) Display an acceptable knowledge of the most important information and there are several minor errors and/or two major errors. Some details are provided. Sometimes organization is confused.

(6 - 5) Offers some familiarization with the most important information but there are many minor errors and/or two major errors. Organization is confused.

General Course Policies

Leaving the classroom: Leaving the classroom on repeated occasions is disturbing to both your professor and your classmates and may adversely affect your participation
grade. Please make use of the 10 minute breaks in between classes to fill up your water bottle, use the restroom, etc.

**Punctuality and tardiness:** Arriving late to class is disruptive to both the professor and your classmates. Please be punctual as your professor may count your late arrival as half of an absence or simply close the door, not let any late students in and consider it as one full absence.

**Communicating with instructor:** Please allow at least 48 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails. The weekend is not included in this timeframe. If you have an urgent request or question for your professor, be sure to send it during the week.

**Electronic devices:** Please keep your cell phones turned off during class. Use your computer for academic purposes only. Otherwise, your participation grade will be lowered.

**Late submissions** of homework, activities, or essays will not be allowed. If for some reason, a student cannot turn in the written homework by the due date, s/he should turn it in before, but never after. Submitting homework by email is not allowed except for obvious and justifiable reasons, i.e. medical problems). Students who do not turn in their homework on time will not receive a “10” (A+) in the participation grade.

**Attendance and Absentee Policy**
Attendance is mandatory at all classes. As we understand that you might fall ill or be unable to come to class (e.g. due to a religious holiday, a flight delay, a family wedding/reunion, a graduation, a job interview, etc.) at some point during the semester, you are allowed up to 4 absences. You will be responsible for the material covered and any work missed. You will not need to justify your absences (up to 4) in any way unless you miss an exam, a presentation, a quiz, etc. In this case, you must present a doctor's note (signed, stamped and dated) to be able to reschedule the exam, etc. It will still count as an absence but you will be allowed to retake the exam, etc. We don't encourage you to use all 4 days unless you really need them as your participation grade may suffer if you are not in class. If used unwisely and you get sick late in the semester, the following penalties will apply:

- On your 5th absence, 1 point will be taken off of your final Spanish grade
- On your 6th absence, 3 points will be taken off of your final Spanish grade
- On your 7th absence, 5 points will be taken off of your final Spanish grade

For classes that meet once a week, each absence counts as two. For classes that meet daily, the penalties outlined above apply if you go over 6 absences (7th absence=5th absence above). Exams missed due to an excused absence must be made up within a week of returning to classes. Talk to your professor immediately after your return.

**Academic Honesty**
Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Pablo de Olavide
University. Cheating on exams and plagiarism (which includes copying from the Internet) are clear violations of academic honesty. A student is guilty of plagiarism when he or she presents another person’s intellectual property as his or her own. The penalty for plagiarism and cheating is a failing grade for the assignment/exam and a failing grade for the course. Avoid plagiarism by citing sources properly, using footnotes and a bibliography, and not cutting and pasting information from various websites when writing assignments.

**Learning accommodations**
If you require special accommodations, you must stop by the International Center to speak to Rubén (the Faculty coordinator: rdialop@acu.upo.es) to either turn in your documentation or to confirm that our office has received it. The deadline is **September 26th**. Rubén will explain the options available to you.

**Behavior Policy**
Students are expected to show integrity and act in a professional and respectful manner at all times. A student’s attitude in class may influence his/her participation grade. The professor has a right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is unruly or appears intoxicated. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, that day will count as an absence regardless of how long the student has been in class. Cell phone use is not allowed and animals (except seeing-eye dogs) are not permitted in the classrooms.

**Course contents**

1. The Nobel Prize: The Institution.
3. Followers and detractors. Life and works.
5. Nobel Prizes in Latin American Literature.
6. Followers and detractors. Life and works.
7. The Latin American poetry, essay and the social context.
8. The Latin American novel and the social criticism.

**Class Schedule**
The following schedule is an ideal proposal. The professor will always take into account students’ learning speed and their opinions. Therefore, the schedule will be susceptible of change in benefit of students, except for the exam dates.

- Wednesday, September 11. Introduction to the Nobel Prize.
- Monday, September 16. Alfred Nobel. His last will.
• Monday, September 23. The Spanish Theatre in the beginning of the 19th century. *The Bond of Interests*


• Monday, September 30. *Platero and I*.

• Wednesday, October 2. Vicente Aleixandre and the Generación del '27.

• Monday, October 7. The Spanish Surrealism. Readings: *Destruction or Love*, among others (selected poems).

• Wednesday, October 9. Camilo José Cela: Post-Spanish Civil War narrative. Film: *The Hive*

• Monday, October 14. Gabriela Mistral: The First Latin American Nobel: "What the soul is to the body, so is the artist to his people". (selection of poems)

• Wednesday, October 16. Pablo Neruda. From *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair*.

• Monday, October 21. *Mid-Term Exam*.

• Wednesday, October 23. Octavio Paz. "The Sons of la Malinche"

• Monday, October 28 Film: “I, the Worst of All”.

• Wednesday, October 30. *The Labyrinth of Solitude and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* or, *The Traps of Faith* (selection).

• Monday, November 4. Magical Realism.

• Wednesday, November 6. *Oral presentations begin*. Miguel Ángel Ásturias and Gabriel García Márquez.


• Wednesday, November 27. Video: Mario Vargas Llosa on *The Feast of the Goat*. **Due Date Essay**

• Monday, December 2. Film discussion. “In the Time of the Butterflies”.

• Wednesday, December 4. Final remarks

• Monday, December 9. No classes will be held.

• Wednesday, December 11. Review for the Final Exam.

**Important dates**

• Final exam: Yet tba (in between Thursday, Dec 12-Tuesday, Dec 17)

• Midterm Exam: October 21.

• Essay: November 27

**Holidays**

• Friday, November 1: All Saint’s Day.

• Monday, December 9: Bank holiday. No classes will be held.