

## ELS210.xxxx Advanced Spanish Composition

INSTRUCTORS\_NAME <instructors\_email@lagcc.cuny.edu>  
<http://faculty.lagcc.cuny.edu/instructor>

SEMESTER

Saved on: 9/8/12 12:25 PM by Tomonori Nagano

### Instructor's Information

**Instructor:** INSTRUCTORS\_NAME  
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**Email:** instructors\_email@lagcc.cuny.edu  
**Tel:** 718-482-5460  
**Office:** B-234  
**Office Hours:** xxx  
**Preferred communication:** E-mail is preferred, with which you should expect my response within 24 hours.  
**Class Schedule:** xxx (Room: xxxx) & xxx (Room: xxxx)

### Course goals and objectives

**Catalog Course Description:** This course is designed as an introduction to the study of fiction and stylistics in the Spanish language. Students learn to identify and utilize effective communicative strategies in written Spanish. They also build an adequate vocabulary for career or academic purposes. Weekly assignments will stress critical and composition skills.

**Section Description:** This is a capstone course for Spanish/English Translation and a required course for other liberal arts options (Latin American Studies, Bilingual/Secondary Education). Compositions stress how the creative process in various art forms builds on universal themes and archetypes, as well as other cultural currencies, that are re-contextualized in various epochs and traditions, including Hispanic, indigenous and Afro American traditions.

**Prerequisites:** ELS105 or Exemption Exam

### Flexible Core Objectives: Creative Expression

**The course bears 3 credits that count as Flexible Core (Creative Expressions) of the CUNY's new general education curriculum (Pathways).**

In this course students will:

- **Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.**  
 In-class reflection exercises and essays require students to respond to primary literary texts written in Spanish and to incorporate critical secondary sources in the analysis of creative discourse in modern Spanish Peninsular and Latin American writing. Students will learn to use the methods of comparative literature to establish connections of literature with other artistic expressions such as film, dance and operetta, as well as disciplines such as philosophy (esthetics) and theoretical physics (string theory, the many worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics).
- **Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.**  
 Students are required to write a minimum of five analyses of increasing length, depth and complexity using the methods of comparative literature to contrast different versions of archetypal themes (the Oedipus myth; the mythical quest for identity and meaning, the archetype of the femme fatale); characterization techniques in written and visual narratives; plot development through mythical structures (Campbell, Eliade); the buildup and resolution of tension; the use of intertexts to reiterate central themes (Gide, Dällenbach) and other rhetorical devices in short and long fiction, as well as their equivalents in other art forms such as film, opera and ballet (specifically versions of Oedipus, Carmen and Giselle).
- **Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.**

Students are required to write at least two eight-ten page analytical papers about the various iterations of a major theme or archetype in different art forms, or the utilizations of scientific cultural currencies in literary, cinematic or other narratives, anchoring their conclusions on properly acknowledged secondary sources. Students will present Power Point summaries of their findings.

- **Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring creative expression, including, but not limited to, arts, communications, creative writing, media arts, music, and theater.**

Students use the methods of comparative literature to analyze complex narrative structures, identify rhetorical devices, identify archetypal figures and structures and contrast the various manifestations of a particular theme, such as the story of Cecilia Valdés or Giselle, in fiction, film, operetta and ballet.

- **Analyze how arts from diverse cultures of the past serve as a foundation for those of the present, and describe the significance of works of art in the societies that created them.**

Students learn to apply the concepts and methods of myth criticism as developed by the Jungian school, to analyze Hispanic versions of universal themes such as the Oedipus myth, or the figure of the *femme fatale*, as well as the use of universal quest structures in Isabel Allende’s *Daughter of Fortune*. Students analyze the significance of the particular iteration of a universal theme within a Hispanic aesthetic and cultural context.

- **Articulate how meaning is created in the arts or communications and how experience is interpreted and conveyed.**

Students compare and contrast the creation and communication of meaning in the written, cinematic, and dance manifestations of different versions of the same theme (Giselle, Cecilia, Oedipus) thus analyzing the role of space, time and contextualization in visual, performing and narrative arts, which are closely intertwined in the artistic manifestations of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

**Textbook, grading, and other class logistics**

**Textbooks:** The following textbooks are required for this class. They are available for borrowing at CUNY libraries:

- Allende, Isabel. *Daughter of Fortune/Hija de la fortuna*. New York: Harper, 1999.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. New World Library, 2008.
- Dällenbach, Lucien. *Mirrors and After: Five Essays on Literary Criticism*. New York: CUNY, 1986.
- Guillen, Claudio. *The Challenge of Comparative Literature*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993.
- Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*. Spanish version on the web available at ciudadseva.com (U of Puerto Rico portal).
- Short stories by Fuentes and Cortazar, as well as the Nobel Prize address by Menchu, are available on the web.
- Films shown in class as part of the syllabus are available in the media collection of the LaGuardia library.

**Grades:** Your final grade will be determined based on the following evaluation points:

- Assignments #1 and 2 @ 10 % each: 20%
- Assignments #3 and 5 @ 20% each: 40%
- Assignment # 4: 30%
- Quizzes and class discussions: 10%

TOTAL: 100%

- **Grade distributions:** A: 95-100%, A-: 90-94%, B+: 86-89%, B: 83-85%, B-: 80-82%, C+: 76-79%, C: 73-75%, C-: 70-72%, D+: 66-69%, D: 63-65%, D-: 60-62%, F: -59%, WU: Unofficial withdraw (≈F), W: Withdraw

**Weekly schedule (subject to change)**

Week	Subject	Assignment
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1	Introduction to the course. The methods of comparative literature: the study of universal themes in various literatures and artistic forms (Guillen, Campbell). Literature and film, dance, music, and philosophy. The theme of the <i>femme fatale</i> : <i>Carmen</i> , <i>Cecilia Valdés</i> . Film and musical versions of the <i>femme fatale</i> archetype.	Humberto Solás. <i>Cecilia Valdés</i> (1981). Class activity on <i>Cecilia</i>
2	Caribbean variation of the universal archetype: the <i>mulata</i> as <i>femme fatale</i>	<b>Assignment #1 (10%)</b> : Five page essay on techniques of characterization, plot development, and Cecilia as <i>femme fatale</i> .
3	The Seducer and the Lady in Distress: Caribbean variations of Don Juan and Giselle. Don Juan in European literature and music: Moliere, Mozart/Da Ponte. The use of intertexts within narratives (Dällenbach): the use of <i>Giselle</i> in Pérez's film.	Fernando Pérez, <i>Life is Whistling</i> (1998) Class activity on <i>Life is Whistling</i> <b>Assignment #2 (10%)</b> : Six page analysis on the use of dance/music intertexts in <i>Life is Whistling</i> .
4	Method of textual analysis (1): narrative voice, character clusters, tag names	Allende, <i>Daughter of Fortune</i> Part One Quiz
5	Textual analysis (2): narrative structure—the quest pattern in myth criticism (Campbell, Eliade)	<i>Daughter of Fortune</i> Part Two Quiz
6	Textual Analysis (3): foreshadowing, prolepsis and analepsis; circular narratives; open endings; <i>opera aperta</i>	<i>Daughter of Fortune</i> Part Three Quiz Class activity on <i>Daughter of Fortune</i> <b>Assignment #3 (20%)</b> : 10 page paper due, with secondary sources, on quest structures and universal archetypes in <i>Daughter of Fortune</i>
7	Visions and revisions of universal themes within Hispanic contexts: the tragic hero and the rise of the <i>polis</i> . Sophocles adapted by Gabriel García Márquez within the context of modern Colombia.	García Márquez/Triana: <i>Oedipus Mayor</i> ; Sophocles: <i>Oedipus Rex</i> .
8	<i>Oedipus</i> (continued)	Class activity on García Márquez/Triana: <i>Oedipus Mayor</i> . <b>Assignment #4 (30%)</b> 10 page paper due on local variations of the Oedipus myth as per Triana/García Márquez
9	Theory and categories of the fantastic in literature and film. Tzvetan Todorov: the marvelous, the grotesque, the fantastic, science fiction. Rosemary Jackson: the fantastic as counterculture, rather than escapism.	Carlos Fuentes, <i>Chac Mool</i> Julio Cortázar, <i>Axolotl</i> ; <i>The night face up</i> . Time travel in film and literature.
10	Scientific theories as cultural currency: the collective unconscious (C.G. Jung); time travel and parallel universes (Richard Feynmann, Michio Kaku, Brian Greene).	Class activity on the stories by Fuentes and Cortázar.
11	The return of the indigenous (collective) consciousness in society and literature	Rigoberta Menchú: <i>My Name is Rigoberta Menchú</i>
12	The place of Hispanic arts and letters within a universal	Class activity on Rigoberta Menchú; final

	context: common themes, universal characters across heterogeneous contexts.	paper due next week on Rigoberta's integrated vision of the arts, dreams, fantasy and politics for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.
13	Final Assignment	<b>Assignment #5 (20%)</b>

### Assignments

#### Assignment #1: *Cecilia* (10%)

Write a five/six page analysis (Times New Roman, 12 pts., double-spaced) about the film *Cecilia* (1980) by Humberto Solás focusing on the following:

1. Cirilo Villaverde and his long residence in New York City.
2. Humberto Solás's filmic variations on Villaverde's novel *Cecilia Valdés*.
3. Specific AfroCaribbean cultural elements (music, art, dance, religious references) incorporated into the novel/film.
4. Cecilia as a reiteration and Caribbean variation of the *femme fatale* archetype within the context of plantation societies.
5. Avatars of Cecilia/the tempestuous light *mulata* in operetta, film and literature of the Caribbean, France (Eugene Sue's *Cecily*), and American film (*Pinky*, *Imitation of Life*, *Lost Boundaries*.)

#### #2 *Life is Whistling* (Fernando Pérez, 1998) (10%)

Write a six page analysis of the film focusing on the following:

1. Fernando Pérez's training and trajectory as a film director.
2. The three intertwined plot lines in the film (the stories of Julia, Mariana and Elpidio) and the central idea in the film as conveyed by the intertext (the ballet *Giselle*) as per Dällenbach.
3. The circular structure in the film and its implications as per Umberto Eco's theory of *opera aperta*.
4. The function of the narrator (Bebé) and her identification with the African *orisha* Ochún, goddess of love and waters. Explain how the mother is presented in concrete and symbolic ways.
5. The symbolism of the black statue with a white mask, and its association with the *orisha* Changó, god of love and war, as well as the allusion to Frantz Fanon's book *Black Faces/White Masks*.
6. Racial and social stereotypes and their function in the total symbolic scheme of the film.
7. The integration of local contexts (AfroCaribbean culture) and universal contexts (*Giselle* and the archetype of the betrayed maiden; Elpidio and the Don Juan archetype) in the symbolic structure of the film.

#### #3 Isabel Allende: *Daughter of Fortune* (20%)

Write a ten page analysis, including primary and secondary textual quotations, of Allende's novel covering the following:

1. How does Allende break with the traditional representation of women in Latin American fiction? How does Eliza compare to Cecilia, Mariana, Julia or Giselle from previous works analyzed in this course? What, specifically, are her major "transgressions" of hegemonic values?
2. How do archetypal figures and patterns determine the structure of the novel?
3. Analyze the process of Eliza's transformation throughout the novel according to the C. G. Jung/Joseph Campbell quest pattern, identifying persona/shadow/animus/Wise Woman/ self-reflection figures she encounters, and how they help her in her trajectory.
4. How does Tao Chi'en represent an alternate model of masculinity and how does he resemble/differ from Leonardo Gamboa and Elpidio from previous works? How does he resemble the archetypal hero, as per Campbell?
5. Discuss the mythical transformation of Joaquín Andieta into Joaquín Murieta. What information does Allende give us to make the metamorphosis credible? Do you see him as a hero or a bandit? How do different characters in the novel see him and why? Can you compare him to other historical characters who have been transformed into mythical heroes? Identify two.

#### #4 *Oedipus Rex and Its Avatars: Jorge Alí Triana's Oedipus Mayor* (1996) (30%)

In this assignment you will explore human identity, that is, how humans have seen themselves in their relation to their feelings, their society, their destiny, and their control or lack of control over them. The play by Sophocles focuses on the themes of seeing and interpreting. The versions by Pasolini and Triana recontextualize these themes according to

different times and places: Fascist Italy in the 1930's, war-ridden Colombia in the mid-nineties. Write a 10 page analysis contrasting the universal and the local contexts of the three works. Make sure to refer to the mythical structures delineated by Eliade/Jung/Campbell, as previously discussed in relation to Allende's novel. You should incorporate at least six secondary sources and focus on the following questions:

1. What do the original Oedipus and his two avatars have in common? What is universal in their quest? What is local?
2. How is the original plot modified to reflect changing circumstances and historical realities?
3. Which of the three versions did you find most pertinent to contemporary issues? Support your conclusions with concrete examples from the text/films, secondary sources, and your own observations.

**#5 The Indigenous Past: "Axolotl," "The Night Face Up" (Cortázar); "Chac Mool" (Fuentes); "Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech" (Menchú, 1992) (20%)**

Write a six page essay based on the texts mentioned above and discussing the following:

1. The persistence of the repressed indigenous cultures in the American unconscious as manifested in its art, especially in the "indianismo" (1880s) and "indigenismo" (1930s) movements after independence from Spain.
2. The fantastic/subversive eruptions of elements from the indigenous past in contemporary stories by Cortázar and Fuentes, and their relationship to Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, as well as modern physics theories of multiple and parallel worlds .
3. Menchú's views of a multicultural, integrated cultural identity for the Americas, based on art and traditions as well as social justice, as per her Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech from 1992.

<b>Policies</b>
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**Classroom policies:** The following policies have been instituted to ensure an optimal learning experience for all students:

- Please arrive on time.
- Please prepare for each class meeting by completing all writing/reading assignments beforehand.
- Please turn your cell phone to silence during class.
- Please turn off your cell phone during the exam and the quiz.

**Valuing LaGuardia's Diversity:** As a college community we represent a world of perspectives on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, and nationality, to name a few. I concur with **the College's Declaration of Pluralism**, if you have any suggestions in helping me to create a welcoming classroom environment, please tell me.

**Rules for Personal Conduct:** You are expected to obey the rules and regulations of the College about conduct. Disorderly or indecent behavior is not appropriate in a college setting. It is a violation of college rules and is not acceptable.

**The student attendance policy:** As stated in the college catalog: "Attendance in class is a requirement and will be considered in the evaluation of student performance. Instructors are required to keep an official record of student attendance. The maximum number of unexcused absences is limited to 15\% of the number of class hours. Note: Absences are counted from the first day of class even if they are a result of late registration or change of program" (117).

**The academic dishonesty policy:** As stated in the catalog: "Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York and is punishable by penalties ranging from a grade of 'F' on a given test, research paper or assignment, to an 'F' in the course or suspension or expulsion from the College. Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Internet Plagiarism
- Obtaining Unfair Advantages
- Falsification of Records and Official Documents
- Misconduct in Internships (117)

**Policy on assigning the grade of Incomplete:** As stated in the college catalogue: "The Incomplete grade may be awarded to students who have not completed all of the required course work but for whom there is a reasonable expectation of satisfactory completion. A student who is otherwise in good standing in a course defined as complying with the college attendance policy and maintaining a passing average but who has not completed at most two major assignments or examinations by the end of the course may request an incomplete grade. To be eligible, such a student must provide,

before the instructor submits grades for the course, a documented reason, satisfactory to the instructor, for not having completed the assignment on time. Instructors giving IN grades must inform students in writing of the conditions under which they may receive passing grades. Departments may designate certain courses in which no incomplete grades may be awarded.” (120).

**Declaration of pluralism:** The Education and Language Acquisition Department embraces diversity. We respect each other regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability and social class. For detailed information regarding the policy, please refer to Student Handbook 2011-2012 (p.89).