The Enactment of Violence
in 20th and 21st Century Spanish and Latin American Film and Literature

Boston College, Fall 2015
4 Credits

September 3 - December 17
Thursdays, 6:15-9:15

Professor: Chris Wood
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Office: 100 McGuinn
Telephone: (617) 552-3800
Classroom: 
Office Hour: Thursdays, 5:15-6:15

Course Description

Short stories, novellas and film will be used to investigate how Spanish and Latin American writers and directors have understood, represented, and responded to the violence of civil war and dictatorship. All writing assignments, class discussions and readings are in English.

Course Objectives

While looking at how violence influences literary works, and at how these works express and enact that violence, the student will gain an understanding of some of the historical and stylistic trends in 20th and 21st century Spanish and Latin American literature and will learn elementary techniques of literary analysis. We will also look at different strategies that have been used for transforming literary texts into film.

Boston College Mission Statement:

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a worldview that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.
**Canvas Page**

All students must use the Canvas page for this course to consult the syllabus, hand in journal assignments, communicate with reading teams, and acquire most of the required material for the course.

**Required Texts**

The following texts can be purchased at the Boston College Bookstore:

- García Márquez, Gabriel. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.

All other texts will be posted on the Canvas site for the course.

**Responsibilities of the Student**

The student must come to class with the readings thoroughly prepared, meaning that she will be able to identify characters, summarize plots, resolve any questions of vocabulary and have thoughtful questions ready. The class meets only 15 times so attendance is mandatory. Any absences after one will result in a 5% decrease in the final grade.

**Written Work**

A final exam essay is due on December 17. I cannot accept any late essays. If the student cannot attend class the day the essay is due, the essay must be delivered to me by email that day before the beginning of class.

Written journal entries, which respond to the questions provided on the syllabus, are due every week before class. Submissions must be made through the Canvas page, and students should also bring a copy of their journal entries to class in order to consult them during class discussions.

**Reading Teams and Additional Class Hour**

Students will be organized into reading teams of from four to six members. Each reading team must participate in the team's blog discussing the reading assignment for the following class sometime during the preceding week and prepare an agreed upon set of observations, questions or critiques which will be presented during class. Participation in the reading team blogs is required and graded.
Components of the Final Grade

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Teams</td>
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<td>Journal</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam Essay</td>
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Grade Reports

All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their fall term grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known, the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

Scholarship and Academic Integrity

It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.

Request for Accommodations

If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.
### Class Schedule and Journal Questions

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<td>Introductions</td>
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<td>Organization of Reading Teams</td>
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<th>September 10</th>
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**Read:** Miguel de Unamuno, *Saint Manuel the Good, Martyr* and Manuel Rivas, *Butterfly's Tongue*

**Journal:**

**Saint Manuel**

1. Who tells the story? To whom is the story told? Why does she tell it? What form does the story take? How does all this make us interpret the information we are given? How would the story be different if it were told by someone else, or with a different purpose?

2. Describe don Manuel's character. Is he a saint? Should he be canonized?

3. What does the lake symbolize? What does the mountain symbolize? How do these two images work together? Find specific examples.

4. Is there violence in this story?

5. Explain the meaning of the last section (beginning on page 293) of the story. What is the point? How does this relate to the central philosophical/theological issue raised in the novel? What is the central philosophical/theological issue raised in the novel?

**Butterfly's Tongue**

1. Write a list of references in the story for which you would need historical knowledge in order to understand.

2. What is the conflict between the priest and the teacher don Gregorio? How do you think don Gregorio and don Manuel, the priest from "Saint Manuel the Good", would get along? Why?

3. Why do you think the author uses the perspective of a young boy to tell this story? What does Pardal not understand about the political and historical events happening around him and how does this lack of understanding affect the way we read the story?
September 17

**Read**: Ramón J. Sender, *Requiem for a Spanish Peasant*

**Journal**:

1. What is a Requiem? How is the novel a "Requiem for a Spanish Peasant"? Through whose perspective is the story mainly told? How does this make us interpret the information we are given?

2. Although the story of the novel is told principally from one perspective, there are other perspectives as well. Identify these perspectives and write about how they differ.

3. How does Mosén Millán organize in his memory the story of Paco's life?

4. What is Mosén Millán's role in the village? Describe his character. How do his actions influence the important events of the novel? Why do you think Sender chose to tell the story mainly through Mosén Millán's memories?

5. Compare Mosén Millán with Manuel, the priest in *Saint Manuel the Good, Martyr*.

6. Identify the various conflicts between characters. How do these conflicts represent larger social, political or ideological conflicts?

September 24

**Read**: Camilo José Cela, *The Family of Pascual Duarte* (pages 3 - 88)

**Journal**:

1. How does the novel begin? Identify the different introductory sections (pages xx-xx). What is their purpose? How do they make us interpret the information we are given in the novel?

2. Who tells the story told in the novel? How does this influence the reader's attitude toward the story?

3. Compare the style of this novel to *Requiem for a Spanish Peasant*. How is it different in tone, in language, in attitude, etc.?

4. Who are Pacual's parents? How might they make Pascual feel about himself and about the world?
October 1

**Read:** Camilo José Cela, *The Family of Pascual Duarte* (pages 89 - 166)

**Journal:**

1. Where is Pascual Duarte when he writes down the story of his life? What does he say about his writing? To whom does he dedicate the manuscript? Why?

2. Make a list of Pascual's victims. Do you see a pattern in his crimes? Is there anything in particular that provokes him?

3. Why has Pascual's life turned out the way it has?

4. What should be done with Pascual?

5. What is this novel about? How is its message different from that of *Requiem*? How are the two stories similar?

October 8

**Read:** Francisco Ayala, *The Cut*

**Journal:**

1. There are two important incidents recounted in this story. What are they? How are they similar? How are they different?

2. What is the meaning of the grape vineyard as a setting for Santolalla's killing of the enemy soldier?

3. What makes the killing shocking? What makes it ordinary?

4. Which members of Santolalla's family represent the two sides of the Spanish conflict?

5. What are Santolalla's political beliefs?

6. Describe Santolalla's character.

6. What role does the dead soldier's identification card play in the story?

7. Explain the reaction of the dead soldier's family when Santolalla returns the identification card. Why do they react this way?
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**Read:** Francisco Ayala, *The Return*

**Journal:**

1. How does the narrator's treatment of Mariana reflect the impact of war and exile on his character?
2. Why does the narrator become obsessed with his old friend Abeledo?
3. What had Abeledo done during the war and how did he die?
4. What happens between the narrator and Abeledo's sister in the brothel? What does it mean? How do you interpret this scene?
5. Why does the narrator decide to leave Spain again?
6. Is there violence in this story? Where? How is it expressed? What role does it play?
7. Describe the narrator's character. How is it different from that of Santolalla?

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**MIDTERM EXAMINATION**
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<th><strong>October 29</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> Esteban Echeverría, <em>The Slaughter House</em> and Horacio Quiroga, <em>Beasts in Collusion</em></td>
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<td>note: Read the brief biographical sketch of Juan Manuel de Rosas, the Argentine dictator who dominated the country at the time in which <em>The Slaughter House</em> is set, on the Canvas page.</td>
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<td><strong>Journal:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Slaughter House</em></td>
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<td>1. What is the author's tone? What are his attitudes towards the Federalists and the Church?</td>
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<td>2. What function has Nature (climate) in <em>The Slaughter House</em>?</td>
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<td>3. What function has Biology (human bodies, animal bodies) in <em>The Slaughter House</em>?</td>
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<td>4. Do you find this story offensive in any way? For instance, do feel it is written from a racist perspective? Explain.</td>
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<td>5. One purpose of this story was to indict the barbarism of the Federalists and the Rosas dictatorship. Is it successful on this level? Can violence be combated with the depiction, in art (film, fiction, painting, etc.), of violence? Or, on the contrary, is the violence in this story just more violence without any good purpose?</td>
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<td><em>Beasts in Collusion</em></td>
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<td>1. How does the author's narrative style dramatize what the narrator says about the difference between the city and the jungle?</td>
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<td>2. Why do you think the narrator chooses to have us follow the two travelers and Divina through the jungle before giving us the background we need to understand who they are?</td>
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<td>3. How would you describe the narrator's understanding of the indigenous people of the jungle?</td>
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<td>4. Describe and explain the psychology of Guaycurú.</td>
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<td>5. Why do the peones follow Alves's orders so slavishly?</td>
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<td>6. What characteristics of Longhi enable him to successfully train the lioness?</td>
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<td>7. Does Longhi remind you of any characters you have seen in movies or read about in fiction?</td>
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<td>8. Why does Longhi abandon Guaycurú and Divina?</td>
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November 5

**Read:** Horacio Quiroga, *The Decapitated Chicken*, Jorge Luis Borges, *Emma Zunz*, and Juan Rulfo, *Talpa*

**Journal:**

*The Decapitated Chicken*

1. What is wrong with the four sons of Berta and Mazzini?
2. What explanation is given for their condition?
3. How do you feel about the way the boys are portrayed?
4. What is the role of illness in the story?
5. Who is to blame for the death of Bertita?
6. How did this story make you feel while you were reading it?

*Emma Zunz*

1. Write about the confusion of names in the story.
2. How does Emma's father die? Why?
3. Why does Emma sleep with the sailor? What do you think about this part of the story?
4. What can be said about the narrator's prejudices from the way he tells the story?
5. Is there justice in this story? Why? Why not?

*Talpa*

1. Write about the literal and symbolic significance of the road from Zenzontla to Talpa.
2. Write about the literal and symbolic significance of night and day.
3. Do you think that Natalia and Tanilo's brother should have refused to take Tanilo to Talpa to see the Virgin?
4. Are Natalia and Tanilo's brother guilty of murder? Are they guilty of anything else?
**November 12**

**Read:** Gabriel García Márquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*

**Journal:**

Decide if Santiago Nasar is guilty or not of having done what Angela Vicario accuses him of, and write two paragraphs defending your point of view. Make sure to use evidence from the novel.

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**November 19**

**Read:** Evelio Rosero, *The Armies*, pages 1-111

**Journal:**

This week and for the week of December 3, write two paragraphs about what you found to be most interesting, moving, disturbing or perplexing about the first (this week) and second (December 4) of this novel.

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**November 26**

**Thanksgiving Break - No Class**

- During these two weeks (November 27 - December 9) Communicate with your reading team about the group presentation for the last day of class (December 10).

- I will put final exam questions and guidelines on Canvas.
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| December 3 | **Read:** Evelio Rosero, *The Armies*, pages 112-215 (see the assignment for November 19)  
**Also:**  
- Some time will be given to the group projects.  
- I will answer any questions you might have on the take-home exam. |
| December 10| **Presentation of Group Projects**                                      |
| December 17| **Take Home Final Due**                                                 |