

Dr. Lois Parkinson Zamora
Spring 2010
On-line VISTA course
Office: (713) 743-2959; 227C Roy Cullen
Office Hours: By appointment
lzamora@uh.edu
Turnitin.com: Course ID: 3045773
Password (lower case): magical

English 3322: The Contemporary Novel: Magical Realism Section 27763

On-line VISTA course

This course will focus on recent novels that have been described by the term "magical realism." Magical realism engages the usual devices of narrative realism, but with a difference: the supernatural is an ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence, accepted and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. We will read a number of novels from different cultural contexts in order to compare the workings of magical realism in North and South America and explore the diversity of its contemporary styles and subjects. We will also pay attention to the visual arts and their connection to the novels we are reading.

The streaming lectures that accompany this course were recorded last year, so there may be some topical information that does not relate to you, but the material covered in the lectures will be relevant to your reading. **There are two streaming lectures per week, except for Week 2 and Week 4, when there are three lectures; the last two weeks of the semester have none.** (Lectures are noted in red on your syllabus, and can be accessed from the icon on our class website.) Your reading quizzes and assignments will be posted on our VISTA site as noted on the syllabus.

Requirements for the course are described at the end of the syllabus. There are no face-to-face meetings for this course.

Posted on our VISTA site under Web Paper Projects are web sites relating to our course material; they were created by students in previous semesters. Please browse through them and learn from them.

Galleries of art and three illustrated lectures are at <http://www.class.uh.edu/classes/zamora>. Not all of the galleries are relevant to this course, but several are. During the semester, you will be directed to specific galleries in conjunction with your reading by links in the weekly organizers. (The top three galleries in both the right and left columns are for this course, if you want to go to the website listed above and take a look.)

Required Texts:

Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community, eds. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (Duke University Press, 1995)

Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Colombia)

Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths* (Argentina)

Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of this World* (Cuba)

Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* (USA)

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (USA)

Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits* (Chile)

First week: What is Magical Realism?

Jan. 19-22

Introduction to the course; Zamora and Faris, Introduction to *Magical Realism*, pp. 1-11.

Two short stories by Gabriel García Márquez, "The Very Old Man with Enormous Wings," and "Light is Like Water" (on VISTA)

Lectures 1 and 2

Second week: The Art Historical Beginnings of Magical Realism

Jan. 25-29

Franz Roh, "Magical Realism: Post-Expressionism," in *Magical Realism*, pp. 15-31

Irene Guenther, "Magic Realism, New Objectivity, and the Arts during the Weimar Republic," in *Magical Realism*, pp. 33-74

Lectures 3, 4, and 25, the final lecture for this class, where you'll find an interview with Irene Guenther, the author of the above essay, and further discussion of the origins of Magical Realism as an art historical category. This lecture is **in addition to** the two lectures for this week. The material on this lecture will be covered on the Reading Quiz for this week.

Images our VISTA site: Week 2:

Magical Realist Painting and Franz Roh

Reading Quiz 1: Covering the reading and lectures assigned to this point; CLOSED BOOK, 30 minutes, timed: available Thursday 10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

Third week: Magical Realism and the Baroque

Feb. 1-5

Read Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Lectures 5 and 6

Images on our VISTA site: Week 3:

The exuberant hyperbole of Baroque painting: angels, levitating virgins, and other miraculous episodes

Maps on our VISTA site: Please study them, and know where our authors come from.

Fourth Week:
Feb. 8-12

Gabriel García Márquez

Finish *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Lectures 7, 8, and the first half of 9 (discussing Baroque painting)

Images on our VISTA site: Week 4:

The Paintings of Colombian artist Fernando Botero

**Reading Quiz 2: Covering *One Hundred Years of Solitude*;
CLOSED BOOK, 30 minutes, timed: available Thursday
10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm**

Fifth week:
Feb. 15-19

Jorge Luis Borges's Trompe l'oeil Tricks

Jon Thiem, "The Textualization of the Reader," in *Magical Realism*, pp. 235-247

Borges, *Labyrinths*, "Partial Magic in the Quixote"

Borges, "When Fiction Lives in Fiction" (on VISTA)

Julio Cortázar, "Continuity of Parks" (on VISTA)

Woody Allen, "The Kugelmas Episode" (on VISTA)

Borges, *Labyrinths*: "The Library of Babel," "The Zahir," "The Circular Ruins," "The Secret Miracle," "The God's Script," "The Aleph" (on VISTA)

Lectures: Second half of 9 and 10

Images on our VISTA site: Week 5:

Trompe l'oeil Painting and Borges

Sixth week:
Feb. 22-26

Jorge Luis Borges' Labyrinths

Borges, *Labyrinths*: "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," "The Garden of Forking Paths," "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote," "The Fearful Sphere of Pascal," "Funes the Memorious," "The Wall and the Books," "Borges and I"

Lectures 11, 12, 13

Images on our VISTA site: Week 6:

Argentine artist Xul Solar and Borges

Reading Quiz 3: Covering the work of Borges and Jon Thiem's essay; CLOSED BOOK, 30 minutes, timed: available Thursday 10 am to Sunday 11:00 pm.

Seventh week:
March 1-5

New World Baroque: Two essays by Alejo Carpentier

"The Marvelous Real in America," in *Magical Realism*, pp. 75-88;

"The Baroque and the Marvelous Real," in *Magical Realism*, pp. 89-108

Lectures 14 and 15 (Baroque art and architecture, and the beginning of *The Kingdom of this World*. Ignore the final discussion of web papers.)

Images on our VISTA site for Week 7:

New World Baroque Art and Architecture

Eighth week:
March 8-12

Lo real maravilloso americano

Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of this World*

Lectures 16

SPRING BREAK
March 15-19

Ninth week:
March 22-26

North American Indigenous Culture I

Read Louise Erdrich, *Tracks*

Lectures 17, 18 and 19

Reading Quiz 4: Covering Alejo Carpentier's essays and his *The Kingdom of this World*, and Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*; CLOSED BOOK, ONE HOUR TIMED: available Thursday 10 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

Tenth week:

North American Indigenous Culture II

March 29-April 2

Read Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

Lectures 20, 21, and beginning of 22

Reading Quiz 5: Covering *Ceremony* ; CLOSED BOOK, 30 minutes, timed: available Thursday 10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

Eleventh week:
April 5-9

Magical Feminism: Isabel Allende

Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits*

Lectures 22, 23 and 24

Twelfth week:
April 12-16

Magical Feminism II

Finish *The House of the Spirits*

Images our VISTA site for Week 12:

The Spanish/Mexican Painter Remedios Varo

In the Web Paper Organizer on our Home Page, go to **nmunoz2** to read/see more about Remedios Varo

Reading Quiz 6: Covering *The House of the Spirits*; CLOSED BOOK, 30 minutes, timed: available Thursday 10:00 am to Sunday 11:00 pm

Thirteenth week:
April 19-23

Magical Feminism III

P. Gabrielle Foreman, "Past-On Stories: History and the Magically Real, Morrison and Allende on Call," in *Magical Realism*, pp. 285-303

Lois Zamora, "Magical Romance/Magical Realism: Ghosts in U.S. and Latin American Fiction," in *Magical Realism*, pp. 497-549

Reading Quiz 7: Covering the essays by Foreman and Zamora (these essays are NOT discussed on the streaming lecture); CLOSED BOOK, 30 minutes, timed: available MONDAY 10:00 am to Sunday, 11:00 pm

Please take Quiz 7 as early as possible so that you will have time to concentrate on your final paper. Your final paper is due early the following week, Monday, May 3. Taking Quiz 7 early will ensure that

you have adequate time to write your final paper carefully and calmly.

Fourteenth week: **Work on your final paper.** If you have not already done so, I recommend that you write me a description of your topic, so that I can make comments that may help you to direct your argument.
April 26-30

Fifteenth week: **FINAL PAPER due to Turnitin.com by midnight, Monday, May 3**
May 3
(Course ID and case-sensitive password at the top of the syllabus)

COURSE EVALUATIONS: Before you can take the final exam, you must fill out the electronic course evaluation; the evaluation icon is to be found on our home page.

FINAL EXAM: Available from Tuesday, May 4, at 10:00 am to Saturday, May 8, at midnight.

Reading is required, and will be covered in the **reading quizzes and the final examination, along with the material covered in lectures on the streaming lectures posted on this class website.** Sometimes the lecture on a particular work will not be totally done at the end of the session, and you'll need to go on to the next one, but you should be able to tell if there is some "spill over" from one lecture to the next.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:

If you are not used to CLOSED BOOK exams, please consider carefully whether this course will work for you. You must agree NOT to consult or quote any material when taking the quizzes and the final exam. The exams must be *in your own words*; memorized material quoted verbatim is not accepted, nor are page numbers from the texts. Quizzes and exams are to reflect what you *know* from having done the reading and watching the lectures. If you haven't been able to do all the reading, take the quiz/exam and do the best that you can without consulting anything other than your own mental content.

Please review the University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy at http://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/uhhonesty_policy.html

Reading quizzes are CLOSED BOOK. Do not consult anything while taking the quizzes. Do not quote any material, even from memory. Quizzes will be posted on the website as noted on the syllabus. Except for Quiz 7, they will be posted on Thursday at 10 am, to be completed by Sunday at 11:00 pm. Quiz 7 is available on Monday, April 20, to encourage you to take it early, and get to work on your final paper, which is due on April 28. The quizzes are simple, short answer questions on plot, character, theme, etc., designed to assure that you have completed the

reading. Quizzes are usually comprised of four questions, each one counting for one point if correctly answered. In one case, the quiz will have six questions.

Please note that the quizzes are the largest percentage of your grade because they attest to your careful reading of the assigned texts. It is imperative that you prepare for them by reading carefully, taking notes on your reading and on the lectures, and attending to the visual images and other materials on the VISTA site. You cannot do well in this course if you don't do well on the reading quizzes. They are CLOSED BOOK; if there is any evidence of consulting your books or notes or other students, there will be dire consequences.

Missed quizzes cannot be made up at a later date.

The final examination is CLOSED BOOK: Do not consult anything while taking the exam, and do not quote any material, even from memory. The Final exam is to be written in your own words, and to be your own thinking, based on the work that you have done this semester in this class. The exam consists of essay questions and passages from the texts we have read, which I will ask you to identify and discuss. Passages will be drawn largely (but not entirely) from those passages discussed in the streaming lectures that accompany this course. The visual arts discussed in the course will also be covered on the final exam. The exam will be timed to last four hours.

Final Paper: 5 to 7 pages of literary critical analysis on a topic that engages Magical Realism in selected work(s) of fiction **that we have read in this class**, with the possibility of extending your discussion to the visual arts and/or film. Please turn it in to Turnitin.com; class ID and password are on the heading of the syllabus.

Turnitin.com: I will ask you to turn in your final papers to the web site turnitin.com, to assure that your text is properly documented. Class ID and password are at the top of this syllabus.

Grades are determined as follows:

Final exam	30%
Final paper	30%
Quizzes	40%

Quizzes are calculated as follows, out of 30 total points: 27-30 A; 26-24 B; 23-20 C; 19-17 D

Your final exam and final paper will be given a letter grade, with the three letter grades weighted according to the percentage of the final grade (30% or 40%) and averaged, to determine your final grade in the course.

Learning Outcomes: This course is designed to teach students to read, write, speak and think more clearly about the type of literary fictions labels “magical realist” by literary critics. This implies the development of interpretive skills that allow for critical analysis of fictions that depart from literary realism, and yet are also realistic in many of their narrative structures and strategies. An important outcome of this course is the cultural awareness that comes from placing literary texts in their cultural contexts. Magical realism is often written in post-colonial

contexts where Western forms of thought have collided, and then converged, with non-Western forms—in the Americas, principally with indigenous and African cultural belief systems and expressive structures. Exams and papers, as well as in-class discussion and writing assignments, are designed to support these outcomes.