

Fall 2024: GSWS 3655-401/ENGL3655001/LALS3655001/THAR3655001

Writing Class: Character, Subject, Genre and Structure within Capitalism

Ricardo Bracho, Abrams Artist-in-Residence, GSWS/FQT

Office Hours: By Appointment, Weds, 12-3 pm

WED, 3:30-6:29



Gayatri Spivak has stated, “Of race, class and gender, class is the least abstract.” While materially true, in literary, theatrical, performative and cinematic representational schemes, class is often occluded, made permeable in opposition to longstanding economic realities or simply wished away in order to focus on plot and pleasantries. Within this course, students will instead focus their writing on class, whether that be on the middle classes, the bourgeoisie, ruling class, or the world’s majority: the working class. Work on class can take the form of satire or solidarity; expose conflict and antagonism between and within a given class; historicize individual relationships within the history of property relations; focus on finances, wealth, or poverty; portray class ascent or descent.

Writing may be in any genre: poetry, fiction, memoir, political essay, film script, play or performance. We will read and view work by artists such as Tillie Olsen, Kae Tempest, Leslie Feinberg, Zadie Smith, Cherrie Moraga, Alma Luz Villanueva, Helena Maria Viramontes, Gary Indiana, Gloria Naylor, Paul Beatty, Robert Altman, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, the Dardenne Brothers, Ken Loach, Lucrecia Martel, Bertolt Brecht, Clifford Odets, Adrienne Kennedy, Studs Terkel, Jean Toomer, Valerie Solanas, and the Chicano, Black and Nuyorican Theater Movements.

We will develop work in/on class via writing exercises, attend readings, plays and performances both on and off campus. Students will do a midterm presentation of their work in progress. Final projects can be a short story, essay, a suite of poems, a play or film script, a short video, a collection of vignettes or a mélange of these genres. Let the writing of class begin!

REQUIREMENTS

The goal of this course is for each student to develop a final manuscript: a short story, poetry, a one act play, a screenplay, non-fiction, comic book, zine, oral history or archival project. That final project will be due **DEC 15th**. We will have a final reading of our work on the last day of class, **Dec 4th** from 5-7 pm.

The midterm will be an in-class critique of in progress writing from **Nov 6, 13, 20**. Midterm grade is based both on student's work and their feedback to their peers. We will discuss in class the proposed projects on **October 2nd** and students will submit a one-paragraph to one page narrative of their manuscript/project on **October 9th**.

Students should schedule at least one office hour session. Students are asked to attend 3 literary events throughout the semester. On and off campus free events will be the focus, but students may also attend 1 online event as well.

Students will read 5 works selected from the reading list as well as view films and other readings sent out as weekly assignments. (Note: the reading list is primarily novels, political theory, short stories and memoirs. The plays, poetry, films and videos will be part of the weekly emailed options.)

Rather than write response/reflection posts on Canvas, students will try to respond to the events, screenings, readings by using them as inspiration/reference for their own writing.

Should an event or reading not be of interest, conflict with your work/school schedule, or be thematically off-putting, students need not attend or engage the work. The novels, short story collections, political philosophy, historical analyses, biographies/memoirs, films, poems and plays we will cover in this course take on capitalism, colonialism, domestic life, workplace dynamics, gender roles/resistance, migration, aging, race, sexuality, friendship, celebrity and the art world. Some of the works are highly experimental, others more plain-spoken. As some of the work developed from within anti-capitalist and anticolonial struggles, feminism/women's movements, gay liberation/queer politics, trans organizing some of the language and imagery is bold, incendiary, and explicit.

We will do weekly in-class writing/drawing exercises, view films, discuss the work we are engaging in relation to that which students are making. Given, the handmade/hands-on approach, ChatGPT/AI will not even be a temptation.

Should you need to miss class, please let instructor know via email prior to the class.

Proletariat Novels

Michael Gold, Jews Without Money
Patricia Galvao, Industrial Park
Meridel Le Seur, The Girl, Women on the Breadlines, North Star Country
Tillie Olsen, Yonnondio, Tell Me a Riddle, Silences
Richard Wright, Uncle Tom's Children, The Man Who Lived Underground

Latin American writers

Rosario Ferre, The Youngest Doll
Rosario Castellanos, The Nine Guardians
Clarice Lispector, The Hour of the Star
Elena Poniatowska, Massacre in Mexico, Nothing, Nobody; Dear, Diego
Gabriel Garcia Marquez, The Autumn of the Patriarch, Clandestine in Chile
Comandante Marcos, Our Word is Our Weapon
Severo Sarduy, Cobra and Maitreya, From Cuba with a Song
Roberto Bolaño, Nazi Literatures in the Americas
Manuel Puig, Pubis Angelical
Camilla Sosa Villada, Las Malas
Antonio José Ponte, In the Cold of the Malecon
Rigoberta Menchu, I, Rigoberta Menchu
Claribel Alegria, Ashes of Izalco, The Murder of Somoza
Rita Indiana, Made in Saturn, Tentacle
Eduardo Galeano, We Say No, Upside Down

British writing

Beryl Gilroy, Black Teacher
Zadie Smith, NW, Swing Time
Leonora Carrington, The House of Fear, Down Below, Collected Stories
Angela Carter, A Night at the Circus
Kae Tempest, Brand New Ancients, On Connection
Hanief Kuriishi, The Buddha of Suburbia
Hazel Carby, Imperial Intimacies, Cultures in Babylon

Class/Race/Sex in US writing

Ntozake Shange, Lilliane
Jean Stein and George Plimpton, Edie, American Girl
Gloria Naylor, Linden Hills, 1996
Helena Maria Viramontes, The Moths, And their dogs came with them
Lousie Erdrich, Antelope Wife
Beth Brant, Mowhawk Trail. Gathering of Spirit
Leslie Marmon Silko, Almanac of the Dead
Miranda July, The First Bad Man
Gary Indiana, I can give you anything but love
Bret Easton Ellis, Glamorama
Adrienne Kennedy, People Who Led to My Plays, Deadly Triplets
Sigrid Nuñez, For Rouenna, The Friend, The Vulnerables
Sabrina Orah Mark, Happily
Jeffrey Renard Allen, Rails Beneath My Back
Paul Beatty, White Boy Shuffle
Danzy Senna, Caucasasia
Sheila Ortiz Taylor, Fault Lines

Colonialism

CLR James, Every Cook Can Govern
Aime Cesaire, Discourse on Colonialism
Jamaica Kincaid, A Small Place
Haunani-Kay Trask, From a Native Daughter
Frantz Fanon, Wretched of the Earth
Michelle Cliff, No Telephone To Heaven
Jessica Hagedorn, Dogeaters (play)
Rudolfo Acuna, Occupied America
Mario Barrera, Race and Class in the Southwest
June Jordan, On Call
Franketienne, Desfazi
Edwidge Danticat, Write Dangerously

Prison Literature

Jean Genet, The Miracle of the Rose, Our Lady of the Flowers
Truman Capote, In Cold Blood
Assata Shakur, Autobiography
George Jackson, Soledad Brother
Nawaa El Sadawi, Woman at Poin Zero
Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Devil On A Cross

Manifestos and Anthologies

Zillah Eisenstein, Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism
Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto
Stuart Hall, et al, Policing the Crisis
Valerie Solanas, The SCUM Manifesto
Karla Jay and Alan Young, Out of the Closets
Elle O'Rourke and Jules Joanne Gleeson, Transgender Marxism
Frank Chin, Aieeee!
Janice Mirikitani, Time to Greez!
Angela Davis, Women, Race & Class

Graphic Novels/Comic Books

Julia Alekseyeva, Soviet Daughter
Alberto Ledesma, Diary of a Reluctant Dreamer
Jessica Abel, La Perdida
Los Bros Hernandez, Love & Rockets, Palomar
Erika Lopez, Flaming Iguanas
Joe Sacco, Palestine

Memoir/Biography/Collective Oral History

Amber Hollibaugh, My Dangerous Desires
Steven Salaita, An Honest Living
Fred Ho, Yellow Power, Yellow Soul; Wicked Theory, Naked Practice
Alice Bag, Violence Girl
Marc Spitz, We Got the Neutron Bomb
Joan Nestle, A Restricted Country, A Sturdy Yes of a People