

**A COURSE INFORMATION:**

- ☑ PROFESSOR: Nelson López. (Co-taught with Carrol Coates)
- ☑ CONTACT: [nlopez@binghamton.edu](mailto:nlopez@binghamton.edu)
- ☑ CLASSROOM: SW 331
- ☑ OFFICE HOURS: LT 1113. Wednesdays 1-4 and by appointment.
- ☑ CLASS TIMES: Wednesday 4:40-7:40
- ☑ REQUIRED READINGS: <http://dictatorsandwriters.blogspot.com/>

| Title   | Author             | Why   |
|---|--------------------|---|
| How to Rule the World: A Handbook for the Aspiring Dictator                       | Andre de Guillaume | See traits of a dictator. Do you qualify as one?                  |
| Facundo: Barbarism and Civilization   | Domingo Sarmiento  | The first Dictator Novel as Genre                                 |
| The Feast of the Goat   | Mario Vargas Llosa | The Dominican Republic under Trujillo                             |
| Travelers Tales of Old Cuba   | John Jenkins       | Politics and history of Cuba through the eyes of diverse visitors |
| Cowboy in Caracas: A North American's Memoir of Venezuela's Democratic Revolution | James W. Russel    | The Venezuelan Revolution   |
| The Kingdom of this World   | Alejo Carpentier   | The Haitian Revolution  |
| The Country Under My Skin: A Memoir of Love and War                               | Gioconda Belli     | The Nicaraguan Experience   |
| General Sun, My Brother   | Alexis             | The infamous 1937 massacre of striking Haitian workers            |
| The President   | Asturias           | The ruthless dictator and his schemes eliminate his adversaries.  |
| Solibo Magnificent  | Patrick Chamoiseau | Martinique's history as a French colony                           |

**B DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE**

Dictators have been important background, even foreground, figures in the novels translated into English from the Americas. We will analyze the writers-dictators sociopolitical interaction in times of exploitation, social and racial injustice, and political repression within authoritarian regimes in the American Continent and how the U.S. intervention in their internal affairs affected the Continent that we know today. This is a course on American literature in translation (as in America, the continent) and will explore different genres and how writers used creative writing techniques to criticize massacres in Haiti, Guatemala or El Salvador. This course gives an expanded definition to the traditional meaning of "Caribbean" to include Central America and the northeastern coast of South America clear around to Brazil.

**C OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:**

At the completion of this course you will be able to:

- know the dictator novel and its implications in the Caribbean and other countries.
- understand the present in the region through a view of historical events.
- engage in critical thinking in regards to sociopolitical interaction in the continent.
- explore literature in translation from French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Creole.
- think of America in a continental way.

**D GRADING CRITERIA**

See explanation below. This course does not award “incomplete” notations. The following chart explains the grade breakdown with an extra 5%.

| Component                 | Grade Percentage |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Public Lectures or LxC    | 15%              |
| Quizzes                   | 20%              |
| Class Discussion          | 10%              |
| Topic Presentations       | 20%              |
| Critique of Presentations | 10%              |
| Blog                      | 10%              |
| Final Project             | 20%              |

| Grade Average | Letter Grade | Grade Average | Letter Grade |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 93 – 100      | A            | 73 – 76       | C            |
| 90 – 92       | A-           | 70 – 72       | C-           |
| 87 – 89       | B+           | 67 – 69       | D+           |
| 83 – 86       | B            | 63 – 67       | D            |
| 80 – 82       | B-           | 60 – 62       | D-           |
| 77 – 79       | C+           | 0 – 59        | F            |

**PUBLIC LECTURES OR LxC (15%):**

You are expected to attend 5 events that deal with Latin America, the Caribbean or Latinos elsewhere and write a 1-page report on each event the week of the activity. The format includes movies, lectures, informal talks, webinars, etc. Although the professor will announce these events, you are encouraged to find additional events on your own. Alternatively, you may sign-up for LxC meetings to waive these public lectures and reports.

**QUIZZES (20%):**

Quizzes are to be taken weekly unlimited times until you get the grade you want. There will be a quiz based on the assigned chapters on the texts and on the songs discussed. They will be taken online through the Quia platform (see instructions below). Quizzes expire every Saturday.

**DISCUSSIONS (10%):**

We will discuss different topics in class based on the assigned readings for the week. You must read the assigned pages in the texts before coming to class and you share your thoughts on a particular issue with the class. Active *insightful* participation, defined as your preparation for class and the effort made to answer questions and take part in class and group activities, is of utmost importance in this class. Lack of active participation may reflect negatively on your grade.

**TOPIC PRESENTATION (20%):**

Students will sign-up for two presentations on a topic relevant to authoritarian regimes or dictatorships in Latin America and the Caribbean. Choose a writer/dictator that has not been studied in class. The best presentations will demonstrate mastery of the assigned readings, may include active learning exercises, and may provide handouts, tip-sheets, or an online guide.

**CRITIQUE OF PRESENTATIONS (10%):**

To get the credit for this area of the rubric, you will analyze and comment orally and in writing on the individual presentations.

**BLOG (10%):**

To get the credit for this area of the rubric, you will post insightful ideas, criticism or reactions to other posts. <http://dictatorsandwriters.blogspot.com/>

### **FINAL PROJECT (20%):**

Towards the end of this class, you are expected to produce a documentary or an essay on a research topic of your interest that is related to the central theme of the class: Dictators. Students may expand to other countries that have had (or still have) authoritarian governments or dictatorships. Projects may include academic research, audio or video documentaries. Grading is participatory, and is assigned by the group. Students may use Spanish, French or Portuguese for additional credit. Those interested in this opportunity should contact the Professors for additional guidelines.

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## **E** ADDITIONAL REMARKS

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### **INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY:**

You have received this syllabus in advance: Get your books before class starts.

You are responsible for the readings assigned for the day and must be prepared to discuss general and/or specific issues in relation to the topic in study. You should get your book from Amazon, BN or elsewhere in advance.

### **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION POLICY:**

This is not a distance course. Therefore, you must be present for all activities. MAKE UPS will not be given for any work without official documented excuses.

### **INCOMPLETE NOTATIONS POLICY:**

This course does not award incompletes.

*A notation of Incomplete, rather than a grade, may be submitted when the student has not been able to complete a course for what, in the instructor's judgment, is a compelling reason. See the Bulletin for complete information on this matter.*

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Students are expected to maintain a high level of integrity. Students submitting the work of others, or those making use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means for their projects, will obtain a grade of zero. No excuses. No exceptions. No tolerance. Students writing essays as their projects should submit them through *Turnitin* or *SafeAssign* found on BlackBoard.

### **INTERNET/COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS**

This class requires basic computer skills such as getting online, typing, using the mouse, remembering passwords, etc. For Quia, [www.quia.com](http://www.quia.com), go online and follow the steps. When asked for class code use: JCBBXE893.

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## **F** CLASSIQUETTE

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- No cell phones, please.
- No texting under desks. No texting at all.
- Computers must be closed.
- Listen respectfully when others are speaking.
- Profanity and disrespectful language or behavior towards others will NOT be tolerated.
- As much as I appreciate your participation, please be considerate and avoid monopolizing other's attention and time for learning.

**G PROPOSED CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES**

| Date   | Geography  | Contents  | Assignments  |
|--------|--|---|--|
| Sep 2  | Caribbean  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intro to class with Prof. Coates.</li> <li>Geography Terminology.</li> <li>Dictator novel.</li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get the books.</li> <li>Study a map of America.</li> </ul>                            |
| 9      | -Qualifiers-   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>How to Rule the World?</u></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sign up for your presentations.</li> </ul>  |
| 16     | Argentina  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Facundo</u></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take quiz.</li> </ul>   |
| 23     | Cuba   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Travelers Tales of Old Cuba</u></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take quiz.</li> </ul>   |
| 30     | Nicaragua  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>The Country Under My Skin</u></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-class presentations.</li> <li>Take quiz.</li> </ul>                                |
| Oct 7  | Dominican Republic   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>The Feast of the Goat</u></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-class presentations.</li> <li>Take quiz.</li> </ul>                                |
| 14     | Haiti/<br>Dominican Republic   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>General Sun, My Brother</u></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-class presentations.</li> <li>Take quiz.</li> </ul>                                |
| 21     | Haiti  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>The Kingdom of this World</u></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-class presentations.</li> <li>Take quiz.</li> </ul>                                |
| 28     | Venezuela  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>A Cowboy in Caracas</u></li> <li><b>Project Proposals Due</b></li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-class presentations of proposals.</li> <li>Take quiz.</li> </ul>                   |
| Nov 4  | Guatemala<br>El Salvador   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>The President</u></li> <li>An interpretation on Salarrué/<br/>Dalton/Argueta/Menen<br/>Desleal</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-class presentations.</li> <li>Take quiz.</li> </ul>                                |
| 11     | Martinique<br>Brazil   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Solibo Magnificent</u></li> <li><u>Literature under the Dictatorship</u> by Elizabeth Ginway</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-class presentations.</li> <li>Take quiz.</li> </ul>                                |
| 18     | Latin America  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Guide to the Perfect Latin American Idiot OR Open Veins of Latin America.</u></li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Half the class reads the <i>Guide</i> and the other half <i>Open Veins</i></li> </ul> |
| Nov 25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Project Due</li> </ul>                  |   |  |
| Dec 2  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-Class Presentations of Projects</li> </ul> |   |  |
| 9      |  |   |  |