



**SPAN312 “Murder, Madness, and Mayhem:
Latin American Literature in Translation”**

Tues, Thurs, 12:30-2pm, Buchanan D201

provisional syllabus

Jan 8, 10:	introduction
Jan 15, 17:	Sarmiento
Jan 22, 24:	Sarmiento
Jan 29, 31:	Asturias
Feb 5, 7:	Asturias
Feb 12, 14:	mid-term revision and examination
Feb 19, 21:	mid-term break
Feb 26, 28:	Roa Bastos
Mar 4, 6:	Roa Bastos
Mar 11, 13:	García Márquez
Mar 18, 20:	García Márquez
Mar 25, 27:	Vargas Llosa
Apr 1, 3:	Vargas Llosa
Apr 8, 10:	conclusion
Apr 10:	<i>Wikipedia article due</i>
Apr 21:	<i>final paper due</i>



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This course is an introduction for the non-specialist to the major contemporary Latin American literary works and their cultural background.

It will focus on novels that emerge from and about Latin American dictatorships. It will examine the relations between writing and power: the ways in which writing can be a form of power, but also power can be a form of writing, and also the ways in which writing may subvert power. We will ask the question: who can resist power's dictates?

These novels are all classics of nineteenth and twentieth-century Latin American literature, by authors such as Nobel laureates Miguel Angel Asturias and Gabriel García Márquez. NB some of these texts are long books. It would be worthwhile reading ahead.

Set texts: The set texts below are available at the UBC bookstore. You *must* do the reading in advance of the relevant classes and bring a copy of the text to class.

Domingo Sarmiento, *Facundo* (trans. Kathleen Ross)
Miguel Angel Asturias, *The President* (trans. Frances Partridge)
Augusto Roa Bastos, *I The Supreme* (trans. Helen Lane)
Gabriel García Márquez, *The General in His Labyrinth* (trans. Edith Grossman)
Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Feast of the Goat* (trans. Edith Grossman)

Blog: You will write c. 400 word weekly responses to the reading on a blog (either one you already maintain, or one you set up specifically for the class); your entries are to be tagged “span312.” You will also comment on at least two other students’ blogs each week.

Wikipedia: You will establish a Wikipedia account and, in groups, write and/or revise a Wikipedia article on a relevant topic, and submit it for Wikipedia peer review.

Assessment: One mid-term examination (20%) and one 6-8 page final paper due at the end of the semester (30%). Your Wikipedia article will count for 30%, and blog entries and comments, plus attendance and participation, will constitute the final 20% of your grade.

Course convenor: Jon Beasley-Murray (jon.beasley-murray@ubc.ca). *His office hours are Thursdays 3-5pm, BuTo 808, or by appointment.* Be in touch if you have queries or problems. Deal with problems when they arise; don't keep quiet and hope they go away!

My expectations:

Above all, what you are expected to do in this class is to engage with (that is to think critically and creatively about, and be prepared to discuss) the texts. The main aim of all the various forms of assessment is to test the extent of your engagement, and to encourage you to articulate the results of that engagement in a variety of formats.

The more effort you put in to reading the texts closely and critically, and formulating your individual responses and arguments in a manner that can be presented persuasively, the better your final grade is likely to be.

All I want you to do is *read the set texts carefully, think about your reading, and take your own position as a result.*

Here, therefore, are my golden rules:

1. To engage, you must be present. So *attend, attend, attend.* And turn up *on time.*
2. You must also have covered the material. So *read the texts.*
3. You must also be prepared to articulate your thoughts, questions, uncertainties, opinions, likes, dislikes etc. So *write your weekly blog entries.* These should be between 300 and 500 words. Spend no more than half an hour on each response: but be sure to spend that half an hour. Forcing yourself to reflect on your reading will prepare you for class and kick-start revision.
4. Finally, you must keep at it. But do not expect to grasp everything immediately. (If you did, there would be no point to the class.) So *communicate any questions or problems you may have, either in class discussion, or via email, or in my office hours.*

The golden rules again: 1) attend, 2) read, 3) write, and 4) communicate.

The *timetable* for each week will ordinarily be as follows:

Tuesdays: general discussion of the week's reading

Thursdays: close examination of specific passages and preparation for the following week

You must have completed the week's reading and written your blog post by midnight on Monday.

Good luck. And just do it.