Course: LIT 4xxx
Semester: Fall 2022
Room: TBA
Time: Tu/Th TBA
Instructor: Nathaniel Cadle
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Office: DM 467A
Office Hours: TBA

LITERATURE AND REVOLUTION

Course Policies

Course Description and Objectives:
In his book *Literature and Revolution*, the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky claimed, “A profound break in history, that is, a rearrangement of classes in society, shakes up individuality, establishes the perception of fundamental problems of lyric poetry from a new angle, and so saves art from eternal repetition…. [T]his spirit is reflected in everybody, in those who accept it and embody it, as well as in those who hopelessly struggle against it.” This course examines Trotsky’s argument that political, social, and economic revolution necessarily transforms literary expression, including writers who resist as well as embrace revolution. More specifically, this course explores the effects of the Mexican Revolution, arguably the twentieth century’s first successful radical revolution, across the literary Left, ranging from Mexican revolutionaries (some of whom identified as indigenous or *mestizo/a*) and U.S. socialists to German anarchists and even Trotsky himself (who spent the last three years of his life in exile in Mexico City).

This is a discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts towards your FIU Global Learning graduation requirement. Revolutions often have global implications: they reshape geopolitics, turn people into exiles, and spur the international dissemination of propaganda, both for and against them. In this course, students will learn how to trace and analyze those global implications through research, writing, active class discussion, and collaborative role-playing.
Discipline-Specific Learning Course Outcomes:
By the end of this course, students will be able to
1. critique the significance of the Mexican Revolution to the literary Left during the first half of the twentieth century;
2. use existing scholarship to develop arguments about the various meanings of complex literary works, including through their historical context; and
3. evaluate literature that either explicitly or implicitly advocates for or against political, social, and economic change.

Global Learning Course Outcomes:
In addition, by the end of this course,
1. students will be able to synthesize the ways that different literary texts are shaped by and help to shape revolutions in local, national, international, and global contexts (Global Awareness);
2. students will be able to analyze how writers occupying different political, economic, and cultural positions in relation to revolutions have represented those revolutions to their diverse readers (Global Perspective); and
3. students will be able to evaluate the solutions to various problems that revolutions have offered, as well as the role that literature plays in persuading diverse local, national, international, and global audiences to support or critique those solutions or to find alternative solutions (Global Engagement).

Required Texts:
Because different editions often use different translations and page numbering, you must purchase or rent the specified editions of the following books:

Mariano Azuela, *The Underdogs*, Penguin 9780143105275
Anita Brenner & George R. Leighton, *The Wind that Swept Mexico*, U of Texas 9780292790247
Nellie Campobello, *Cartucho and My Mother’s Hands*, U of Texas 9780292711112
B. Traven, *General from the Jungle*, Farrar Straus and Giroux 9780374722555

Our other readings are in the public domain and/or short enough to make available via Canvas:

Richard Harding Davis, selections from journalism
Ricardo Flores Magon, *Land and Liberty*; selections from other writings
John Mason Hart, “The Mexican Revolution, 1910-20,” from *The Oxford History of Mexico*
Jasen Landau, “From Mexico”; “Mexico”
Archibald MacLeish, *Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller’s City*; *The Fall of the City*
Eugene O’Neill, *The Movie Man*
Octavio Paz, selections from *The Labyrinth of Solitude*
Katherine Anne Porter, “Flowering Judas”
John Reed, selections from *Insurgent Mexico*
Diego Rivera, *Man at the Crossroads*; *Man, Controller of the Universe*
Leon Trotsky, selections from *Literature and Revolution*
E.B. White, “I Paint What I See”
Grading Criteria:
Your performance in this course will be evaluated via traditional grading methods. The assignments you need to complete this semester appear below, with percentages indicating their relative importance to the overall course grade. Below that, you will find the point range for each letter grade. Global Learning assignments are indicated in bold. Further information about each of these assignments appear in the next section of this syllabus. Detailed rubrics for the Global Learning assignments will be made available as the semester progresses.

Class Discussion: 10%
Draft Workshops: 5% (2.5% each)
Short Essay: 20%
Mid-Semester Reflection: 10%
Collaborative Project: 25% (15% = presentation; 10% = written reflection)
Long Essay: 30%
Total: 100%

A = 93-100 B = 83-86 C = 70-76
A - = 90-92 B - = 80-82 C = 77-79
B + = 87-89 C+ = 77-79 F = 0-59

Assignments:
Please submit each written assignment to Canvas by 11:59 AM on the day it is due. In other words, you should submit it to Canvas before we meet for that day’s class session. Be sure to type your name at the top of each assignment, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and double-space the lines in your paragraphs. These requirements do not apply to the Draft Workshops or the presentation portion of the Collaborative Project, which you will complete in class.

Class Discussion: Students learn most when actively demonstrating critical thinking and engaging their teacher and fellow students in open dialogue. Thus, active class discussion constitutes a portion of your final grade. Class discussion provides a low-risk means of expressing your views about texts, testing your ideas with your peers, thinking aloud, and demonstrating that you are doing your work. In a sense, I expect you to learn from one another as well as from me. Please note that simply showing up to class does not count as class discussion. Class discussion accounts for 10% of your final grade. You will receive 100% for class discussion if you (1) bring the text we are discussing with you to class, (2) pass any pop quizzes designed to confirm you are keeping up with assigned readings, (3) contribute meaningfully to class discussion in at least seven different classes, and (4) do not misuse technology during class (such as updating Instagram). Each time you fail to meet these requirements, you will receive 5 fewer percentage points for this grade. Thus, if you contribute to class discussion in six instead of seven classes, fail one pop quiz, and distract other students by using technology in an irrelevant way, your class discussion grade will be 85%.

Draft Workshops: There will be two draft workshops. One will occur during the class session immediately preceding the due date for the Short Essay; the other will occur during the session immediately preceding the due date for the Research Essay. In those sessions, (1) you must bring a rough draft of your essay, (2) that draft must reach at least 50% of the required length of the
essay as described in this syllabus, and (3) you must exchange drafts with two other students and provide actionable feedback on those students’ drafts, based on prompts provided during each workshop. Aim to write at least 100 words of feedback on each draft. This is effectively a pass/fail grade. You will receive full credit for each draft workshop (2.5% of your final grade) if you complete the three tasks listed above. If you know that you will be absent for a draft workshop, you will receive credit if you make an appointment with FIU’s Center for Excellence in Writing and forward a summary of their feedback to me via email. Unfortunately, due to the nature of in-class draft workshops and the quick turnaround between the workshops and the deadlines, there are no other opportunities for making them up.

Short Essay: The main claim of Leon Trotsky’s *Literature and Revolution* is that revolutions produce or reveal new social and cultural needs that new forms of literary expression meet. Scholars of Mexican literature have long regarded Mariano Azuela’s *The Underdogs* (1915) and Nellie Campobello’s *Cartucho* (1931) as among the first and most important examples of the so-called Novels of the Revolution. Write a 1,200- to 1,500-word essay about either *The Underdogs* or *Cartucho* in which you argue how that particular Novel of the Revolution responds to political, economic, or other social or cultural needs revealed by the Mexican Revolution. Frame your analysis through both Trotsky’s argument and the assigned secondary sources that discuss the history and significance of the Mexican Revolution (Hart, Paz, and Brenner & Leighton). In other words, successful essays will simultaneously (1) apply Trotsky’s argument to the context of the Mexican Revolution (or critique the argument if it has limited applicability), (2) synthesize historical and cultural information you read in other secondary sources, and (3) analyze either *The Underdogs* or *Cartucho* through both #1 and #2. This assignment is due the Tuesday of our fifth week. This assignment will serve as an assessment of your global awareness.
Mid-Semester Reflection: By the time you finish reading General from the Jungle, you should have gained a thorough understanding of the significance of the Mexican Revolution and its impact on early twentieth-century leftist literature. In a 500- to 600-word essay, reflect on what we have covered and what you have learned in the course so far. What have you learned about the relationship between literature and revolution? What has surprised or even inspired you about the literature we have read? Would you like to learn more about a particular topic that we have discussed? What big questions or uncertainties do you have about the literature and period we are studying? Before you begin writing your Mid-Semester Reflection, jot down some tentative answers to these questions. Then, in the Reflection, try to tie those answers together coherently. In other words, don’t treat those questions as a simple checklist to run through. Allow your own personality and interests to come through in your writing. This assignment is due the Tuesday of our seventh week.

Collaborative Project: Before beginning Unit 4, you will receive access to a dossier of historical documents related to Leon Trotsky’s presence in Mexico. After losing a struggle for power with Joseph Stalin, Trotsky left the Soviet Union, where his name was linked to the defendants of the Moscow Show Trials of 1936-38. In 1937, Lázaro Cárdenas, usually regarded as the last president of Mexico’s revolutionary period, granted him asylum. Operating out of Mexico City until his assassination in 1940, Trotsky collaborated across various national lines in order to offer the international Left an equally revolutionary alternative to the Comintern (or Third International), which Stalin controlled. The documents in this dossier provide insight into several of these collaborations as well as the Comintern’s attempt to suppress his remaining influence. Students will assume the identity of a historical figure represented in the dossier: Trotsky himself; James P. Cannon, an American who co-authored the platform of the Fourth International with Trotsky; André Breton, a French poet who co-authored Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art with Trotsky; Frida Kahlo, a Mexican artist who hosted Trotsky when he arrived in Mexico; probably had an affair with him; and various members of the Dewey Commission, which investigated the charges made against Trotsky during the Moscow Trials. Read the entire dossier, but pay particular attention to documents that relate to the role you are playing. This assignment will serve as an assessment of your global perspective.

During our ninth week, and speaking as the character whose identity you have assumed, you will present to the class an Executive Summary of your historical figure’s view of Trotsky. Is he
guilty of the charges the Soviet Union made against him, does he represent a more viable path forward for revolutionary art and politics, or is there a more nuanced position? Your Executive Summary should last between 4 and 6 minutes (which equates to 600-900 words). You may quote from the documents in the dossier directly or paraphrase them, as long as your Executive Summary accurately reflects the role you are playing. In other words, your Executive Summary must indicate that you understand your historical figure’s views about Trotsky and the international Left in the late 1930s. **On the Tuesday of our tenth week**, after you have presented your Executive Summary and listened to other students present theirs, you will submit a Written Reflection. In 600 to 900 words, evaluate the situation for yourself. Based on everything that you have read and heard in Unit 4, what is your judgement of Trotsky’s significance to—or negative influence on—the international Left? If you wish to compare him with other texts we have read, what did he bring—or fail to bring—to revolutionary Mexico?

**Long Essay:** Unit 5 consists of four case studies. Each case study focuses on a particular literary genre: journalistic reportage, short stories, poetry, and drama. We will read at least two different works in each genre written by authors with different attitudes toward the Mexican Revolution. Some are supportive of what the Mexican Revolution was trying to accomplish; some are dismissive; some offer nuanced critiques of certain aspects; some use themes drawn from the Mexican Revolution in new contexts. Choose one case study and write a 1,800- to 2,100-word essay in which you analyze and evaluate the texts in that case study. How, and especially why, do these texts try to persuade readers to support or oppose the Mexican Revolution’s solutions to social problems? How effectively do these texts imagine a world made better by the Mexican Revolution or, conversely, how effectively do they imagine alternatives to the Mexican Revolution? It may help to think about how this essay is different from the Short Essay. Whereas a successful Short Essay analyzes a single literary text in terms of how it directly reflects the aims of the Mexican Revolution, a successful Long Essay develops an argument about the legacy of the Mexican Revolution through critical evaluation of multiple texts that offer a range of rhetorical responses to its aims. This assignment will serve as an assessment of your global engagement.

**Academic Integrity:**
FIU defines academic misconduct in the Student Conduct and Honor Code as, “any act or omission by a Student, which violates the concept of academic integrity and undermines the academic mission of the University in violation of the Code.” Code violations include, but are not limited to, academic dishonesty, bribery, cheating, commercial use, complicity, falsification, and plagiarism. This page is available here: [https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/student-conduct-and-honor-code/index.php](https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/student-conduct-and-honor-code/index.php)

In this course, the most obvious concern regarding academic integrity is plagiarism. The best way to avoid committing plagiarism, even unintentionally, is to give credit for ideas or language you have borrowed from another source, including books, journal articles, Internet sites, interviews, and videos. If you use any of these sources, you should cite and document them, following the proper MLA format. A good resource for MLA guidelines is available here: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html)
If you have any questions concerning plagiarism, acceptable sources, and the proper documentation of sources, just reach out and contact me before the assignment is due.

**Course Schedule**

**Unit 1: The Theoretical and Historical Context (Global Awareness)**

Tu 1 Course introduction
Th 1 selections from Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (Canvas)
    Anita Brenner & George R. Leighton, *The Wind that Swept Mexico*, chapter I

Tu 2 John Mason Hart, “The Mexican Revolution, 1910-20” (Canvas)
    Anita Brenner & George R. Leighton, *The Wind that Swept Mexico*, chapter II
Th 2 Octavio Paz, selections from *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (Canvas)
    Anita Brenner & George R. Leighton, *The Wind that Swept Mexico*, chapter II

**Unit 2: The Novel of the Revolution (Global Awareness)**

Tu 3 Mariano Azuela, *The Underdogs*, First Part
    Anita Brenner & George R. Leighton, *The Wind that Swept Mexico*, chapter IV
Th 3 Mariano Azuela, *The Underdogs*, Second and Third Parts
    Anita Brenner & George R. Leighton, *The Wind that Swept Mexico*, chapter V

Tu 4 Nellie Campobello, *Cartucho and My Mother’s Hands*, all of *Cartucho* only
Th 4 Draft workshop for Short Essay

**Unit 3: Taking the Revolution across Borders (Global Perspective)**

Tu 5 Ricardo Flores Magon, selections from various writings
    B. Traven, *General from the Jungle*, chapter 1; **Short Essay due**
Th 5 Jack London, “To the Comrades of the Mexican Revolution, February 4, 1911”
    B. Traven, *General from the Jungle*, chapters 2-5

Tu 6 Gustav Landauer, “From Mexico”; “Mexico”
    B. Traven, *General from the Jungle*, chapters 6-9
Th 6 B. Traven, *General from the Jungle*, chapters 9-12

Tu 7 B. Traven, *General from the Jungle*, chapters 13-16; **Mid-Semester Reflection due**

**Unit 4: Taking Revolutions across Borders (Global Perspective)**

Tu 8 Students study and research roles individually
Th 8 General class discussion of dossier and roles

Tu 9 **Collaborative Project: Presentations, first half**
Th 9 **Collaborative Project: Presentations, second half**

Tu 10 **Collaborative Project: Written Reflections on Dossier, Roles, and Presentations due**
Unit 5: Evaluating Revolutionary Solutions, Critiques, and Alternatives (Global Engagement)
Th 10  Case study 1 (reportage): Richard Harding Davis, selections from _Insurgent Mexico_
Tu 11  Case study 1 (reportage): John Reed, selections from _Insurgent Mexico_
Tu 12  Case study 2 (short story): Katherine Anne Porter, “Flowering Judas”
Th 12  Case study 3 (poetry): Diego Rivera, _Man at the Crossroads_; _Man, Controller of the Universe_, via links:
https://www.diegorivera.org/man-at-the-crossroads.jsp#prettyPhoto
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mzQDfK3A5Q
Archibald MacLeish, _Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller’s City_
Th 13  Case study 4 (drama): Ricardo Flores Magon, _Land and Liberty_
Tu 14  Case study 4 (drama): Eugene O’Neill, _The Movie Man_
Th 14  Case study 4 (drama): Archibald MacLeish, _The Fall of the City_, (Canvas) and via link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hms-Zb7KV3w
Tu 15  Draft Workshop for Research Essay
Th 15  Course wrap-up; **Research Essay due**

Schedule for final week of the semester TBA.
Dear Alex,

This memo is provided in lieu of Chair signature on curriculum forms.

The curriculum changes below have been approved by the respective program curriculum committees and have the Chair's approval.

**Course Changes**
ENC 4260 Advanced Professional Writing
ENL 4273. Modernist British Fiction
LIT 3306 Travel Literature (GR Designation)

**New Courses**
ENC 4xx Zine Writing
LIT 4xxx Literature and Revolution (new course and GR Designation)

Best,
mc

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