ENG 496B: Early Latino/a Literature

_Hilos y Tapices (Threads and Tapestries) of Early Latinidad_

**Course Description:**

Latinx/o/a writing has existed long before 20th century state policies and publishing markets created the category we recognize today as “Latino/a literature.” This course will focus on the literary and cultural production of writers from the era of initial colonization through Latin American independence and the 19th century actions fueled by the U.S. ideology of “Manifest Destiny.” The writing students will study in this course fundamentally shaped the ways we identify and talk about “Latina/o literature” today. Throughout our exploration, students will reflect on how ideas and identities of *latinidad* are negotiated across these periods. Crucially, students will undertake these reflections by engaging with the practices and tools of the digital humanities. Students will learn to critically read and analyze primary digital archival material and its metadata, and place those materials in conversation with the literary and cultural production of its time.

The primary outcome of this course is the publication of a digital book on the _Hilos y Tapices (Threads and Tapestries) of Early Latinidad_ – through the platform Scalar. Students will use the platform to illuminate their discoveries of the threads and tapestries of early *latinidades* at work within the very fibers of *latinidad* today. How are the processes that make visible the threads, patterns, and strategies of *latinidad* employed in literary studies akin to the processes employed by the digital humanities? In bringing these examinations & methodologies together, we are able to better understand the fullness of these expressions of *latinidad* – and their curation - as efforts of world-making.

**Course Objectives / Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students will have advanced their ability to:

✓ Identify authors and experiences represented in early Latinx and Latin American writing
✓ Analyze how notions *latinidad* were articulated and negotiated from the colonization of the Americas through the 19th century
✓ Comfortably utilize the following free digital tools for their own research and publication needs: [Zotero](https://www.zotero.org) & [Scalar](https://www.scholarlycommons.org)
✓ Critically evaluate digital archives in order to understand their affordances, limitations, and biases
✓ Synthesize observations of textual material and digital objects into critical analyses
✓ Develop skills required to work independently and collaboratively on interdisciplinary, project-based learning
Required Texts
All Readings will be provided as PDFs or links on Canvas.

Course Policies
We will work to develop equitable course policies and expectations together during our first two weeks of class.

Assignment Categories:

I. Zotero Annotations and Tagging (30% of final grade)

Instead of traditional “reading logs” or essays, you will be developing research notes to be shared with your colleagues, and collaborative categories, or “tags,” that build collective threads and connections across your work. The tasks in this assignment category include:

- **Zotero Annotations**: individually-written “notes” on Zotero’s annotation platform that demonstrate a variety of entry points into analysis
- **Zotero Tags**: keywords that synthesize and establish networks of themes, patterns, other connections between readings. You will develop and revise these tags together, as you go through the course.
- **Tag Analysis Post**: A public post on our discussion board with relevant citations from the readings that elaborates on one of the Tags.

II. Digital Humanities Lab Work (10% of final grade)

The assignments in this category are designed to help facilitate your literacy with these digital tools and the affordances of the digital humanities. They include:

- Scalar Expo: Play with sample Scalar pages and share your observations and questions.
- Padlet Posts on conversations in the digital humanities
- Modules on the basics of Zotero & Metadata

III. Mastering Metadata: Personal Archive Project (15% of Final Grade)

You will create a personal digital archive that tells a story about you and how you identify yourself. This will include images, audio/video, links to online material, but no actual physical objects (but digital surrogates can represent physical objects). Through this project, you will develop your own “metadata” by thinking through the following questions:
• What objects, ideas, events, and concepts have formed my identity?
• What would a future researcher discover about me?
• What is challenging about only having a small set of items that will tell my story?
• What do the choices we make in regard to what we leave out of our personal archive tell us about ourselves?

Your archive should contain 5 objects that pertain to a range of categories I’ll provide for you to choose to address. You will post your archive a Scalar page (and thus practice messing around with Scalar!). You may choose to make your Scalar page visible to everyone in the class OR to me alone.

(Our version of this project is adapted from that of R.C. Miessler at Gettysburg College; Learn more about the project’s origins here: Personal Archive Assignment)

IV. Teach-in: Digital Object Mini-Gallery (15% of Final Grade)

Teach-ins have their history in student activism. The first “teach-in” was organized by Students for a Democratic Society and faculty at the University of Michigan in 1965, in response to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. Students and faculty occupied an academic building and held the teach-in overnight. Since then, teach-ins have occurred across campuses in response to contemporary issues from global trade to the Black Lives Matter movement. This project will embody the spirit of the teach-in, which focuses on being creative, oriented toward action, and taking ownership of the learning of our community.

This Teach-in will take the form of a “micro-gallery” of your creation. You will choose 3 digital objects, one from each of the following archives:
• The Benson Library Digital Collections
• The Library of Congress
• The Internet Archive

Your task will be to organize them under a keyword/concept into a mini exhibition. Your aim is to curate a story about these objects using information from their metadata as well as the content of the object itself. You will post your gallery and commentary on a Scalar page (and thus practice messing around with Scalar!).

V. Scalar Book Contribution (30% of Final Grade)

This assignment category includes three overall tasks:

• Your individual contribution to the Scalar book, which will be one of the following:
  ○ A PATH that maps a thread of early latinidad – an idea; an innovation; a specific formation of identity. The path should include:
- 2-3 literary “objects” with “metadata” and commentary - a close reading or other mode of textual analysis
- 3-5 digital objects with metadata and analysis commentary
  - A TAG page that coalesces the *threads* into a “tapestry” – in other words, a keyword or term that is embedded within and helps draw connections across paths.
- Peer Review efforts:
  - Path writers will serve as peer reviewers for Tag page writers, and vice-versa.
- A final Reflection on the project & course as a whole.

### COURSE AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

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<th>Week &amp; Focus</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Selection from <em>Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America</em>, Juan Gonzalez&lt;br&gt;Selection from <em>Open Veins of Latin America</em>, Eduardo Galeano&lt;br&gt;Selection from <em>Culture Works: Space, Value and Mobility Across the Neoliberal Americas</em>, Arlene Dávila</td>
<td>Zotero Module 2: Setting up Tags (activity + video from York University; <a href="#">Working with Tags</a>)&lt;br&gt;Zotero annotations and tags&lt;br&gt;Course Policy Ratification</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Choose an archive or archivist on <a href="#">Pop Archivist</a>&lt;br&gt;Simon Fowler: “Inappropriate Expectations” From <em>The Silence of The Archive</em></td>
<td>Post a Padlet visualization of your take-away from the readings&lt;br&gt;Scalar Expo: Add your observations and questions about model Scalar Pages in our shared Google Sheet</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><em>Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition</em>, Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca&lt;br&gt;<em>The Florida of the Inca</em> “El Inca”</td>
<td>Zotero annotations and tags</td>
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| 16th century writings | Garcilaso de la Vega  
| Rabinal Achí |  |
| 5  |
| 17th and 18th century writings | Loa to the Divine Narcissus; poetry of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz  
| “The History of New Mexico,” Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá  
| “An Old Woman Remembers,” Eulalia Pérez  
| Diary of Governor de Anza’s Expedition against the Comanche Nation, Juan Bautista de Anza | Zotero annotations and tags |
| 6 | Review Zotero Annotations  
| Jeannette A. Bastian: “Radical Recordkeeping: How Community Archives are Changing How We Think About Records” | Zotero Tag Analysis Post  
| Complete Metadata Intro Module (includes Metadata MOOC 1-1; Metadata MOOC 2-1: Introduction; Metadata MOOC 2-3 Dublin Core Elements + reflection activity) |
| 7 | “Google Has a Striking History of Bias Against Black Girls,” Safiya Noble (author of Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism) | Complete the Personal Archive Project |
| 8  |
| 19th century writings | Documents: “The Monroe Doctrine” (1823)  
| “Coney Island;” “Our America,” José Martí  
| “The Song of Borinquen;” “A Cuba,” Lola Rodríguez de Tió | Complete Personal Archive Project Reflection  
| Zotero annotations and tags |
| Documents: “Texas, Mexico, and Manifest Destiny” (1845); Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848)  
| “The Squatter and the Don,” María Amparo Ruiz de Burton | |
| 9 | 19th century writings | Document: “I Took Final Action in 1903” (1903; Roosevelt)  
*To Roosevelt,” Rubén Darío  
“The Birth of the God of War,” María Cristina Mena  
Articles by Arturo Schomburg:  
“Questions by a Porto Rican;”  
“The Roosevelt Doctrine;”  
“The Negro Digs Up His Past,” “Notes on Panama and the Negro” | Zotero annotations and tags |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Tags & Storytelling | Roopika Risam: “The Stakes of Postcolonial Digital Humanities” | Zotero Tag Analysis Post  
Post a Padlet visualization of your take-away from the reading |
| 11 | Curation & Storytelling | Archive Exploration:  
· The Benson Library Digital Collections  
· The Library of Congress  
· The Internet Archive | Teach-in: Mini Gallery of Digital Objects |

**SCALAR BOOK COMPLETION**

| 12 | “Path” Curators & Authors | Draft individual Scalar Path | “Tag” Page Authors / Network Developers  
Serve as Peer Reviewers and Scalar platform assistants |
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| 14 | “Path” Curators & Authors | Serve as Peer Reviewers and Scalar platform assistants | Draft “Tag” page |
| 15 | “Path” Curators & Authors | Serve as Peer Reviewers and Scalar platform assistants | Draft “Tag” page |
| 16 | “Path” Curators & Authors | Present Completed Book and Celebrate!  
Submit Project Reflection | “Tag” Page Authors / Network Developers  
Serve as Peer Reviewers and Scalar platform assistants |