
Dr. Diane Accaria-Zavala, retired professor [2009 syllabus provided for reference purposes]
guanara@onelinkpr.net

Course Description:
A crucial topic for the modern and contemporary American novelist is that of imperialism and its legacy or effect on the national and transnational landscape. The imperial enterprise deeply affects the collective psyche (a nation’s sense of national identity and collective goals), and the individual (on either side of the imperial project). As writers living the “experience” and consequence of the “flawed design” within the imperial enterprise of their nation, they felt that its’ gigantic meaning ranged from personal and national destiny to human destiny itself. While it assumes purity of motive, the national spirit in the imperial enterprise, supports relentless physical or ideological expansionism or interventionism, causing great human and ecological strife. For writers such as the Native American Scott Momaday, or the Anglo Americans such as William Faulkner, and more recently Cormac McCarthy, the task to establish the fateful ramifications of empire or colonialism becomes as imperative as it does subversive.

In their work, foundational themes, myths, or stereotypes such as the frontier or border, Western progress, expansionism, colonialism, nature vs. nurture, civilization, savagery, the land (or home-land), violence, regeneration, transgression, or redemption, miscegenation, ethnic purity, are revisited, scrutinized, de-mystified, and, at times, subverted. These novelists invariably portray their characters’ internal lives, their mental, emotional and spiritual condition, as they avertedly or inadvertently partake of the nation’s political, economic or ideological enterprise. Usually their characters are deeply troubled with internal, existential struggles; are world-weary or cynical, finding themselves rootlessly existing in usually seedy or sordid circumstances. Their stories usually occur in poor, hot, and dusty landscapes such as America’s Southwest, or the South, or Mexico, Haiti, or Cuba. Suffering and unhappiness are omnipresent in the “fallen” world these novelists depict, and ideological or theological faith is posed against a background of unvarying human evil, sin, and doubt. In short, these chosen novelists present, and grapple with, the reality of evil within a national, transnational, and personal landscape. In doing so, they comment on the past and future of their nation and their people; they denounce the inevitable catastrophe of unrelentless exploitation and provoke, in future generations, a possible and hopeful redemption in acknowledgement and in a commitment for change.

During the course of our study, certain films (either adaptations of these novelist’s work, or screenplays they have authored) may be screened as supplementary material.

Required texts:
A. Ordered at BORDERS / Plaza Las Americas (see Ileana Barreto if you have trouble):

William Faulkner:

N. Scott Momaday

Cormac McCarthy
B. Reserved Readings (in the Richardson Seminar Room [PED 107] under course number; *seek on line):

1. Literature (stories or excerpts):
   - **Faulkner** [*"Nobel Prize Award Speech" (1949; *seek on line)]
   - **Scott Momaday** [Excerpt of novel: *House Made of Dawn* (1968); Prologue; July 20, July 21, July 28]
   - **W. Whitman** [Poem: “Facing West from California’s Shore” (1860)]
   - **F.S. Fitzgerald** [Excerpt of novel: *The Great Gatsby* (1925)]
   - **Cherokee Myth:** “The Bear Man”

2. Essays (historical, literary criticism, cultural or literary theory / *seek on line):
   - **Cohn, Deborah N.** “Faulkner and Spanish America: Then and Now” (2003)
   - **Eddins, Dwight.** “‘Everything a Hunter and Everything Hunted’: Schopenhauer and Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*” (2003)
   - **Fanon, Frantz.** From: *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961): “Reciprocal Basis of National Culture and the Fight for Freedom”
   - **Frye, Northrup.** “The Archetypes of Literature” (1951)
   - **Howe, Irving.** “The Idea of the Modern” (1967)
   - **Jameson, Fredric.** “Postmodernism and Consumer Society” (1988)
   - **Lukacs, Georg.** “The Ideology of Modernism” (1957)
   - **Messenet, Peter.** "‘No Way Back Forever’: American Western Myth in Cormac McCarthy's Border Trilogy” (2005)
   - **Nelson Limerick, Patricia.** From *The Legacy of Conquest* (1988): “Introduction: Closing the American Frontier and Opening Western History”; “Chap. 1: Empire of Innocence; Chap. 6: The Persistence of Natives”; “Chap. 7: America the Borderland”; “Chap. 10: The Burdens of Western American History”
   - **‘Pitavy, F.** “Prohibition in William Faulkner's *Sanctuary*: Motif and Metaphor”[*Seek on line]
   - **Roberts, Marilyn.** “Scarface, The Great Gatsby, and the American Dream”[*Seek on line]
   - **‘Schrader, P.** “Notes on Film Noir I and II” [*Seek on line]
   - **Snead, J.** “The "Joint" of Racism: Withholding the Black in Absalom, Absalom!” (1987)
• Stevens, J. W. "Bear, Outlaw, and Storyteller" (2001)
• Sundquist, E. "Absalom, Absalom! and the House Divided" (1983)
• Trefzer, Annette. "Postcolonial Displacements in Faulkner’s Indian Stories of the 1930s" (2003)
• *Turner, Frederick Jackson. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893) [*Seek on line]: www.learner.org/workshops/.../docs/turner.html

Course Outline [check Course Calendar for details on due dates]:

Week I-II: ‘The Legacy of Conquest’ in the US: From Modernism to Post Modernism--Literature as a Subversive Act
Readings: Theory/History: Turner; Nelson Limerick; Fanon; Lukacs; Howe; Frye
Screenings: "The West" (Doc:1996; all 8 episodes *available in Lab)

Week III: Going Over Bounds—A Legacy of Corruption, the Gangster and Modernity
Readings: Whitman "Facing West from California’s Shore"; Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby (1925); M. Roberts; Schrader
Screenings: Public Enemy (1930); Scarface (1932); The Maltese Falcon (1941); "Double Indemnity (1944); "Citizen Kane (1946); Public Enemies (2009)

Week IV-VII: William Faulkner: The Flawed Design of Empire & the Legacy of Postcolonial Displacement
Readings: Novels: Sanctuary (1931); Absalom, Absalom! (1936) / Short stories: “Red Leaves”; “Dry September”; “The Old People”; “The Bear”; “Nobel Prize Award Speech” / Criticism: Bongie; Cohn; McHale; Stanchich; Tebbetts; Trefzer; Pitavy; Sundquist; Snead; Porter.

Week VIII-X: Scott Momaday: On Being “Bear”—Exercises in Savagery

Week XI-XV: Cormac McCarthy: The Legacy of Conquest—Blood, Sweat & Tears

Teaching strategies*: Seminar based on lectures, class discussions, and student-generated analysis.

*Los estudiantes que reciban servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional pueden recibir acomodo razonable y equipo asistivo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos para las Personas con Impedimento (OAPI) del Decanato de Estudiantes.

Evaluation Method*: Three grades (each one: 33.9%)
• Mid Term Exam @ 100 points
• Research Paper (includes Proposal, Annotated Bibliography & 18-24 pp essay on student’s topic choice)
• Reviews, Assignments, Oral Reports @ 100 points (4 during the semester).

*Bevaluación diferenciada disponible para estudiantes con necesidades especiales.

Bibliography [*assigned texts / **highly recommended and in Richardson Seminar Room]:


*Schrader, P. "Notes on Film Noir I and II." ON LINE: permophiles.spaces.live.com/.../cns!49386EFDA74809EA!1571.entry


Electronic resources:

- http:www.gutenberg.org/etext/3120
- http:www.modern-fiction-network.org
- http:www.imdb.com
- http:www.lanic.utexas.edu/project/arl.
- Library of Congress digital/digitized collections:
  - http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ or http:www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html

ASSIGNED FILMS

[Note: Films cannot be screened in class but are assigned as HOME or LAB viewings. Just as your literary or theory texts, these films are compulsory for class discussion. These films may be seen in our Resource Center (The Lab) with a previously set appointment or you may rent them on your own. Please make pertinent arrangements and see these films before their due date. *Indicates not available in Lab.]

The West (Doc:1996)
Public Enemy (1930)
Scarface (1932)
The Maltese Falcon (1941)
Double Indemnity (1944)
Citizen Kane (1946)
Intruder in the Dust (1949)
Two Soldiers (2005)
House Made of Dawn (1969)
Skins (2007)
No Country for Old Men (2007)
The Road (2009)
All the Pretty Horses (2000)
Public Enemies (2009)

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