

Humanities 321: Major Works of Literature—The Modern World

“Variants of Realism and the Modern World-System”

Instructor: Kelly Todd Brewer
Office Hours: Wednesday 9:00-12:00 or by appointment

Zoom: <https://sabanciuniv.zoom.us/j/94140087317>

Lecture: Wednesday 1:40-4:30

Humanities 321 this semester will survey various manifestations of Realism in the works of four prominent authors: Leo Tolstoy (Russia), Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia) and Isabel Allende (Chile). The course will focus on the writers and their works in the scope of the “modern world-systems analysis”—a multidisciplinary approach to world history, social inequality and class structures and the pervasive legacy of what has been deemed “the long 16th century” in which the rise of nation-states and international trade occasioned the “discovery” of new (foreign) lands and the subsequent colonization of its peoples. In this regard, the course canvasses and critiques how the authors through various forms of realist fiction reflect the fallout from the crisis of feudalism, colonization, decolonization and ultimately the advent of the Cold War in a bi-polar world. The course attempts to show how realist fiction depicts events of the modern world as an ever-present continuum that increasingly transplanted feudalism, in a capitalist mode of production, from core states (Western Europe) to the peripheral colonies in Africa and Latin America. As such, the course pays close attention to the notion of the “West and the Rest” of the world and the cultural antagonisms that emerged as a result of cultural clashes.

In addition to the selected readings, students will view several documentaries and films that provide the historical backdrop for the periods and writers in question.

The Goal of the Course

By the end of the course, students will 1) have broad range of knowledge of various modes of realist fiction and the writers associated with the movements 2) understand the interdependent relationship between literature, politics and ideology 3) have an understanding of how humanity and the “human condition”—both good and bad—are interconnected on a global scale 4) demonstrate comprehension of the materials through a series of short papers.

Course Requirements

Students attend ALL classes having done the necessary preparatory work. Class participation is a substantial portion of the final grade. This is a seminar, which means that your regular, active participation is expected. Attendance is compulsory in lectures and discussion sections. Failure to attend more than two times will result in a reduction of points from the overall grade. Students who miss more than 9 hours of classes/discussions in total will automatically lose the participation grade. Medical reports are subject to the approval of the instructor. The instructor retains the right to decline a medical report. PFD files are available in the resources section of the course on SUCourse.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are suspected of submitting work that is not your own, you will be either asked to do an oral exam, fail the assignment (potentially the course) or be brought up before the ethics committee of the university.

Students with disabilities will be accommodated according to their special needs. In such cases, students should inform the instructor and also write to specialneeds@sabanciuniv.edu in order to arrange for accommodations.

Attendance and Participation

Please keep your cameras on during all live sessions. Participation (contribution to class discussions, poll participation, general involvement, etc.) will be taken into consideration along with attendance in grade calculations.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

The HUM 321 classroom is free from all discrimination based on, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, language, disability, gender, and sexual orientation. Students are expected to maintain this environment.

Breakdown of grades

30 % Response papers (10 points each)

20% Midterm Exam

30 % Final Exam

20 % Participation and Attendance

Average	59	64	68	72	76	80	84	88	92	96
Letter Grade	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A

Week 1 (February 28): Introduction to the course and key terms

Week 2 (March 8) Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*

Week 3 (March 15): Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*

Response paper I

Week 4 (March 22): Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Week 5: (March 29): Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Week 6 (April 5): Gabriel García Márquez, “Big Mama’s Funeral”

Response paper II

Week 7 (April 12): Gabriel García Márquez, “Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother”

Week 8 (April 19): Gabriel García Márquez, “Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother”

Week 9 (April 26): MIDTERM EXAM

Week 10 (May 3): Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits*

Week 11 (May 10): Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits*

Response paper III

Week 12 (May 17): Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits*

Week 13 (May 24): Isabel Allende *The House of the Spirits*

Week 14 (May 31): Review