

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2015-2016 LA ST 499 B1/ C LIT 497 B1: Special Topics:
Latin American Culture and the Environment**

(Winter Term)

Instructor: *Odile Cisneros*

Office: *Arts 218-C*

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Personal Website: *TBA*

Time: *W 2:00-4:50*

Place: *TB 100*

Office Hours: *M & F 11-12*

or by appointment

Course Website: *eClass (Moodle) under
LA ST 499/C LIT 497 Combined*

Course Prerequisite: None

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed, no such projects approved

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional N/A

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material available

Exam registry – Students' Union

<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>

See explanations below

Document distributed in class

Other: Details provided by instructor in class

NA

Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)

Yes No

Course Description and Objectives:

How have writers, artists, and intellectuals in Latin America responded to the ecological challenges of the 20th and 21st centuries? What can Latin America, with its embattled past of both human and resource exploitation, teach us about alternative relationships with human and non-human nature? Can Amerindian views of nature help us rethink our place in the environment? From the new perspective of environmental humanities, this seminar-style course will explore both theoretical concepts in environmental criticism as well as art, music, literature, and film that raise ecological issues. Topics we will address include: air and water pollution & environmental justice; garbage, recycling & aesthetics;

animals; indigenous views of nature; man vs. environment; and ecotourism. Through consideration of both primary and secondary texts, we will attempt to chart Latin American culture's unique perspective on the environment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Define environmental humanities, ecocriticism, and green studies.
- Discuss the assumptions behind Western approaches to humans and nature and how they shape our interactions with the environment.
- Describe theoretical concepts and approaches in ecocriticism, and develop appropriate vocabulary to explore them.
- Name several environmental problems prevalent in Latin America.
- List 6 major intellectual figures from Latin America who have engaged arts and literature from an environmental perspective and comment how they have done that.
- Compare and contrast Western notions about nature with Native American and indigenous views.
- Describe how art and culture can uniquely inform ecological thinking and environmental attitudes.
- Perform a reading of a literary or visual text from an ecocritical perspective.

Texts:

LA ST 499 / C LIT 497 Selected Readings (electronic coursepack available on eClass)

Supplementary materials will be distributed through eClass as specified in "Supplementary Class Schedule" and more materials, including films, may be placed on reserve.

Grade Distribution (see "Explanatory Notes"):

Active class participation (of which attendance only 5%)	10%
4 short reaction papers (2-3 pp) on readings/viewings (each 5%)	20%
Joint presentation on a mutually agreed on topic	15%
Midterm exam, Wed., Feb. 10	25%
Final paper (8-10 pp) due: Fri., April 15 at noon in Arts 218-C	30%

Total: 100%

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Since this course is primarily based on the discussion of texts and films, students are required to attend class properly prepared, having done the readings and/or viewing/listening specified on the Class Schedule. Unless otherwise indicated, the readings are to be found on eClass. Other recommended books may be placed on Reserve at Rutherford Library. In addition to readings on eClass and recommended books, supplementary course materials will be posted on eClass or may be placed on reserve at the Rutherford Library Reserve Desk.

Attendance and active participation in class discussion will determine 10% of the grade.

Students will hand in 4 short reaction papers (2-3 pp) on the date of their choice based on readings/viewing scheduled for that week. These are your own reflections on the assigned readings for the course. They should demonstrate you have read and understood the ideas in the reading/viewing and that you engage critically with them.

A joint presentation on an assigned topic will be required of students and scheduled by the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

One midterm exam will be given on Feb. 10, based on material from the first half the semester.

A research paper based on a topic chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor will be due on Friday, April 15, at noon. The final paper topic must be approved in writing by the instructor through submission of an abstract by the student at a date TBA. The mechanics of the paper should conform to the MLA or Chicago Manual of Style format.

Details of assignments will also be discussed in the course of the semester and detailed instructions will be posted on eClass.

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.”

Academic Integrity:

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment safe and free of discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels this policy has been or is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>).

Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110>

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the Student Conduct and Accountability (<http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/Students.aspx>) and the Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook (<http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en/Students/UndergraduateHandbook.aspx>) regarding the definitions of **plagiarism** and its consequences when detected. If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the Academic Discipline Process (<http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/~media/osja/Documents/DisciplineChartAcademic.pdf>)

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1)) <http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.3.html#23.3>) and 23.5.6 (<http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.5.html#23.5>) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

In this course, participatory attendance and completion of daily assignments will count in sum for 10% of the grade. Please see course description, grade distribution, and explanatory notes on assignments above for details on participation.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Otherwise, assignments may be handed in one class-day after the stated deadline without penalty, with a 1%-per-class-day penalty assessed for each subsequent class-day of lateness. **No extensions will be granted on the final project.**

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Student Accessibility Services, contact their office immediately (2-800 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB www.ssd.ualberta.ca).

Grading:

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below (“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Letter	%	Pts	Descriptor
A+	95-100%	4.0	Excellent: Superior performance showing understanding and knowledge of the subject matter far exceeding expectations.
A	90-94%	4.0	Excellent: Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A-	86-89%	3.7	Excellent: Clearly above average performance with complete knowledge of subject matter.
B+	82-85%	3.3	Good
B	75-81%	3.0	Good: average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
B-	70-74%	2.7	Good
C+	66-69%	2.3	Satisfactory: Basic understanding of the subject matter
C	61-65%	2.0	Satisfactory
C-	58-60%	1.7	Satisfactory
D+	55-57%	1.3	Poor: Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.
D	50-54%	1.0	Minimal Pass: Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.
F	0-49%	0.0	Failure: Unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.