

Topics in Ethnic American Literature Section 01

ENGL 165

Fall 2022 4 Unit(s) 08/19/2022 to 12/06/2022 Modified 08/20/2022

Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Maite Urcalegui
Email:	maite.urcalegui@sjsu.edu
Office Location:	Faculty Offices Building (FOB) 216
Office Hours Information:	Mondays & Wednesdays 3-4 p.m. in person in FOB 216 Tuesdays 4-5 p.m. on Zoom . https://sjsu.campusconcourse.com/Mondays%20&%20Wednesdays%203-4%20p.m.%20in%20person%20in%20FOB%20216%20%20%20Tuesdays%204-5%20p.m.%20on%20Zoom%3A%20%20%20%20%20%20https%3A/sjsu.zoom.us/j/84765764961?pwd=MkFXSTVhb0d3alF2NXZ1Tm9XZEZKUT09
Class Day, Time, & Location:	Mondays & Wednesdays 1:30-2:45 p.m. Boccardo Business Center (BBC) 130

Course Description and Requisites

English 165, also cross-listed with African American Studies 165, is a focused study of a topic in ethnic American Literature, such as African American, Asian American, Latino American, or ethnic autobiography. Topics change; check schedule of classes for current offering.

This iteration of the course, “**Latinx Comic Art and Activism**,” examines how Latinx artists and activists have used the comics form to represent intersectional identities, create community, advocate for political change, and speculate alternative futures. “Latinx” is a gender-inclusive term that was developed by young queer and trans activists to describe the experience of people within the U.S. and Canada who are from or have origins in “Latin America” (Mexico, South America, and the Caribbean). Latinx, as an umbrella term, describes a diverse array of geographic, national, and ethnoracial identities and communities that are not monolithic or homogenous. Comics, in their visual and verbal hybridity, are a generative form through which to explore the intersections, complexities, nuances, and conflicts within the diversity that is Latinx. In addition to spanning these diverse histories and identities, the comics, cartoons, and graphic novels we will read in this course will also span a variety of forms and genres, including superhero comics, sci-fi, autobiography, and political cartoons. We will study and situate these works within a longer history of comic art and visual culture within Latinx struggles for social justice. Students will engage in close reading/viewing, critical thinking and discourse, analytical writing, and creative writing and comics making to develop and showcase their knowledge throughout this course.

Course may be repeated for credit for a total of 8 units.

Prerequisite(s): Upper division standing.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

Engaging in Scholarly Discourse & Community

The classroom is a professional setting of learning. Please come prepared to discuss the day's materials (having done the reading) and participate in class activities. You are welcome to read and take notes on your phone, laptop, or tablet. However, please use your devices only for class work during our time together.

Our class will require participation and collaborations and will cover complex issues, such as but not limited to race and racism, gender, and sexuality. Your respectful, responsible, and self-aware engagement and dialogue will be vital to maintaining a productive and collaborative learning community. While we will develop community expectations and discussion guidelines in class, here are some foundational considerations:

- We can disagree and challenge each other's thinking and ideas in a civil, respectful, and productive way as long as that disagreement is not predicated on hate or exclusion. As James Baldwin famously said, "We can disagree and still love each other, unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist."
- We will strive to avoid sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist and other marginalizing language. If harmful language is used in class, we will address it together as a learning moment to the extent it is appropriate and safe to do so. Intentionally violent and exclusionary language (i.e., slurs of any kind), however, will not be tolerated.
- When a slur appears within a text, as will sometimes occur, please do not reproduce it in your own writing or say it aloud. You may say "first letter of word-word" (i.e. "s-word") or simply redact it with a written (-----) or spoken pause. If you are unsure of the history or meaning of a word, please ask or do your research.
- In this course, we will explore diverse narratives through an intersectional framework that recognizes how we all negotiate multiple identities and embody varying relationships to power and privilege. The same intersectional theories that inform our reading should shape how we engage in dialogue in this learning community.
- Close attention to the language that we use is a necessary component of close reading within literary studies. Please be mindful of the language you use and the relationship between language and power.

A Note about Emails

Please be aware that I do not respond to emails outside of traditional business hours, M-F 9-5. If it is not a weekend and I have not responded to your email within 48 hours, please do not hesitate to follow up and send me a reminder.

When you email me, please be clear, concise, and respectful. Include a subject that states the purpose of your email as well as a greeting and a signature that includes your name.

Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance. Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of course or assignment goals:

- A [90-92=A-, 93-96=A, 97-100=A+] = Excellent;
- B [80-82=B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+] Above average;
- C [70-72=C-, 73-76=C, 77-79=C+] = Average;
- D [60-62=D-, 63-66=D, 67-69=D+] = Below average;
- F = Failure.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.

2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

English 165 supports students in achieving all five of these Program Learning Outcomes.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: english@sjsu.edu (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

By reading course texts and engaging in class assignments, activities, and discussions, students will learn to:

1. Identify and discuss different historical trends, cultural contexts, and aesthetic traditions within Latinx comic art.
 - i. You will read theory and criticism within both Latinx studies and comics studies alongside comics and graphic novels to understand major trends, discourses, and debates within Latinx comics (Course Readings & Participation; Group Teaching Facilitation).
2. Analyze how comic art emerges within and responds to power dynamics, including colonialism, racism, xenophobia and nationalism, classism, ableism, and sexism, including cis- and hetero-sexism.
 - ii. You will explore how visual culture and comic art have been a part of Latinx struggles for social justice and analyze the ways that Latinx artists portray, critique, and reimagine intersecting power structures (Group Teaching Facilitation; Collaborative Close Reading Practice; Close Reading Paper)
3. Use foundational comics theory to identify the elements of the form and to construct original arguments about course texts and to create your own original comics.
 - iii. You will develop and hone your close reading methodology by discussing how the details (both visual and verbal) of the page contribute to a text's meaning and practicing this through making (Collaborative Close Reading Practice; Close Reading Paper; "Biography of Belonging" Mini-Comic; Final Comic Portfolio & Showcase).

Course Materials

*Note that all of these books are available at the [campus bookstore \(https://sjsu.bncollege.com/course-material-listing-page?bypassCustomerAdoptions=true\)](https://sjsu.bncollege.com/course-material-listing-page?bypassCustomerAdoptions=true) and on our [Leganto course reserve \(https://csu-sjsu.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/leganto/readinglist/lists/6465346830002919?institute=01CAL_SJO&auth=SAML\)](https://csu-sjsu.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/leganto/readinglist/lists/6465346830002919?institute=01CAL_SJO&auth=SAML). Some are available as an eBook that allows multiple check outs and some are print materials on loan for 2-hour periods, so please plan ahead. While it is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to these texts, you are not required to purchase them. If you have trouble getting access to or finding these texts, please reach out to the instructor or library liaison.

Kat Fajardo, *Miss Quinces*

Emil Ferris, *My Favorite Thing Is Monsters*

Sharon Lee De La Cruz, *I'm a Wild Seed*

Liliam Rivera & Steph C., *Unearthed: A Jessica Cruz Story*

Lila Quintero Weaver, *Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White*

Gabby Rivera & Celia Moscote, *Juliet Takes a Breath: The Graphic Novel*

Cristy C. Road, *Spit and Passion*

Duncan Tonatiuh, *Undocumented: A Worker's Fight*

*All other readings will be made available on Canvas.

Library Liaison

You may contact either (or both) Kathryn Blackmer Reyes (kathryn.blackmerreyes@sjsu.edu) and/or Peggy Cabrera (peggy.cabrera@sjsu.edu) if you would like additional research support for your work in this course.

☰ Course Requirements and Assignments

All assignment instructions and grading criteria will be discussed in class and posted on Canvas prior to the deadline.

In-class participation (10%): I encourage you to participate in class discussion not only by sharing your thoughts and asking questions but also by actively listening. I understand, however, that we all participate and process knowledge in different ways. The graded portion of your participation will not be based on how much you talk in class but will be based on a series of informal reflections, writing assignments, and small group activities done in class.

Group Teaching Facilitation (15%): The group teaching facilitations are an opportunity for you to become the teachers, share your excitement about a text, and lead class discussion. Your goal is to kickstart class discussion by offering a collaborative close reading that then opens to 2-3 open-ended discussion questions for the class. Presentations will be collaborative, and groups will meet with me in office hours prior to presenting.

Collaborative Close Reading Practice (10%): In groups you will read a single page or scene from a text and discuss your close readings and build ideas. Then, independently you will develop your own tentative thesis statement that you support with a single body paragraph (about 1-1 ½ pages). This is a low-stakes opportunity for you to practice selecting and analyzing concrete details from a literary text that will then serve as a foundation for the close reading paper.

Close Reading Paper (20%): This 5-7-page close reading paper invites you to follow your curiosity as you pursue an original argument (a thesis) about an assigned literary work of your choice. This paper offers a space for you to engage in sustained close reading as a methodology for exploring what literature means, how it is important, and how it participates in cultural production and contemporary issues.

"Biography of Belonging" Mini-Comic (15%): The "Biography of Belonging" assignment is inspired by Alberto Ledesma's graphic autobiography *Diary of a Reluctant Dreamer* and is a low-stakes opportunity to practice making comics for the final portfolio & showcase. You will create a mini-comic using [one sheet of paper \(https://marekbennett.com/1sheet/\)](https://marekbennett.com/1sheet/) that explores some aspect of your own personal biography.

Final Comic Portfolio & Showcase (30%): In your final project, you will create a longer-form comic, a minimum of 5 pages plus a jacket. You will then write a critical reflection where you reflect on the aesthetic and thematic choices you made and connect them to course content. Finally, you will showcase and celebrate your work with a 3-minute flash presentation at our class "Con."

✓ Grading Information

*Please see "Program Information" for more details regarding grading. Assignment instructions and grading criteria will be discussed in class and posted on Canvas prior to the deadline.

In-class participation 10%

Group Teaching Facilitation 15%

Collaborative Close Reading Practice 10%

Close Reading Paper 20%

"Biography of Belonging" Mini-Comic 15%

Final Comic Portfolio & Showcase 30%

Extra Credit: You may earn extra credit of up to a 3% points on your final grade by posting up to six responses in the optional course discussion forums on Canvas. Note that you are always welcome to post more, but you cannot exceed the 3% point extra credit.

Extensions & Late Work: I am very willing to work with you if you anticipate that you may need extra time to submit your best work in an assignment. However, I can only do this if you communicate with me in advance. Please email me at least 72 hours in advance if you would like to request an extension on an assignment. Unless there is an emergency, extensions will not be granted if the assignment is due in less than 72 hours. If late work is submitted, it will be graded at the instructor's discretion and may receive a deduction.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Note that, while I will not add more work to this schedule, the timing and exact readings are subject to change and will be communicated accordingly.

Topic, Week, & Date	Readings, Assignments, & Deadlines
Course Introduction	Introduction to course & "conocimiento"
Week 1 Aug. 22-24	
What is Latinx?	Monday 8/29
Week 2 Aug. 29-31	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read Catalina M. de Onís "What's in an 'x'?: An Exchange about the Politics of 'Latinx'"Read selected shorts from Frederick Luis Aldama's <i>Tales from La Vida</i>Discuss Group Teaching Facilitation & Sing-Up Wednesday 8/31 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Read Claudia Milian "Introduction" & "Articulations" from <i>LatinX</i>
What is Latinx Comics?	Monday 9/5
Week 3 Sept. 5-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No class due to the Labor Day holiday. Enjoy some time to rest and catch up on reading! Wednesday 9/7 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Read Scott McCloud Ch. 1-4 from <i>Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art</i>Read Aldama <i>Your Brain on Latino Comics</i> p. 1-21

Topic, Week, & Date	Readings, Assignments, & Deadlines
Latinx Artistic & Activist Histories Week 4 Sept. 12-14	Monday 9/12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read selected cartoons from Lalo Alcaraz & Eric J. García • Read Lenny M. Cauich Maldonado “Trans-hemispheric activism: Mexican and Latinx Grafica” Wednesday 9/14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read selections from Alberto Ledesma <i>Diary of a Reluctant Dreamer</i>
Undocumented Narratives Week 5 Sept. 19-21	Monday 9/19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Alberto Ledesma “Doodling as Activism” • Read Evelyn Nakano Glenn “Constructing Citizenship: Exclusion, Subordination, and Resistance” Wednesday 9/21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Biography of Belonging Mini-Comic
Week 6 Sept. 26-28	Monday 9/26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read first half of Duncan Tonatiuh <i>Undocumented: A Worker’s Fight</i> Wednesday 9/28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish Duncan Tonatiuh <i>Undocumented: A Worker’s Fight</i> • Submit “Biography of Belonging” Mini-Comic
Civil Rights Struggles Week 7 Oct. 3-5	Monday 10/3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read first half of Lila Quintero Weaver <i>Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White</i> Wednesday 10/5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish <i>Darkroom</i>
Queer Coming of Age Week 8 Oct. 10-12	Monday 10/10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read first quarter of Emil Ferris’ <i>My Favorite Thing is Monsters</i> Wednesday 10/12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read second quarter of Emil Ferris’ <i>My Favorite Thing is Monsters</i> • Discuss Collaborative Close Reading Practice
Week 9 Oct. 17-19	Monday 10/17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read third quarter of Emil Ferris’ <i>My Favorite Thing is Monsters</i> Wednesday 10/19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish Emil Ferris’ <i>My Favorite Thing is Monsters</i> • Submit Collaborative Close Reading Practice

Topic, Week, & Date	Readings, Assignments, & Deadlines
Punk Comics Week 10 Oct. 24-26	Monday 10/24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read first half of Cristy C. Road <i>Spit and Passion</i> Wednesday 10/26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish Cristy C. Road <i>Spit and Passion</i>
Week 11 Oct. 31-Nov. 2	Monday 10/31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read selected issues of Gilbert & Jaime Hernandez (Los Bros Hernandez) <i>Love and Rockets</i> Wednesday 11/2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read selected issues of Gilbert & Jaime Hernandez (Los Bros Hernandez) <i>Love and Rockets</i>
Mini-Comics Week 12 Nov. 7-9	Monday 11/7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read mini-comics by Breena Nuñez & Arantza Peña Popo Wednesday 11/9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read shorts by Rosa Colón Guerra • Read Gemma Sou & John Cei Douglas "After Maria" with commentary by Fernanda Díaz-Basteris • Discuss Close Reading Paper
Latinx Intersections & Intersectionality Week 13 Nov. 14-16	Monday 11/14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class meeting because Dr. Urcalegui will be presenting at the PAMLA conference. • Complete required discussion activity on Canvas. Wednesday 11/16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Sharon Lee De La Cruz <i>I'm a Wild Seed</i>
Queer Comics Week 14 Nov. 21-23	Monday 11/21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Kat Fajardo <i>Miss Quinces</i> • Submit Close Reading Paper Wednesday 11/23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class. Non-instructional day. Enjoy some time off to catch up on rest & reading!
Week 15 Nov. 28-30	Monday 11/28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read first half of Gabby Rivera & Celia Moscote's <i>Juliet Takes a Breath</i> & preface from original novel • Discuss Final Portfolio & Showcase Wednesday 11/30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish Gabby Rivera & Celia Moscote's <i>Juliet Takes a Breath</i>

Topic, Week, & Date	Readings, Assignments, & Deadlines
<p>Latinx Superheroes</p> <p>Week 16</p> <p>Dec. 5-7</p>	<p>Monday 12/5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read first half of Liliam Rivera <i>Unearthed: A Jessica Cruz Story</i> • Read Frederick Luis Adlana "Foreword," "Preface," "Prologue," and "Epilogue" from <i>Latinx Superheroes in Mainstream Comics</i> <p>Wednesday 12/7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish Liliam Rivera <i>Unearthed: A Jessica Cruz Story</i>
<p>Final Exam</p> <p>Dec. 13</p>	<p>Class Comic Con Showcase</p> <p>Tuesday, December 13, 12:15-2:30 p.m.</p> <p>Boccardo Business Center (BBC) 130</p>