

Span 795: Literary Theory and Criticism

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Course description

This course introduces graduate students to literary and cultural theory via theories, disciplines, and approaches that are especially relevant for (or that have significantly impacted) the field of Latin American studies: cultural studies, subaltern theory, postcolonial theory, and memory and trauma studies. After some preliminary classes on basic theoretical concepts (“literature,” “interpretation,” “representation,” “narrative,” “ideology,”) we will pay special attention to how the abovementioned theories, disciplines, and approaches have answered the following questions: How does literature intersect with culture, language, and representation? What is the link between discourse and ideology? What are the connections among literature, culture, history, and politics? In order to better answer these questions, we will study the most recent approaches in conjunction with relevant classical theories. For example, we will study cultural Marxism together with subaltern theory; structuralism, post-structuralism, and deconstruction together with post-colonial theory and affect theory.

Span 795 fulfills the literary theory requirement for PhD students and is recommended for MA students, especially for those interested in continuing into the PhD level.