

Spring 2026  
**ENGL 3351 Mexican American Literature & Culture Syllabus**

Texas A&M University - San Antonio  
Tuesdays & Thursdays (T/R) 2pm – 3:15pm  
Classroom Hall 305



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Professor: Laurie Ann Guerrero  
Office Location: Classroom Hall 314N

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Office Hours: TH 11am-12:15pm, by appt.

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**Course Description:**

The goal of this course is to study works of Mexican American literature through the genres of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, film, music, and visual art. Other goals of the course include improving students' understanding of these works as expressions of individual and human values within a historical and social context. The goal is to cultivate an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide this literature, reflecting on the way this literature influences and is influenced by intercultural experiences, and researching critical responses and linguistic theories associated with these works. This course challenges students to make critical connections among various styles, subgenres, and historical or social contexts. This course is intended to more generally improve your critical thinking, reading, speaking, as well as research and writing skills. This course is discussion-based and thus it is vital that you come to class having completed the reading for that day and prepared to talk about assigned readings. Because this is an upper-level course, students are expected to have a strong knowledge of basic grammar and punctuation.

**Required Materials:**

- notebook
- *...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him* by Tomás Rivera
- *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros
- **If schedule allows, one of the following books** (your choice—no need to purchase all three).

I will let you know in week 3:

- *All Around Us* by Xelena Gonzalez, illustrated by Adrianna Garcia
- *Where Wonder Grows* by Xelena Gonzalez, illustrated by Adrianna Garcia
- *Remembering* by Xelena Gonzalez, illustrated by Adrianna Garcia
- other required materials will be made available on Blackboard or provided by professor

**Learning Objectives:** At the end of the course, students will...

- Exhibit a substantial knowledge of and comprehend key themes, tropes, topics, arguments, and questions in the study of Mexican American Literature and Culture.
- Demonstrate recognition of the literary, cultural, historical, and theoretical contexts within which these works were produced.
- Incorporate reading/research into original critical analysis, form a critical position, and creative expression.
- Gain confidence in oral and written expression.

**Grade Breakdown:** These outcomes will be assessed through the completion of the assignments listed below.

- Participation (attendance, workshops, discussion, homework, etc.): 35%
  - Attendance (worth half of the participation grade)
  - Readings & Discussion (worth half of the participation grade)
- Assignments (6 total): 40%
- Final Presentation & Reflection: 25%

Grades will be calculated using the following scale.

90-100=A                  80-89=B                  70-79=C                  60-69=D                  59 or lower=F

**General Comments on Assignments:** Successful completion of this English course depends to a great degree upon your ability to read with scrupulous care, attention, and insight. Careful reading of all assigned material will be one of the foundations of your work for the course. You will be expected to have completed all assigned reading on the day a text is discussed in class and to prepare for class by taking notes and contributing to discussions.

**Participation in Class (35%):** You are participating when you are contributing to discussions; being a critical listener and thinker; asking questions of anything you do not understand; and offering constructive feedback on your peers' ideas, and participating in workshops. Also, you must come to class prepared with the proper materials (paper, pen, text, notebook, etc.).

**Attendance:** Attendance is taken at the start of each class. Each student is allowed 2 absences. After which, a doctor's note (or some kind of formal documentation) is required for an excused absence. Tardies result in a 50% grade for attendance that day, while absences will receive a 0%. **Chronic absences and/or tardies will affect your final grade.**

**Readings:** Successful completion of this course depends to a great degree upon your ability to read with scrupulous care, attention, and insight. Careful reading of all assigned material will be one of the foundations of your work for the course. You will be expected to have

completed all assigned reading on the day a text is discussed in class and to prepare for class by taking notes and contributing to discussions.

**Discussion:** A vital, ongoing intellectual conversation is at the heart of the course. Attendance and participation are crucial. I will be taking attendance at every class. Not showing up to class will affect your grade. Please observe, though, that your presence in the classroom does not automatically guarantee you full credit. Even though the class will sometimes consist of lectures, you are nevertheless required to provide input. It is crucial that students arrive in class with required texts read, prepared to offer thoughtful responses to the readings.

**Assignments (40%):** You will only be given SIX assignments throughout the semester. Some are strictly analytical, while others have an additional creative aspect. Occasionally, we will do free-write assignments in class. These free writes are to help you think through your ideas and to be used alongside your assignments. If you struggle with grammar and punctuation, please attend tutoring sessions to improve your writing, as poor writing skills will affect your grade. All writing will be assessed according to MLA formatting. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are unfamiliar with this; you may be in the wrong class.

We will go over each assignment in detail. It is important that you are prepared to cultivate a safe space for yourself, and for others, to explore difficult topics.

**Final Presentation & Reflection Paper (25%):** One day during the last three weeks of class, you will present an analytical (and creative if you choose) presentation on Mexican American Literature and Culture in addition to a 3–5-page reflection paper. Details on this will be given in class toward the end of the semester.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

**Absences:** If you must be absent from class and cannot submit an assignment on time because of a personal emergency, you should email me as soon as possible to ask for an extension. I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK, but I am happy to give extensions. If you were unable to attend class due to illness, please talk to me after you return. There is no need to email me to inform me of an absence unless you need an extension or to show me proof of an emergency.

**After an absence, a student should contact a classmate about class material and obtain info that was distributed. No in-class assignments can be made up.** Please also make every effort to avoid leaving class early. If you must leave class early, please inform me in advance. If you leave 30 minutes or more before the end of the class without discussing it with me beforehand, you will be considered absent for the day. Since our class functions as a community, it is essential that students attend class consistently.

**Classroom Conduct: Be respectful.** We will be discussing sensitive topics in this course, and it is perfectly normal that we may not all agree. However, you are to refrain from using language or behavior that is sexist, homophobic, classist, racist, intolerant and/or insensitive to the differences of others. I have a zero-tolerance policy on oppressive and unproductive language. I reserve the

right to ask you to leave if you do not abide by these standards. You may also face more serious consequences, and your participation grade will suffer the consequence as well.

The following behaviors will also negatively impact your participation grade: missing class; coming to class without the required assignments/tools; disrespecting your peers and your professor; being on your phone or engaging with others while we are in class; off-topic conversations with your classmates; doing work for other courses; hostile behavior toward a classmate or me, or any behavior that is inappropriate, and/or off-task. These behaviors are not conducive to a positive classroom environment. If I witness repeated inappropriate behavior, ask you to leave, and you will be counted absent.

Any student who uses language or behavior that is sexist, homophobic, classist, racist, intolerant and/or insensitive to the differences of others, will be asked to leave. We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**Deadlines & Late work:** Unless there are extenuating circumstances, no late work will be accepted. All written and online work must be submitted on time. No exceptions, unless for real and serious emergencies, in which case you should get in touch with me at once.

**Assignment Policies:** You are expected to submit original work for this course. Do not recycle papers written for other courses. If any assignment is unclear, please ask questions.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** Students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic Dishonesty for which a student is subject to penalty includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submission, misrepresentation of academic records, facilitating academic dishonesty, unfair advantage, violating known safety requirements and ethical misconduct. This includes holding other students to same standards and reporting any incidents of alleged violation of the honesty policy to the instructor involved or, if necessary, to the appropriate academic department head. All students are responsible for being familiar with the Academic Dishonesty Policy, which may be found by clicking on the [Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook](#).

**o ABSOLUTELY NO USE OF GENERATIVE AI PERMITTED:**

ENGL 3551 assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

Simply put, plagiarism is copying another's work, whether it's word-for-word or paraphrasing. Using AI is also a form of plagiarizing, and it is considered a form of cheating.

**Collaboration:** All written assignments outside of the classroom should be completed individually. I will let you know when an in-class activity is a collaborative one; if I do not specifically tell you to collaborate, you can assume that the assignment should be completed on your own. Note that in some situations uncalled for collaboration can be construed as plagiarism.

**Availability:** My office is located in **Classroom Hall 314N**. Please email me or see me after class to set an appointment. If you make an appointment with me, I expect that you will keep it like any other professional meeting. If you must cancel an appointment, please let me know at least 24 hours in advance, if possible. Office hours are an appropriate venue to confer with me about any aspect of the course, clarification of my expectations or your grades, comments on assignments, questions about course material. I recommend meeting with me early in the semester as one-on-one help and individual attention often results in a deeper understanding of course materials and clearer expression of that understanding in your writing.

**E-mail:** I am available by email at [LGuerrero@tamusa.edu](mailto:LGuerrero@tamusa.edu), and I check my email at least once a day Monday-Thursday before 5pm for any questions or comments. *Do not use the Blackboard message option.* I usually return emails within 48 hours, but I do not check my email on the weekend.

**Blackboard:** Everything we do for class will be on Blackboard—get familiar with it if you are not already. Blackboard can be accessed at <http://tamusa.blackboard.com/>. If you need assistance (technical support) with Blackboard, please call (210) 784-4357 BEFORE you contact me with tech questions. They are the experts.

**Self-Reliance:** This is an upper division English course. I realize that some of you are either nonmajors or new to the English major; however, because this is a major and upper division course, I expect a certain level of proficiency in terms of reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking.

**If you need extra help or assistance in a particular area, you need to be proactive and independently seek solutions.**

**Please click [UNIVERSITY POLICIES](#) to read more.**

**\*Note:** I reserve the right to make changes to the reading & assignment schedule and requirements as necessary. This document serves as a contract between the professor and the students. Upon receipt of this document by the students, the professor assumes that expectations set forth in the syllabus have been read and acknowledged by the student, and that proper communication has been initiated about assignments, schedule, and grading. Please contact me at the aforementioned email address with any questions or comments. I look forward to the semester!