

Spring 2018 Capstone

Prof. Elizabeth T. Goizueta

Stokes Hall 107S T 4 30-6 50

goizuete@bc.edu

Office: Lyons 204B Office Hours: Tuesday 3-4pm or by appointment

Phone: 552-1479 / Department Phone: 552-3820

Beyond Study Abroad: Journeying through Spain and Latin America

This course is an attempt to reflect on the Spanish-speaking study-abroad experience through travel literature of the twentieth century, examining the repercussion of Marxist ideology in Spain, Mexico, Caribbean and Latin America. Through the eyes of acclaimed writers, students will explore how external events interact with personal choices to affect relationships and life-commitments, often with serious moral consequences. More specifically, the course will examine how the experience of cultural displacement itself impacts the challenge and process of vocational discernment. While focusing on Spain and Latin America, the course will appeal to any student who has studied abroad. All readings and movies will be in English.

Arguably the earliest example of modern Western travel literature is Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quijote*. A contemporary correlate is John Dos Passos's *Rosinante to the Road Again*, Dos Passos's great philosophical treatise on his travels through Spain in the 1920's and his quest to capture the essence of the Spanish identity. Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a novel centered on the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), tackles the challenge of describing Spanish fascination with life and, ultimately, death. Both American authors were drawn to Spain and to each other, uniting talents and tales while joining Republican forces in the Spanish Civil War. There, the relationship eventually grew bitter and became estranged when ideological differences drove these companions apart. *In The Man Who Loved Dogs*, writer Leonardo Padura continues the exploration of the panoramic repercussions of Russia's revolution in the early part of the twentieth century in Spain's Civil War and in Mexico's sympathetic refuge of the Marxist revolutionary and theorist, Leon Trotsky. The novel examines Trotsky in the home of artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. The themes of idealism and loss are examined through the intersection of politics and art. Finally, the often-ensuing condition of exile due to revolutions and dictatorships is examined in full with Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*, a tale of Dominican sisters coming of age in the US, and Isabel Allende's *Of Love and Shadows*, an account of Chilean lovers entangled in the complexities of Pinochet's regime. Both novels examine the experiences of dictatorships, both left and right wing, and explore societal as well as personal repercussions. Disparate perspectives, as an outsider looking-in and an insider looking-out, provide the framework

for discussions on work, relationships, our place in society and, indeed, the world.

Book List:

Rosinante to the Road Again, John Dos Passos (Spain) Chapters I-IV; VI; VIII; X; XIII; XV; XVII

For Whom the Bell Tolls, Ernest Hemingway (Spain)

The Man who Loved Dogs, Leonardo Padura [Part One and Two: Chapters 1, 15, 20, 25, 27, 28; Part Three-Apocalypse, pp. 501- 572] (Spain, Cuba, Mexico)

Exhibition catalog (on Canvas) *Rafael Soriano: The Artist as Mystic*, ‘The Heart that Lights from the Inside: Rafael Soriano’s Struggle for His Artistic Vision’, Elizabeth Thompson Goizueta (Cuba)

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Julia Alvarez (Dominican/U.S.)

Of Love and Shadows, Isabel Allende (Chilean)

Films:

Even the Rain (También la lluvia), Icíar Bollain (Bolivia and Spain) 2010

Machuca, Andrés Wood (Chile) 2004

Babel, Alejandro González Iñárritu (Morocco, Japan, Mexico) 2006

“People and their cultures perish in isolation, but they are born or reborn in contact with other men and women, with men and women of another culture, another creed, another race. If we do not recognize our humanity in others, we shall not recognize it in ourselves.” Carlos Fuentes

Requirements

Participation: Active participation is crucial to the success of the seminar (25%). All readings must be read by the date indicated. Students will write six 1-page reflections on specific topics, to be read in class **each week** (except when students are viewing in-class movies; discussion will take place after movie). Students will be called on at random to share their reflection assignments, which will be used for **in- class discussions**. More than one student can voluntarily share his or her reflections: The more reflections, the better the discussion. (25%) Students are encouraged to share their discussions with each other before class. One absence is permitted per semester. Subsequent absences will affect the grade.

Papers: Students will write two 8-10-page papers involving research on a specific study-abroad topic identified in the seminar. All papers must be handed in on time. Five points

will be deducted for every late paper turned in within the week of the assignment. (40%)

Mixed Media project: Students will create a mixed media project that will reflect their impressions of their study-abroad experience. It should last no more than **5-7 minutes** and will be viewed and presented in class. Students who exceed that time frame will be deducted points for each excessive minute. (10%)

Class Structure: There will be a weekly poetry/literary reading and reflection during the first 10-15 minutes. This will be followed by a 30-minute lecture on readings followed by a class discussion on the readings. There will be time for a short 10-minute break. The second 70 minutes will be divided into small group and larger class discussions generated from the 1-page reflection assignments. The professor will take the last 10 minutes of the class to review the following week's assignment. Films viewed in class will be discussed during the same session, time permitting.

Finally, all students should understand the importance of academic integrity. Further, it is expected that all students subscribe to the university's academic policy, which can be found at this link: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html>.

Week 1 - Relationships

January 16 - Study-abroad experience reviewed: Getting acquainted

Overview of course: syllabus, readings and assignments

Poetry meditation: St. John of the Cross, "The Dark Night of the Soul"

Getting acquainted in class: What were some of the places in which students studied abroad? What were the reasons for those choices? How did the experience add/detract from students' studies at BC? What were some of the tangible vs. intangible benefits that arose from the experience? Review of next week's assignment.

Week 2

January 23 - Reflections on Identity in Dos Passos's *Rosinante on the Road Again*

Poetry meditation: Antonio Machado, "Caminante no hay camino"

At what point does the student try to assimilate and identify with the cultural and linguistic norms of the host country? To what extent is the student motivated to adapt to the culture? In his book, *Rosinante to the Road Again*, Dos Passos creates a story of two travelers making their way by foot from Madrid to Toledo in post-World War I Spain. The two foreigners are on a quest to discover the "gesture" that defines all that is Spanish. On their journey, they meet all types of common people. In their contact and interaction with these peoples, the travelers attempt to identify the essence of the Spanish character.

Reflection prompts: At what point did the BC program give you the opportunity to immerse yourself in the host country's world? Did you feel accepted? If not, what were the barriers? How did the culture in which you were raised contribute to feelings of acceptance? What elements of Dos Passos's wanderings resonate with your experience? Were you ever motivated to determine what the essence was of the people whose country you shared? Why or why not?

Week 3

January 30 - Meditations on Life, Love and Death in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

Poetry meditation: Miguel Hernández, *The Prison Poems*, "War"

Why is life abroad experienced so sharply in a way that it cannot be in the US? Why is every gesture or smile or reproach magnified in the experience? How does the intensity of the experience affect us? Hemingway captures this sense of intensity and magnifies it in his book *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a depiction of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The book is as much a treatise on Spain and her people as it is on war. Hemingway explores friendships and relationships on an intimate level against the massive backdrop of war, where human emotions of trust, pride, loyalty and love are tested. In the novel, how does war revolve around the theme of friendship? Is there a cost? How heavy is the cost? Were there experiences abroad that caused you to assess your reaction to a situation, to force a deliberate choice and did you have to defend that choice?

Reflection prompts: What particular fascination does death hold for the Spaniards, outside of war? Why are their Jesuses on the cross, their saints in the wilderness, their warriors in battle bloodier and more "sufridos" than those in other countries? What is it about the Spanish character that lends itself to an open recognition of death during life? Is it a reminder that life is tenuous and must, therefore, be lived to the fullest? How is that different from the American experience of death? Think about some of the images from Spain that reflect upon these questions, either through personal experience of paintings, sculptures in museums, churches, palaces, etc. or in the novel. Were there any experiences or reflections that you as students had that resonate with the Spanish experience of life or death?

Weeks 4, 5, 6 - Careers and Friendships

Week 4

February 6, In-class viewing: *Even the Rain* – 103 minutes

The movie, *Even the Rain*, produced by Spanish director Icíar Bollaín, is a film within a film, shot in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Sebastián, the Mexican director in the story, and Costa, the Spanish executive producer, travel to Bolivia to make a movie about

Christopher Columbus's conquest of Latin America. They hire local actors to play the parts of the indigenous tribes, families and leaders who first to received Columbus and the Spanish conquistadors. Unexpectedly, Sebastián and Costa find their lives increasingly intertwined with those local members of their film, including conflicts arising from strikes directed at privatizing the town's water. Conflicts between career expectations and personal obligations intervene. Alongside the reevaluation of Columbus's legacy, Bollaín's explores what happens to relationships when people open themselves up to unexpected situations. Each individual must confront their own humanity, their own choices, their own limits.

Reflection prompts: How did Costa and Sebastián's career aims conflict with their personal reactions to the Bolivian peasants' demand for the non-privatizations of water? Who did you think would ultimately respond to the human conflicts presented in the film? Were you surprised at Costa and Sebastian's responses? Were you in a situation in which your friendship or potential career aims were jeopardized? How did you react?

Week 5

February 13, Careers and Friendships in Leonardo Padura's *The Man Who Loved Dogs* (Only Read Chapters indicated in syllabus for Parts One and Two; Part Three-Apocalypse)

Poetry meditation: Nicolás Guillén, *Caña/Sugarcane*

Drawn to participate in the Spanish Civil War, Dos Passos and Hemingway set out on a journey of friendship and professional complicity to support the left-wing Republican cause. They became entangled in the Spanish Civil War and the ideologies that supported Stalin's communist experiment in Spain during that time. Leonardo Padura's book, *The Man Who Loved Dogs*, is a thriller, which focuses on the assassination of Leon Trotsky and draws the readers into a tale of conspiracy, where the most basic concepts of ideals are tested against the backdrop of political machinations. The central story in *The Man who Loved Dogs* is the friendship between Iván Cárdenas Maturell, a proofreader at a Cuban veterinary journal, demoted to this position when writing a story deemed counterrevolutionary, and a mysterious man he meets walking his dogs on the beach near Havana in the mid-1970s. The man turns out to be Ramón Mercader, a Spaniard trained by the KGB, who sank an ice pick into Leon Trotsky's skull, eventually killing him in Coyoacán, Mexico in 1940. The friendship between Iván and Ramón and their ensuing moral discoveries frame the human cost of abstract ideals and the corrosive, insidious effects of life under a repressive regime. More importantly, Padura explores disillusionment with revolutions, ultimately turning his lens inward towards the failures of the Cuban revolution.

Reflection prompts: How did the understanding of foreign events trigger certain reactions in Padura's novel? Does being away from a familiar tradition or culture in moments of tension influence one's actions? How did the internal events of politics force these protagonists along individual paths of moral re-evaluation? Often, moral choices are

inconvenient truths. How did each person grapple with those truths in light of their own careers? What was the ultimate price that each paid?

Week 6

February 20 – Career and Friendships

Please read Paris Review's Interview with Dos Passos and be ready to discuss in class: <http://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2015/01/14/good-hearted-naivete/>

Read Elizabeth Thompson Goizueta essay in exhibition catalog *Rafael Soriano: The Artist as Mystic (posted on Canvas)*. There will be a discussion on Leonardo Padura's book and Rafael Soriano exhibition essay. Discussions will address revolutions and twentieth-century political and personal repercussions.

Reflection prompts: What were the political and personal repercussions for the protagonists of the Marxist agenda in Spain, Mexico and Cuba in Padura's novel? With respect to the artist Rafael Soriano, what were the effects of life under a repressive regime? What were the costs on his career, on his friendships? What was his ultimate response?

First paper due, February 27 - What is friendship, how do we define it? On what is friendship based? Do friendships force us to readjust our thinking, our moral attitudes, and our expectations for life? What were the personal repercussions among the protagonists that we have seen: Soriano, Dos and Hem (observing from the outside), Iván, Ramón and Trotsky (participating from the inside)? What happens when friendships get entangled in exterior events? Were there reassessments in terms of their careers and personal lives between the characters that we have studied?

Keep in mind the books and personalities that we have been examining. What resonated when you were reading Padura's, Hemingway's and Dos's books? How does friendship ultimately square with your worldview, especially for all of you in early adulthood? Look to all three books, *The Man Who Loved Dogs*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Rosinante to the Road Again*, and look at how political events affected Trotsky, Hemingway and Dos Passos, to see how their characters' interactions were affected. Be specific about your observations in the books: there should be original analysis on what you have read and what you think with respect to those protagonists' relationships. Discuss the themes of disillusionment and loss, hope and fidelity.

Weeks 7, 9, 10 - Our place in Society

Week 7

February 27 – Papers due. Guest speaker – Our place in Society: Career Center/Guest speaker

How did the student's experience abroad affect life choices? Name five careers that you would have considered before study abroad. Name five careers that you would consider now.

As students face graduation and their own place in society, what are the pushes and pulls that influence that decision? How do factors in one's own culture play into deciding one's place in that society? How did the study-abroad experience as a foreigner in another country affect one's feelings of placement in society? How do we feel towards the issues of immigration, education, and employment, with respect to the Latino/a in our society?

Week 8 - Spring Break March 5-9

Week 9

March 13 — Prof. Eve Spangler will lecture on the water rights in the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict or open discussion on revolutions in twentieth century Spain and Latin America.

Week 10 – 11

March 20 and March 27 – Mixed Media Project and Presentation

Here are guidelines/suggestions to help you think about your projects/presentations: Do NOT have a series of photos of just you and your friends smiling and looking beautiful. You are all beautiful already; I can see that with my own eyes! Instead, think about your experience and include some type of reflection component. Those reflections may take the form of poetry, a painting, a postcard, architecture, a song, sculpture, or food. It can be a visual album, a short play, and excerpts from a journal. It can include a combination of these, in a mixed-media format. I would like you to dig deep and really think about what the experience meant to you. Negative aspects can be included, especially if it depicts the experience.

Week 12, 13, 14: Spirituality and the "Other"

Week 12

April 3 In-class Viewing: Machuca- 121 minutes

This coming-of-age story directed by Andrés Wood explores the lives of three young Chileans caught up in the turbulent years following socialist president Salvador Allende's election. Set against the backdrop of Chile's brief socialist era, 1970-73, their lives reflect the socio-economic disparities and reforms that are promoted under the Allende presidency. As the political turmoil intensifies with General Augusto Pinochet's military coup of September 11, 1973, the societal rifts tear away at the young friends' relationships. Each friend is faced with moral tests far beyond their capabilities.

Reflection prompts: How did the social and political upheavals affect these students' worldviews? What were the personal costs? How does one's place in society constrict or expand one's opportunities for advancement? At what point is society's approval more important than one's moral compass? Is it always recognizable?

Week 13

April 10 - *Of Love and Shadows*, Isabel Allende

Poetry meditation: Pablo Neruda, Canto General "The Heights of Macchu Picchu"

Ultimately, if we want to understand the culture found in Latin America, we must recognize that the roots of this culture must be found in Spain. Spain transplanted the Spanish language, the Catholic religion, and an authoritarian political tradition. It came into contact with a new indigenous element that forced an amalgamation of races, ideas and cultures. If the debate between Spain and Latin America, once yoked together under monarchy until the 19th century, seems at times dramatic it is because it is a debate with great emotional stakes: a debate not with others but with themselves. The election of socialist president Salvador Allende in 1970 brought Marxist ideology to Chile. The subsequent political upheaval and 1973 coup d'état backed by General Augusto Pinochet resulted in a wave of "desaparecidos" or disappeared persons and a society openly afraid to challenge moral injustices. The institutional church became the only moral authority to question and combat Pinochet's regime. Siding with the "pueblo", the church opted for the marginalized, the downtrodden, the missing. In the aftermath of Pinochet's regime, the institutional church was responsible for organizing and maintaining commissions on truth and reconciliation. Both attempts, to recognize the truth and search for an element of forgiveness, were essential in the healing process.

Reflection prompts: How did your desire to travel and explore other cultures affect possible life callings? Did study abroad afford time for reflection on life calling? Did it introduce new ideas into the discernment process? Were spiritual concerns at play? How does the element of forgiveness, in the face of injustice, whether personal or systematic, affect an individual? Has there been any circumstance that has challenged you personally to forgive?

Week 14

April 17 - The "Other" in Julia Alvarez's *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*

Poetry meditation: Nicolás Guillén, *The Dove of Popular Flight*, "Puerto Rican Song"

What is the responsibility of caring for the other? As Carlos Fuentes states, "If we do not recognize our humanity in others, we shall not recognize it in ourselves." The study abroad experience, ultimately, is designed to put the student in the place of others, to look outside of themselves and to grow spiritually. This growth often comes as a result of uneasy alliances: uncomfortable situations, difficult struggles, and vulnerable challenges. To be seen as the "other" for a determined period and to be open to that position implies,

most basically, bravery but more importantly, empathy. The ability to empathize with the other is the single most important factor affecting change in the world.

Reflection prompt: How does the student meet the challenge of integrating those experiences and relationships when they return to this world? What is it like to return to the home country and see it as an “outsider” must see it? As an insider looking out, what are the challenges that arise in assimilating those experiences?

Second Paper due April 24; please send electronically no later than April 24 at midnight.

Paper topic: select either Isabel Allende’s *Of Love and Shadow* or Julia Alvarez’s *How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents*. Use the books as points of departure to examine the themes of the “other” and our place in society. Feel free to incorporate the films, guest-lectures as well as any of the poetry on which we have reflected. How do we relate to others in society? How did the study-abroad experience affect our considerations of the “other” in our society? How did it affect our sense of who we are as sacred and what our place is in this world? Was the ability to empathize with the “other” heightened by the study-abroad experience? How does empathy translate on the world stage, small or large?

Week 15

April 24 – Papers due. In class viewing of film *Babel* written by Guillermo Arriaga and directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu

Film Synopsis The multi-narrative drama completes González Iñárritu’s Death Trilogy, following *Amores perros* and *21 Grams*. It is an international production among companies based in the US, Mexico and France. The film portrays multiple stories taking place in Morocco, Japan, Mexico and the US.

Discussion of film *Babel* in context of the “other”: How are presumptions/stereotypes, systematic and personal, broken down through the willingness to enter into relationship? What happened to these people once they risked being vulnerable with each other?

Week 16

May 1 -Tapas Barcelona The last course will take place at Barcelona restaurant, 1700 Beacon Street. Transportation: Take the T, Green line, C, Tappan Street stop, walk across the street. BC Bus to Cleveland Circle, walk one-half mile. This week will be used to review the course and its main objectives. The journey through Spain and Latin America with some of the literary giants of the 20th century is intended to provide a catalyst for a final, open discussion. There will not be a final exam in this course.