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English 349/Spanish 400-01

New World Identities: Exceptionalist Ideologies of the Americas

As its title indicates, this course explores how peoples of the New World have identified themselves as exceptional with respect to Europeans and the inhabitants of other parts of the Americas. After first addressing exceptionalism in the abstract and considering the long history of “Western exceptionalism,” we will consider how exceptionalism influenced early European understandings and articulations of the New World. We will also study how exceptionalist thinking helped construct regional and national identities in various discourses of the US and Spanish America. Students will be asked to critically read different kinds of texts (essays, poems, short stories, a novel) and use techniques of literary analysis to produce to illustrate how exceptionalism operates in different kinds of texts.

All classroom discussion will be in English. All texts will be made available in English. Spanish majors are encouraged to read texts originally written in Spanish in that language.

Required Texts:

Students are asked to read the following 3 texts, as well as various pdfs linked to the course Blackboard site.

1. Crèvecoeur, J. Hector St. John. *Letters from an American Farmer and Sketches of Eighteenth-Century America* Penguin Classics; Reprint edition, 1981. ISBN 0140390065
2. Rodó, José Enrique. *Ariel*. Trans. Margaret Seyers Peden. Austin: U of Texas Press, 1988. ISBN 0292703961

[for Spanish majors: *Ariel*. 3^a ed. Catedra, 2000. ISBN 843761791X]

3. Gallegos, Rómulo. *Doña Barbara*. Peter Smith Publisher, 1990. ISBN 0844611948

[for Spanish majors: *Doña Barbara*. Espasa-Calpe, Mexicana, 1991. ISBN 0785950095]

Schedule:

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| Week 1 | Introduction
Columbus, “Letter to Santangel” selections in class |
| Week 2 | Shakespeare, “The Tempest” in <i>The Anthology of American Studies</i>
Loren Baritz, “The Idea of the West,” <i>The American Historical Review</i> |

Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Conquest of New Spain*, selections
John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity"

Week 3 Jack P. Greene, "Expectations" in *The Intellectual Construction of America*
Bishop G. Berkeley, "On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning
in America"
Benjamin Franklin "Information to Those Who Would Remove to America"

Week 4 J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, selections

Week 5 J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, selections
Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar"

Week 6 Andrés Bello, "The Craft of History"
Simón Bolívar, "The Jamaica Letter"

Week 7 Walt Whitman, "Preface" to *Leaves of Grass*
José Martí "Our America"
Explication de texte due

Spring vacation

Week 8 José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel*

Week 9 Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race*, selections

Week 10 Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American
History"
Sarmiento, *Facundo*, selections

Week 11 Rómulo Gallegos, *Doña Bárbara*

Week 12 Rómulo Gallegos, *Doña Bárbara*

Week 13 Caroline Kirkland, "Harvest Musings", "Love vs. Aristocracy"
Thomas Brower Peacock, "The Columbian Ode"
Fernando Ortiz *Cuban Counterpoint*, selections
Critical research paper due

Week 14 Fernández Retamar, "Caliban: Notes Toward a Discussion of Culture in Our
America"
César Augusto Salgado, "Hybridity in New World Baroque Theory" or
Monika Kaup, "Neobaroque: Latin America's Alternative Modernity"

Grading:

Quality of participation, including discussion questions and weekly responses on Blackboard	10%
Explication de texte 6-8 pages	20
Critical research paper 12-15 pages	40
Take home final exam 8-10 pages	30