



**ENGL 2351.101 H1/691 H1/791 H1**  
**Introduction to Mexican American (Chicanx) Literature:**  
**A Story of Struggle, Protest, and Reclamation**

**Professor Dael Serda | 8-wk Syllabus | Fall 2025 | 8/18/2025 – 10/9/2025**  
**M/W 9:30 - 10:50 am | LRC 212B**

This class is a Hybrid class. This means that we meet face-to-face twice a week and will work heavily on the course outside of the times we meet; in other words, we are doing sixteen weeks of work in eight compressed weeks.

**Professor Dael Serda, MFA**  
**Campus Email:** [dserrda@com.edu](mailto:dserrda@com.edu)  
**Office Phone:** (409) 933-8497

**Student Hours/Conference/Office Hours: LRC Suite B Rm. #241 Humanities Department**

Monday: 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Tuesday: 8:30 am – 11:00 am

Wednesday: 8:30 am – 9:30 am & 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Thursday: 8:30 am – 10:30 am

You can choose to see me during the above hours f2f in my office or online using Teams. I can also make myself available to you via Teams or f2f outside these hours pending our arrangements.

NOTE: Regarding Microsoft Teams, access it through the COM homepage. Access it through the “Office 365 & Email” button next to the “D2L” button. “Teams” is one of the apps available through Office 365. There is no cost as a result. It is my preferred mode of communication because of its ease and speed.

**You can find these books at COM’s library and most public ones. You can purchase new or used copies or if you’d like to borrow them from me, I have a dozen of each in a lending library I house in my office on campus.**

*Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya (available electronically on D2L)

*Under the Feet of Jesus* by Helena Maria Viramontes

*Borderlands/La Frontera* by Gloria Anzaldúa (also available electronically on D2L)

*The Last Karankawas* by Kimberly Garza

NOTE: I will provide PDFs of all other course readings. They will also be available on D2L.

**ENGL 2351 Mexican American Literature:** A survey of Mexican American/Chicanx literature from Mesoamerica to the present. Students will study literary works of fiction, poetry, drama, essays, and memoirs in relation to their historical, linguistic, political, regional, gendered, and cultural contexts. Texts will be selected from a diverse group of authors, literary movements, and media forms. Topics and themes may include the literary performance of identity and culture, aesthetic mediation of racialization, struggle and protest, and artistic activism.

**Course Prerequisite:** English 1301 with a C or better.

**Assignments and Projects: Course Grade Breakdown**

1. Weekly Reading Responses:	40%
2. Project #1: Extended Literary Analysis: 2+ primary sources:	15%
3. Project #2: Extended Researched Analysis:	20%
4. Project #3: Chicanxs/Latinxs in Popular Culture Plus Reflective Analysis:	15%
5. Project #4: Reflection on the Course:	10%
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TOTAL:	100%

I will provide a brief explanation of each of the course breakdown items below and then provide a more detailed handout for all major projects.

**Weekly Reading Responses:** Students will submit one major post (350+words) plus three peer feedback posts (50+ words) each week. All four posts need to roughly equal at least 500 words in total at a minimum; you can always write more, and I hope you will. The most important part of these posts is that they must engage deeply with and synthesize at least two of the required/assigned literature. They must synthesize your response to at least two of the major required texts each week (unless we are reading a single novel that week). You must also engage in conversation with classmates about the ideas about the literature and auxiliary assigned texts. For example, students can choose to author a main post that explores the use of the mother archetype in two of the assigned readings and then post feedback for three different peers or engage in a back-and-forth with one or two peers.

Ideally, your authored/main reading response post should include the original questions that prompted your thinking, your reflections and analysis, directly quoted and summarized and/or paraphrased aspects of the texts you're analyzing with proper attributions, and there should be a clearly intended, supported, and articulated thesis. When possible, include the citations for the sources you're using. Other than when we are working on Project #2 the research analysis paper, the bulk of your reading responses should refer to the secondary and primary, literary sources assigned in this course. If you wish to make use of other secondary or primary sources and are not sure of their relevance or reliability, please consult with me via Teams or email (I prefer Teams for its convenience).

I encourage students to deepen inquiry threads from week to week. There is no such thing as exploring one subject, question, theme, or line of thinking too much provided the thinking gains complexity and depth as you proceed.

This part of the coursework makes up a substantial part of the course grade.

I've sketched out the bigger projects below. I will provide you with more details as the dates approach.

**Project #1: Extended Literary Analysis:** This will be a slightly longer essay than your weekly writing and will include at least two primary source texts from the assigned texts thus far. This first extended essay will be around 850+ words in length and requires no sources outside the two literary, primary texts selected from the assigned literature up to that point. The point is to deepen your analysis in support of a complex, debatable thesis.

**Project #2: Extended Researched Analysis:** This essay will be a traditional literature research paper where you offer your readers (the class) your analysis of a selected assigned text and use scholarly sources to help shape your argument.

**Project #3 Chicanxs/Latinxs in Popular Culture Showcase** will require a video or traditional analytical essay in which you present us with a new text (a contemporary piece of literature or text in a different mode such as film, TV, music, visual art, a person, or any other kind of text) that complicates our conversation as it relates to Chicanx or Latinx Literature and the Chicanx or Latinx experience.

**Project #4 Reflection on the Course** will ask you to reflect and write about the process you undertook for Project #2, what you gained, and what your experience has been in this course.

**Grading Rubric for all writing:**

95+ = The writing/project is insightful, thought-provoking, and well-composed. There is a well-developed, debatable, analytical thesis. The work pushes the class conversation forward in surprising ways. The student successfully connected multiple readings to generate and support complex ideas when appropriate. All evidence is explained well and cited correctly.

90+ = The writing/project is insightful, thought-provoking, and for the most part, composed well. There is a well-developed, debatable, analytical thesis. The work attempts to push the class conversation forward; these feel somewhat original and new to the class conversation. When appropriate, the author connected more than one of the readings to attempt to generate complex ideas. All evidence is explained well and cited correctly.

80+ = The writing/project is a solid response though not overly original; it may have some grammatical and/or mechanical errors but the intent is clear. The author may have connected more than one of the readings to attempt to generate interesting claims and ideas. The evidence may or may not be cited correctly.

70+ = The writing/project is on time and meets minimum expectations. There is often no properly cited evidence in this work. There may or may not be efforts to connect multiple texts. NOTE: Late posts can earn up to a 75% if they are very high quality.

60+ = This work shows minimal effort; though, on time, the work is below average in clarity. There is rarely properly cited evidence in these.

50+ = This work is likely submitted late, and the content is at least average.

0-40+ = This work is submitted late, and the content is below average.

**Grading Scale:**

**A 90-100%** = Excellent work; superior in both style and content.

**B 80-89%** = Good work; solid content

**C 70-79%** = Average work; **meets the minimum requirements**

**D 60-69%** = Below average work; does not meet the requirements

**F 50-59%** = Failing work; deficient in mechanics, style, and content; all late work will lose half credit at least

**Make-Up /Late Work Submission Policy:**

If you submit anything late but within twenty-four hours after the assignment is due, you will automatically lose *some* credit but only *up to* a letter grade. If you submit your work past twenty-four hours, I will accept it for half credit in most cases, though if the work is strong, I might credit the work up to 75%. What this means is to always aim for high-quality writing even if the work is late. The last day I will accept any work will be Monday night (11:59 pm) of the last week of class. I will not provide

feedback for any work that is submitted late after the first deadline or for work that fails to meet minimum requirements though I will assign a grade.

**Attendance, Participation, & Drop by Instructor Policy:** Participation contributes to your **Daily Grade average**. This is a **participation-heavy** online course. The success of the course depends on the community we build; thus, your presence on D2L is vital. I *reserve* the right to drop you after four **consecutive** missed assignments and/or four missed classes without notice from you. In sum, your active engagement is key.

**IT'S BEST TO COMMUNICATE WITH ME IF YOU KNOW YOU'LL BE UNABLE TO FINISH ASSIGNMENTS or if you are going to be absent.**

**Communication Policy:** Email me at [dserda@com.edu](mailto:dserda@com.edu) using your COM email, please. I do not check D2L messages with daily frequency. I only use that function to send your major project comments. You may of course also call me during office hours and/or leave me a voicemail. Lastly, I highly recommend you message me via COM's Office 365 Microsoft TEAMS as it is convenient, and we can often dialogue quickly through it. I recommend you download the TEAMS app.

**Communicating with your instructor:** ALL electronic communication with course instructors must be through your COM email and COM's Microsoft Office 365 TEAMS. Due to FERPA restrictions, faculty cannot share any information about performance in the class through other electronic means.

**Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Identify key ideas, representative authors and works, significant historical or cultural events, and characteristic perspectives or attitudes expressed in the literature of different periods or regions.
2. Analyze literary works as expressions of individual or communal values within the social, political, cultural, or religious contexts of different literary periods.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the development of characteristic forms or styles of expression during different historical periods or in different regions.
4. Articulate the aesthetic principles that guide the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.
5. Write research-based critical papers about the assigned readings in clear and grammatically correct prose, using various critical approaches to literature.

Student Learner Outcome	Maps to Core Objective	Assessed via this Assignment
1. Identify key ideas, representative authors and works, significant historical or cultural events, and characteristic perspectives or attitudes expressed in the literature of different periods or regions.	Social Responsibility (SR)	D2L Discussions

2. Analyze literary works as expressions of individual or communal values within the social, political, cultural, or religious contexts of different literary periods.	Personal Responsibility (PR)	D2L Discussions Essays
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the development of characteristic forms or styles of expression during different historical periods or in different regions.	Personal Responsibility (PR)	D2L Discussions Essays
4. Articulate the aesthetic principles that guide the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.	Critical Thinking Skills (CT)	D2L Discussions Essays
5. Write research-based critical papers about the assigned readings in clear and grammatically correct prose, using various critical approaches to literature.	Communication Skills (CS)	Essays Presentations D2L Discussions

### Academic Dishonesty: IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ!

Any incident of academic policy will be dealt with per college policy and the Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty is an extremely serious offense and will result in a **grade of zero** on that exam, assignment, or project, and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for the appropriate disciplinary action. Using artificial intelligence (AI) technology to produce parts or all of your college work qualifies as academic dishonesty if your instructor didn't explicitly ask you to use it. Please avoid using AI unless your professor says otherwise. When in doubt about whether you can use any technology to help you with your work, ask your professor.

If I suspect use of AI in your written submissions, then I will run the work through various AI detectors and more importantly, ask to conference with you so we can discuss your process, and you can talk out your ideas with me. They should line up well with the written submission. The ideas you discuss in class and offer to us through less formal means such as through discussion and written low-stakes reflections should also align with your personal style and stances. I am not looking for you to sound “collegiate” or “smart” or like anyone else other than you. We are here to expand your ideas and help you develop your thinking through various speech and literacy acts and processes including reading, thinking, listening, speaking, brainstorming, note-taking, writing, rewriting, revising, and editing. Thinking, reading, and writing are messy and hard. We will embrace the mess and difficulty together.

### Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas and claiming them as your own. Plagiarism is a very serious offense. Plagiarism includes paraphrasing someone else's words without proper citation and attribution, copying directly from a website, and pasting it into your paper, and/or using someone else's words without quotation marks. Any assignment containing *any* plagiarized material will receive a grade

of zero, and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate disciplinary action.

**Links on Avoiding Plagiarism:** [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/avoiding\\_plagiarism/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/avoiding_plagiarism/index.html)

### **Student Concerns/Questions Statement**

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please contact me using the contact information provided at the top of the first page of this syllabus. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact the Humanities Department Chair, Dr. Brian Anderson at 409.933.8186 or [banderson@com.edu](mailto:banderson@com.edu).

### **About Me: My Teaching Philosophy:**

Learning is fluid. Learning takes place both inside and outside the classroom. It continues long after we leave school. In this course, we will think of ourselves as creators of meaning. We will also regard ourselves as active learners and contributors. I specify “active” because I want to foster a sense of inquiry, reflection, communication, and interaction. All these lead to eventual/more *autonomy* which is related to self-determination and self-realization. In other words, I hope to help you become selfishly aware of what the world offers you and in turn, what you can offer the world.

Additionally, we will work to think objectively while valuing our subjectivity. We will acknowledge that to be good humans, we must be able to be objective and subjective in tandem. Yet, before we go off on our unique paths toward self-actualization, I ask that we learn to work together to bring what we learn from the outside in and take what we learn here outside.

I see myself as both a teacher and a student. Both identities allow me to be particularly sensitive to what works and does not work in the traditional and virtual classroom. Additionally, I push myself to make connections between what I learn and teach in a course and the life that continues outside it. Bridging the two makes what I do in school, as both a teacher and student, much more relevant and meaningful for me. I hope to encourage you to seek those connections also.

Moreover, I recognize you have been a student a long time. You will join this course with a wealth of experience, wisdom, and knowledge, and because I understand your importance, this will be a student-centered course where we will push boundaries together.

**The Tutoring Center** (ICB 104) is staffed with tutors. Let them be a part of the team that helps you become the best communicator possible. Additionally, your peers and I will also be available to help you. I am specifically here to help you, so don’t be shy; use the office hours I offer to your advantage. **Visit <https://com.mywconline.com/> to schedule a tutoring appointment with The Tutoring Center.** **Students come back raving about how helpful the center is. Take advantage.**

**The GCIC Academic Symposium:** COM’s 2026 GCIC Academic Symposium is an opportunity for students to showcase their best academic and creative projects. To learn more, visit: [com.edu/symposium](https://com.edu/symposium). Participation in the symposium helps develop your professional skills and widen your professional networks; it should be noted on your resume/CV. The Symposium is also an opportunity for you to share work you really care about. This academic year, the Symposium is on Friday, April 10, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the ICB building. The abstract submission deadline was Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Please speak with me if you are interested or have questions, and visit this site for more information: <https://www.com.edu/symposium/>

**Honors Contracts** are special projects that extend the work we do in class. They are for ambitious and/or motivated students who wish to deepen their knowledge and experiences of the practices and ideas related to this class. They require students to earn at least a B in class and approval from me since the Honors Contract will require the student and I to work closely together. Please speak with me if you are interested or have questions and visit this site for more information: <https://www.com.edu/honorsprogram/>.

### Course Outline/Calendar

#### English 2351 | Fall 2025 | 8-Week Calendar 8/18/2025 – 10/9/2025 (Tentative/Subject to change with notice)

For the first **five** weeks when major projects are not yet due, students will write 350+ word short essays that synthesize your reading. These reading responses must include debatable, analytical theses and supporting evidence and analysis and the best writing is cohesive. Students will also write at least three meaningful 50+ word comments or record 30-second to 1-minute responses for three or more peers each week. In sum, I expect active engagement with at least four thoughtful posts each week. All four posts should roughly total at least five hundred (+) words.

Please read, listen to, and/or watch the required materials listed below and consider engaging with anything in the weekly folders that isn't listed below since the lists here are not comprehensive. In other words, the folders have supplemental material that will further enhance your understanding and knowledge, but as stated here, they are supplemental and not required texts. They are in labeled weekly folders in the Content tab on D2L. **All deadlines are Sunday at 8 am on D2L for your posts and projects. Comments for peers are due before class on Monday at the latest.**

#### Contextualizing Our Pending Journey with Mexican American Literature

**NOTE: I'll specify what we'll discuss on which day during class, so please be sure to attend all face-to-face meetings.**

#### Week 1:

Required:

- In class overview will include a syllabus review, Honors Contracts, the GCIC Academic Symposium, and I'll discuss how to academically write about literature and what it means to develop a debatable thesis. I'll explain the lending library.
- What does it mean to be a Chican@? <https://www.dailychela.com/chicano-meaning/>
- "Chicano: Origin and Meaning" by Edward R. Simmen and Richard F. Bauerle (1969)
- "The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo" (1848)
- From *La raza cósmica, The Cosmic Race*, José Vasconcelos
- From *The Labyrinth of Solitude* by Octavio Paz (1914-1998)

Optional:

- Watch part of lecture on Paz
- Watch mini-doc on Zoot Suit Riots
- Watch 1981 film excerpts of *Zoot Suit* by Luis Valdez

**Reminder: Swing by my office to say hello and check out the required books from my office.**

Your Week 1 weekend post is due by Sunday at 8am. Your peer comments (3x) are due before class on Monday.

## **Week 2:**

Required:

- In class overview: I will touch on how to reference poetry in literary writing including how to cite, what goes in an in-text citation, and how to reference speakers of poetry.
- “Coatlicue’s Rules: Advice from an Aztec Goddess” by Pat Mora
- “Malinche’s Tips: Pique from Mexico’s Mother” by Pat Mora
- “Consejos de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: Counsel from the Brown Virgin” by Pat Mora
- “I am Joaquín” by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales
- “La Loca de la Raza Cosmica” by La Chrisx
- read about The Bracero Agreement (1942)
- “We Shall Overcome” by Cesar Chavez
- “What is Democracy” by Cesar Chavez
- Poem(s) by Jimmy Santiago Baca
- *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya (Time permitting, we will begin discussing but won’t write about this novel until the Week 3 post. Please begin reading this novel.)

Your Week 2 weekend post is due by Sunday at 8am. Your peer comments (3x) are due before class on Monday.

## **Mexican American/Chicanx Literature: From the Canon**

### **Week 3:**

- *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya

Your Week 3 weekend post is due by Sunday at 8am. Your peer comments (3x) are due before class on Monday.

### **Week 4:**

Required:

- Introduce Project #1: Extended Literary Analysis
- From ...*y no se lo trago la tierra/...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him* by Tomas Rivera
- *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* by Gloria Anzaldua: Chapters 1, 2, 5, and 7

Your Week 4 weekend post is due by Sunday at 8am. Your peer comments (3x) are due before class on Monday.

## **Contemporary Voices**

### **Week 5:**

Required:

- *Under the Feet of Jesus* by Helena Maria Viramontes, the entire novel

Your Week 5 weekend post is due by Sunday at 8am. Your peer comments (3x) are due before class on Monday.

### **Week 6:**

Required:

- *The Last Karankawas* by Kimberly Garza (pages 1-74)

Week 6 weekend post: Finish Project #1 and submit it by Sunday morning. No peer comments required.

## **Personalizing Our Mexican American Literary Journey**

**Week 7:**

Required:

--Status report for Projects #2 and #3

--Read pages 75 through page 175 from *The Last Karankawas* by Kimberly Garza

Please complete the course evaluation.

Week 7 weekend post: Submit Project #2 and #3 by Sunday at 8 am. No peer comments required. Finish reading *The Last Karankawas* by Kimberly Garza for next week's class discussion on Monday.

**Week 8:**

Required:

--Final class discussion about *The Last Karankawas* by Kimberly Garza

--Project #4 due this Wednesday night at 11:59 pm.

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Thank you for your participation in this course! May you have a fruitful break!

## Institutional Policies and Guidelines

**Grade Appeal Process:** Concerns about the accuracy of grades should first be discussed with the instructor. A request for a change of grade is a formal request and must be made within six months of the grade assignment. Directions for filing an appeal can be found in the student handbook <https://www.com.edu/student-services/student-handbook.html>. *An appeal will not be considered because of general dissatisfaction with a grade, penalty, or outcome of a course. Disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment of the quality of the student's work and performance is also not an admissible basis for a grade appeal.*

**Academic Success & Support Services:** College of the Mainland is committed to providing students the necessary support and tools for success in their college careers. Support is offered through our Tutoring Services, Library, Counseling, and through Student Services. Please discuss any concerns with your faculty or an advisor.

**ADA Statement:** Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to contact:

Kimberly Lachney, Student Accessibility Services Coordinator

Phone: 409-933-8919

Email: [AccessibilityServices@com.edu](mailto:AccessibilityServices@com.edu)

Location: COM Doyle Family Administration Building, Student Success Center

**Textbook Purchasing Statement:** A student attending College of the Mainland is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

**Withdrawal Policy:** Students may withdraw from this course for any reason prior to the last eligible day for a “W” grade. Before withdrawing students should speak with the instructor and consult an advisor. Students are permitted to withdraw only six times during their college career by state law. The last date to withdraw from the 1<sup>st</sup> 8-week session is October 1. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is November 14. The last date to withdraw for the 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-week session is November 25.

**FN Grading:** The FN grade is issued in cases of *failure due to a lack of attendance*, as determined by the instructor. The FN grade may be issued for cases in which the student ceases or fails to attend class, submit assignments, or participate in required capacities, and for which the student has failed to withdraw. The issuing of the FN grade is at the discretion of the instructor. The last date of attendance should be documented for submission of an FN grade.

**Early Alert Program:** The Student Success Center at College of the Mainland has implemented an Early Alert Program because student success and retention are very important to us. I have been asked to refer students to the program throughout the semester if they are having difficulty completing assignments or have poor attendance. If you are referred to the Early Alert Program you will be contacted by someone in the Student Success Center who will schedule a meeting with you to see what assistance they can offer in order for you to meet your academic goals.

**Resources to Help with Stress:**

If you are experiencing stress or anxiety about your daily living needs including food, housing or just feel you could benefit from free resources to help you through a difficult time, please click here <https://www.com.edu/community-resource-center/>. College of the Mainland has partnered with free community resources to help you stay on track with your schoolwork, by addressing life issues that get in the way of doing your best in school. All services are private and confidential. You may also contact the Dean of Students office at [deanofstudents@com.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@com.edu) or [communityresources@com.edu](mailto:communityresources@com.edu).

**Nondiscrimination Statement:**

The College District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy.

### **Honors Student Requirements:**

Students who are selected to participate in this class as Honors students will engage in instructor-directed projects that require at least fifteen hours of work above the course obligations. Honors students and I will meet regularly outside of class to discuss progress and negotiate details.

1. For this course and for this semester, I am asking my Honors students to read at least one additional novel or a selection of additional shorter pieces beyond the selections already listed in the course calendar. (4+ hours)
2. Honors students will also extend their Project #2 including more scholarly, secondary sources and page count. (5+ hours)
3. Honors students will conduct a mini-ethnography or compose a creative piece and construct a website where they will publicly archive their choice. (6 + hours)
4. Finally, I will mentor Honors students on how to submit an abstract for presentation of their work at the 2026 GCIC Academic Symposium. I will of course extend this mentoring experience to any students who seeks guidance from me during office hours and/or through email or Teams communication: <https://www.com.edu/symposium/>