

Displacement
in Latin American and Latino Literature
(FORL/IDIS 291)
Moravian College
Spring 2008

Dr. Erica Miller Yozell Comenius Hall 402 610-625-7782 emy@moravian.edu I will generally respond to your emails within 24 hs on weekdays and within 48 hs on weekends.	Class times: M, W 10:10-11:20 a.m. Location: Comenius 309 Office Hours: Mon. & Wed 11:40-12:40, Wed 9-10, and by appt.
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Displacement—*migration, exile, or marginalization within a nation*—is a phenomenon seen across the world, and one that currently is a frequent topic of discussion. The reasons for such displacement, as well as the understanding and representations of it, vary across cultures depending on historical circumstances, societal differences, and cultural norms.

This course will focus on different responses to these phenomena among the diverse Latin American cultures. In this course, we will study texts and films that examine such questions through the lens of fiction. These texts deal directly with moments of social transformation, power differences, and cultural (mis)understanding. Studying these works will help you better understand the timely issues of displacement, as well as how these issues are perceived and represented.

In this course, the discussions and writing assignments will help you develop your critical writing, reading, and thinking skills that will enable success in this class and will also transfer to other academic and professional contexts.

You do not need a background in Latin American or Hispanic studies, although such a background will enrich our discussions. The course will be conducted in English.

Required Texts (Available at the Moravian College bookstore):

Junot Díaz, *Drown*

Cristina García, *Dreaming in Cuban*

Alicia Partnoy, *The Little School*

Manuel Puig, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*

There will be a number of additional required readings available in photocopies or on Blackboard.

Blackboard:

I have put together a Blackboard site (<http://blackboard.moravian.edu/>) for this course. You need to enroll yourself — so please do this soon! The registration code is exile. On Blackboard you will find a copy of the syllabus, the course calendar, and my contact information. As the semester progresses, I will post homework assignments, some readings, details on compositions and projects, any changes to the syllabus, and additional information. If you miss class for any reason, you should check the syllabus and Blackboard so that you know what material to prepare and what homework to complete for the next class.

EXPECTATIONS, EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK:

Feedback: I will provide regular feedback to you on individual assignments, drafts of papers, and through the journal binder. I encourage you to continue those conversations with me during office hours as well as in class. I will also seek your feedback on the course and the material—your questions and comments — several times during the semester.

Participation and Preparation (10%): This class is based on discussion, so your active participation in class is crucial to the success of this course. The course issues are complex and controversial, and in discussing them, we will strive to respect and to engage with others' perspectives. In order to do so, you are expected to have read carefully the assigned material, to have completed all assignments, to contribute thoughtfully to class discussions, and to take an active role in class activities.

More than three absences, for any reason other than documented illness, will result in a lowering of the final grade by a partial letter grade (for example, from a B+ to a B). If you will miss class for a religious holiday, please let me know ahead of time so we can make arrangements for missed work. Exceptions may be granted only in extraordinary circumstances such as prolonged illness or family emergency; these situations may require additional documentation through Learning Services and are not automatically guaranteed. The student would need to make arrangements to complete missed work. Travel plans are not considered extraordinary circumstances.

Please remember to turn off all personal communication devices during class time. I also ask that you not eat meals during class because it is distracting and impedes your full participation in class activities.

Journal (30%): Students will maintain a three-ring binder in which ALL of the regular informal and formal written assignments will be collected and organized in chronological order. During the semester, students will be asked to complete a variety of assignments designed to help students engage with unfamiliar material as well as to develop critical thinking and writing skills. They will include free-response entries, guided responses, writing and pre-writing exercises, brief position papers, and discussion questions. At times, I will collect individual assignments and at other times, the whole journal binder. If you meet all of the requirements for the journal assignments and complete them on time, you are will receive a B in this category. You may earn an A by regularly demonstrating qualitatively superior work (more details on that during the semester). Late or incomplete work, on the other hand, will earn a grade lower than a B.

Short analysis/response papers (5%, 10%, 10%=total 25%): Students will write several different kinds of short (2-page) papers on specific topics. Papers must be typed and double-spaced; work is to be handed in at the beginning of class. Late work loses 15 points per day, starting at the time of class.

Two 5-6 page compositions (15% & 20%=total 35%): Students will write two 5-6 page essays, along with revisions of those essays. Details will be announced during the semester. Papers must be typed and double-spaced; work is to be handed in at the beginning of class.. Late work loses 15 points per day, starting at the time of class.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Writing Center: I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Center (second floor of Zinzendorf) when working on papers. <http://home.moravian.edu/public/eng/writingCenter/appointments.htm>

Reeves Library: The librarians also provide excellent help with research questions. The library website contains a number of research guides, too. <http://home.moravian.edu/public/reeves/>

Office of Learning Services: 1307 Main Street, (610) 861-1510, <http://home.moravian.edu/public/stusvc/learning/>
They provide great resources and strategies to help all students achieve academic success. They are also the place to go if you would like to request accommodations in this class.

The Counseling Center: 1307 Main Street, (610) 861-1510,
<http://home.moravian.edu/public/stusvc/counseling/>
The counselors are there to help you with the stressors of college life.

Academic Honesty:

It is your responsibility to make sure you are familiar with the Policy on Academic Honesty at Moravian College. Plagiarism (presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own) and cheating are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. Homework is assumed to be done individually unless otherwise specified. For example, while you may study together, it is not acceptable to write "joint" homework and turn in two copies.

For detailed information, see the website:

<http://www.moravian.edu/studentlife/handbook/academic2.htm>