

# JRLC/LACS 5060

## Telenovelas, Culture and Society

(Fall 2007)

---

### *Instructor:*

Dr. Carolina Acosta-Alzuru  
222 Journalism Bldg.  
542-5680 (o)  
208-0252 (h) (Please call before 9 p.m.)  
[cacosta@uga.edu](mailto:cacosta@uga.edu)

### *Office Hours:*

Wednesday: 10:00-11:00 a.m.  
Friday: 11:00 a.m.-noon  
or by appointment

---

### *Course Objectives:*

The course will examine Latin American telenovelas and their insertion in Latin America's social formation. The connections between culture, media and society will be highlighted as we examine the historical roots of the genre, learn about its contexts of production, consumption and regulation, and analyze telenovelas as a public forum for the negotiation of social issues and meanings associated with Latin American reality. In addition, the course will underscore how telenovelas implicate and draw their audiences into the process of cultural production, as we look at how a mass-produced genre, conceived as for-profit entertainment, has tremendous significance in the everyday life of those who watch it.

### *Specific Objectives:*

- To become familiar with communication concepts and tools that are used in critical and cultural approaches to mass media studies
  - To analyze the ideological, rhetorical and cultural underpinnings of telenovelas
  - To understand the commercial and aesthetics dimensions of telenovelas, and their social uses
  - To examine how processes of industrialization and globalization have made their mark on the telenovela genre
- 

*Course Pre-requisite:* SPAN 2002

---

## *Required Readings:*

- Readings are available via WebCT
  - Internet reading assignments are also specified in this syllabus
- 

## *Expectations and Requirements:*

- Punctual attendance and class participation are expected. You should **NOT** take this course if you cannot attend class regularly and/or you're not willing to participate in class discussion
- If you must be absent from class, please let me know via email
- Borderline grades may be decided on attendance and class participation
- Deadlines are mandatory
- You should complete the reading assignments **before** class meets

## *Penalties for breaking conduct code:*

- More than four unexcused absences: deduction of one letter grade
  - Chronic tardiness: deduction of one letter grade
  - Late assignment: 10 points per day overdue
- 

## *Evaluation:*

The percentages and deadlines of your final grade for each assignment are as follows:

Representation & Identity Report	20%	October 1
Consumption Presentation	15%	October 15, 17, 19, 22, 24
Production Essay	15%	November 19
Final Paper	30%	December 10
Class Participation	20%	

## *Representation & Identity Report:*

On **Monday, October 1**, you will turn in a 3-5-pages paper focusing on the representations and identities created in a telenovela that you will watch from the beginning of the semester. Telenovelas are broadcast throughout the day on Univision, Telemundo and Telefuturo. Please check your local listings (or these networks' websites) for their schedules, and decide which telenovela you will watch and analyze.

If you prefer, you can purchase an abridged version of a telenovela on Amazon.com or Ebay and analyze this telenovela in your report. Please let me know your choice via email ([cacosta@uga.edu](mailto:cacosta@uga.edu)) by **Monday, August 27**.

**NOTE: If you're taking the class for credit in Spanish, your Representation & Identity Report should be written in Spanish.**

---

### *Consumption Presentation:*

Our meetings on **October 15, 17, 19, 22 and 24** will be devoted to your Consumption Presentations. You will prepare a 10-minute presentation about the reception of the telenovela of your choice. Again, you can choose a telenovela that is currently broadcast in the U.S., or one that you have purchased in its abridged version. (I recommend, but do not require, you use the same telenovela that you watched for your Representation & Identity Report).

You can gather the information for your presentation by observing the Internet bulletin boards dedicated to telenovelas. Another option is to conduct a brief (5-10 questions) spot survey regarding the telenovela of your choice. If you choose to do this, you will NOT ask the participants' name at any point, and the only demographic information that you will record is their age, gender and country of origin. In your presentation you will assign randomly-selected pseudonyms to your participants.

Your presentation should be well organized, articulate and informative for your audience. The use of PowerPoint is recommended, though not required. Following your presentation there will be a 5-minute Q&A period.

### *Production Essay*

On **November 19**, you will turn in a 2-3-pages Production Essay in which you will reflect on any aspect of telenovela production of interest to you. **This essay is reflexive in nature.** I'm interested in your reactions and thoughts regarding what you have learned in class about telenovela production and its links to the telenovela audiovisual text and its reception. Mere description of what you learned in class is **NOT** what I'm looking for.

### *Final Paper*

Your final paper (6-10 pages) is due **December 10 at noon.** The topic of this paper is wide open, as long as it relates to telenovelas:

- 
- Any of the topics we have covered in class
  - A particular telenovela
  - A particular network
  - A particular producing country
  - Telenovela reception in a particular country or area of the world
  - Your learning process throughout this semester
  - Any particular link or links between telenovelas, culture and society
  - A particular aspect of the globalization of telenovelas
- 

Please let me know the topic of your final paper before **November 19.**

---

## *Class Participation*

You will have substantial responsibility in class discussions. Regular, punctual attendance, critical assessment of assigned readings, and class participation are essential and expected. While there are no exams, you should demonstrate your understanding of the readings through your active participation. In other words, you are expected to read the assigned articles and chapters, take time to reflect on what you have read, and come prepared to engage in debate and pose thoughtful questions.

## *Grading Scale*

Since the University has moved to a plus/minus grading scale, your grades will be assigned from the following scale:

A	=	100-94
A-	=	93-90
B+	=	89-87
B	=	86-84
B-	=	83-80
C+	=	79-77
C	=	76-74
C-	=	73-70
D+	=	69-67
D	=	66-64
D-	=	63-60
F	=	59 and below

## *Course Calendar:\**

**Aug. 17:**      **Introductions**  
**How is our Spanish?**

**Aug. 20:**      **Cultural Studies**  
                          Barker, C. (2000). *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage. Pp. 7-12; pp. 44-48.

**Aug. 22:**      **The Circuit of Culture**  
                          du Gay et al. (1997). *Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 1.

**Aug. 24: What is a Telenovela?**

<http://www.dorimedia.com/content.asp?page=whatis>

<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Telenovela>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telenovela>

<http://www.worldscreen.com/featurescurrent.php?filename=0605noveles.htm>

Espada, Carolina (2004). *La telenovela en Venezuela*. Caracas: Fundación Bigott. (pp. 37-40).

**Telenovela Typology**

Reel, Monte (2005, April 16). In Latin America, teens get soap in their eyes. *Washington Post*, p. C01.

**Aug. 27: Due: Title of Telenovela for Representation & Identity Report****Telenovela History**

<http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/T/htmlT/telenovela/telenovela.htm>

Rego, Cacilda M. (2003). Novelas, Novelinhas, Noveloos: The evolution of the (Tele)Novela in Brazil. *Global Media Journal*, 2(2).

<http://lass.calumet.purdue.edu/cca/gmj/sp03/gmj-sp03-rego.htm>

**Aug. 29: Latin America and Latin American Television: a Brief Overview**

Sinclair, John (1999). *Latin American Television: A Global View*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK. (pp. 1-32).

**Aug. 31: A conversation with Venezuelan actor Marisa Román****Sept. 3: Labor Day Holiday-No class****Sept. 5: Representation & Identity: The basics**

Acosta-Alzuru, Carolina (forthcoming). *Venezuela es una Telenovela: Melodrama, Realidad y Crisis*. Caracas: Alfa. Cosita Rica: Más que una historia de amor (pp. 29-38).

**Representation & Identity: Yo soy Betty, la fea**

Forero, Juan (2000, December 11). Bogotá Journal: An ugly-duckling face wins TV-watchers' hearts. *The New York Times*. P. A4.

Lozano, Pilar (2001, March 2). Seducidos por "Betty la Fea". *El País*. P. 80.

Rodríguez, Cindy (2001, January 25). Beauty beyond skin's depth. "Betty la Fea" finds rapt Latino viewers. *The Boston Globe*. P. A1.

Wiltz, Teresa (2001, May 12). The swan song of "Betty la Fea". *Washington Post*. P. C01.

Collazos, Iván Ulchur (2000). *Betty La Fea: La suerte de la Inteligencia*. *Chasqui*, 71.

<http://www.zonalatina.com/Zldata185.htm>

<http://archive.salon.com/mwt/feature/2001/06/01/betty/>

**Sept. 7: Representation and Identity: Gender**

Acosta-Alzuru, Carolina (2003). Fraught with contradictions: The production, depiction and consumption of women in a Venezuelan telenovela. *Global Media Journal*, 2(2).

<http://lass.calumet.purdue.edu/cca/gmj/sp03/gmj-sp03-acosta-alzuru.htm>

**Sept. 10: Representation and Identity: Realism and Politics**

Porto, Mauro Pereira (2003). Realism and politics in Brazilian telenovelas. *Media International Australia*, 106, pp. 35-45.

**Sept. 12: Representation and Identity: Socioeconomic Class**

Acosta-Alzuru, Carolina (forthcoming). *Venezuela es una Telenovela: Melodrama, Realidad y Crisis*. Caracas: Alfa. Cosita Rica: Más que una historia de amor (pp. 172-178).

Glascok, Jack & Ruggiero, Thomas E. (2004). Representations of Class and Gender on Primetime Spanish-Language Television. *Communication Quarterly*, 52(4), pp. 390-402.

- Sept. 14:**        **Representation and Identity: Contemporary Issues**  
                          Acosta-Alzuru, Carolina (forthcoming). *Venezuela es una Telenovela: Melodrama, Realidad y Crisis*. Caracas: Alfa. Temas sociales, económicos y culturales (pp. 188-234).
- Sept. 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, 28:**  
                          No Class meeting. Students work on their Representation & Identity Reports.
- Oct. 1:**            **Due: Representation & Identity Report**
- Consumption: Inside the home**  
                          Barrios, Leoncio (1988). Television, telenovelas and family life in Venezuela. In James Lull (Ed.), *World families watch television*, (pp. 49-79). Sage: Beverly Hills, CA.
- Consumption: Bulletin Boards**  
                          Foro Recordar es Vivir:  
                          <http://www.network54.com/Forum/243414/>
- Foro TV Venezolana e Internacional:  
                          <http://z6.invisionfree.com/TVVI/index.php?showforum=1>
- Foro TV Puerto Rico: <http://www.network54.com/Forum/43187/>
- Consumption: Blogs and Webpages**  
                          Todotnv: <http://www.todotnv.com/>
- Telenovelas Filipinas: <http://telenovelas.multiply.com/blog>
- Anita's blog: <http://telenovelas-anita.blogspot.com/>
- Caray!Caray!: <http://caraycaray.blogspot.com/>
- Telenovela Love Garden: <http://gardenersdaughter.blogspot.com/>
- Oct. 3:**            **Consumption: The Case of Cosita Rica**  
                          Acosta-Alzuru, Carolina (2007, July). *Hola, Olegario: the Production, Representation and Consumption of Hugo Chávez in a Venezuelan Telenovela*. Paper presented in the Political

Communication Research Section of IAMCR's 50<sup>th</sup> Conference.  
Paris, France.

**Oct. 5:**            **Consumption: The Case of *Ciudad Bendita***

**Oct. 8:**            **Consumption: Health and other messages**

Andaló, Paula (2005). Love, tears, betrayal and health messages. *Perspectives in health magazine*, 8(2).

Acosta-Alzuru, Carolina (2003). Tackling the Issues: Meaning making in a Telenovela. *Popular Communication*. 1(4), 193-215.

Waggoner, Martha (2006, June 24). North Carolina-produced telenovela prepares for second season. Associated Press.

**Oct. 10:**          **Consumption: Ratings and Shares**

Pérez Belisario, Hernán (2007). *Televisión*. Comala.com: Caracas, Venezuela. (pp. 179-191).

**Oct. 12:**          **Production: How Telenovelas are “made”**

Acosta-Alzuru, Carolina (forthcoming). *Venezuela es una Telenovela: Melodrama, Realidad y Crisis*. Caracas: Alfa. La Producción: Cómo se hace una Telenovela (pp. 39-51). (.pdf)

Tufte, Thomas (2000). *Living with the Rubbish Queen*. University of Luton Press: Luton, UK. (pp. 129-139—2.- Creative workers).

**Oct. 15, 17, 19, 22, 24:** **Consumption presentations**

**Oct. 26:**          **Fall Break—No class**

**Oct. 29:**          **Production: Tensions**

Tufte, Thomas (2000). *Living with the Rubbish Queen*. University of Luton Press: Luton, UK. (pp. 139-145—3.- Producing *Rubbish Queen*).

Padrón, Leonardo (2002, Sep-Oct-Nov-Dic). La telenovela: ¿género literario del Siglo XXI? *Revista Bigott*, 62, 44-54.

Barrera Tyszka, Alberto (2002, Sep-Oct-Nov-Dic). Desde las tripas de un culebrón. *Revista Bigott*, 62, 62-65.

Espada, Carolina (2004). *La telenovela en Venezuela*. Caracas: Fundación Bigott. (pp. 57-60).

**Oct. 31:**        **Production: Challenging events and scenes**

**Nov. 2:**        **Production: The Music**

Archivo: Música\_letras\_telenovelas.pdf

**Nov. 5:**        **Regulating Telenovela Content**

Acosta-Alzuru, Carolina (forthcoming). *Venezuela es una Telenovela: Melodrama, Realidad y Crisis*. Caracas: Alfa. La Regulación: La prensa, el gobierno y la oposición (pp. 55-68).

**Nov. 7:**        **Regulation: The Press**

Rosete, Francis (2004, Agosto). Olegario en busca del “NO” a punta de billete. *Revista Zeta*, 1476, 34-37.

**Nov. 9:**        **Regulating the Social Formation**

Touré, Khadida (2007). Telenovelas reception by women in Bouaké (Cote D’Ivoire) and Bamako (Mali). *Visual Anthropology*, 20(1), 41-56.

Werner, Jean-Francois (2006). How women are using television to domesticate globalization: A case study on the reception and consumption of telenovelas in Senegal. *Visual Anthropology*, 19(5), 443-472.

**Nov. 12:**      **Telenovelas in the World**

Martínez, Ibsen (2005). Romancing the globe. *Foreign Policy* (151), 48-56. (.pdf)

Carvajal, Doreen (2006, December 17). Germans fall for a romantic TV genre from Latin America. *International Herald Tribune*.

- Nov. 14:** No Class. Students work on their Production essays
- Nov. 16:** **Globalization changes the Telenovela/The Telenovela redefines Globalization**  
 Wilkinson, Kenton T. (2003). Language difference in the telenovela trade. *Global Media Journal*, 2(2).  
<http://lass.calumet.purdue.edu/cca/gmj/sp03/gmj-sp03-wilkinson.htm>
- Mato, Daniel (2002). Miami in the transnationalization of the telenovela industry: On territoriality and globalization. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 11(2), pp. 195-212.
- Nov. 19:** **Original stories or remakes?**  
**Due: Production Essay**  
**Due: Inform Dr. A of your Final Paper's topic**
- Nov. 21, 23:** Thanksgiving—No class
- Nov. 26:** **Telenovelas in the U.S.: Spanish-speaking TV**  
 Porter, Eduardo. (2005, November 16). Miami opens for pouting, scheming, trembling business. *The New York Times*, p. 1-10. (.pdf)
- Navarro, Marysa (2005, November 6). A global audience for campy drama shows its force. *The New York Times*, p. 1-10. (.pdf)
- Clemens, Luis (2006, November). Nets chart different courses to succeed with telenovelas. *Multichannel News*.
- Clemens, Luis (2006, November). Plot twists for genre. *Multichannel News*.
- Nov. 28:** **Telenovelas in the U.S.: English-speaking TV**  
 Heffernan, Virginia (2006, September 28). Television review: a plucky guppy among the barracudas. *The New York Times*.
- Rohter, Larry (2007, January 7). How 'Ugly Betty' changed on the flight from Bogota. *The New York Times*, p. 4-4.

Carter, Bill (2006, December 25). Sizzling a year ago, but now pffftt... *The New York Times*.

Bellos, Alex (2007, January 7). Telenovelas. *The Sunday Telegraph* (London). P. 7-14.

Hibberd, James (2006, March 13). Telenovelas pose peril for writers. *Television Week*, TVCurrents, p. 1.

[http://www.nbcumv.com/telemundo/release\\_detail.en.nbc/entertainment-20070614000000-nbcuniversalscores.html](http://www.nbcumv.com/telemundo/release_detail.en.nbc/entertainment-20070614000000-nbcuniversalscores.html)

<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117966965.html?categoryId=14&cs=1>

**Nov. 30: Telenovela Conversations/Discussion Student Papers**

**Dec. 3: Telenovela Conversations/Discussion Student Papers**

**Dec. 4: Course evaluations  
Conclusions**

**Dec. 5: Catch-up day, if necessary.**

**Dec. 10: Due: Final Paper.**

**\* The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.**

---

## *Academic Honesty*

*All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>*

---