

Fate, Freewill and Entrapment in Modern Spanish Narrative

MWF 9:00-9:50 | KAUKE 141

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OFFICE HOURS: By appointment
OFFICE: Kauke 303

Course Description: This course examines the themes of *fate*, *freewill*, and *entrapment* in a selection of short stories, novels, and films primarily from Spain. It begins with an examination of the medieval fable, *El brujo postergado* (c. 1330) by Don Juan Manuel, and two early modern novellas, *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554, author unknown) and *El licenciado Vidriera* (1613) by Miguel de Cervantes. These three literary texts will serve as a touchstone for subsequent examination of a selection of canonical twentieth-century films, short stories, and novels that, in addition to exploring fate, freewill and entrapment, examine identity, selfhood, disillusionment, hardship, freedom, patriarchy, authoritarianism, love, and modernity. The common threads connecting the selected readings and viewings are: (1) their exploration of the human condition; (2) their meditation on the state of human affairs; (3) and their portrayal of (in)humanity during times of instability, crisis, and change. Scholarly articles that facilitate in-depth discussion of the texts and serve as models of academic writing on literature and film will be assigned for some of the readings. **Prerequisites:** Spanish 202, and either 223 or 224, or permission of the instructor. This course can be used to satisfy the Junior IS requirement for the Spanish major. **Course taught in Spanish.**

Student Learning Objectives: 1) To develop an appreciation of the study of Spanish as a field of humanistic inquiry; 2) to gain a deep and nuanced understanding of the assigned primary texts in relation to their socio-historic and/or philosophical context; 3) to acquire basic knowledge of three important historical periods in Spain (Renaissance, Baroque, and 20th century); 4) to obtain structured practice in literary analysis and research; 5) to gain experience reading scholarly studies on Spanish literature, film, and culture; 6) to continue gaining advanced practice in reading, speaking, writing, and listening comprehension for everyday communication and higher-order reasoning. All of the assignments and class activities are designed to achieve these objectives. **Note:** The learning objectives for this course align closely with the following [Graduate Qualities](#) of the College of Wooster: *Independent Thinking*; *Integrative and Collaborative Inquiry*; *Dynamic Understanding of the Liberal Arts*; *Effective Communication*; and *Global Engagement*.

Expectations and Required Work: All assignments must be completed before class on the dates indicated on the schedule of classes. Generally, preparing for class entails: 1) actively reading or viewing the assignments that appear on the schedule of classes; 2) taking careful notes on the reading or viewing assignments; 3) completing and submitting all homework assignments with care and attention to detail. It is recommended that you review grammatical topics independently as needed and that you consult with the professor during office hours to address any difficulties that you might be experiencing in the course. As a discussion-based course, it is imperative that you come to class ready to engage with your peers, sharing your ideas on the assigned readings or viewings and taking a leadership role in facilitating substantive and focused exchanges. It is also expected that you bring printed copies of the assigned readings to class and your notes. Finally, each class session will require approximately 2-3 hours of focused preparation.

General Statement on learning a foreign language: There are no shortcuts to learning a second language. Grammar and vocabulary must be actively reviewed and memorized independently for an extended period of time after having formally studied them in courses. At Wooster, the formal study of grammar corresponds to Spanish 101-102 and Spanish 201-202. As an advanced 300-level course, the assumption is that you possess the ability to see your written errors and to hear your spoken errors and to practice self-correction. Doing the assigned work for this course conscientiously and diligently will reinforce your knowledge of Spanish grammar provided that you do your part to remedy any gaps in your knowledge of Spanish that you know exist. Not reviewing grammar and not being an active reader, listener and inquirer will put you at significant risk of linguistic regression. As you probably already know, learning a second language does not happen by simply

enrolling in courses and doing the required work. It requires a personal commitment to mastering the language that is supported and complemented by your coursework. Above all, learning Spanish requires you to develop and execute your own individual strategy to actively use and live the language. I expect that if you have enrolled in this course your long-term goal is to achieve a respectable level of *bilingualism*. This being the case, you will do well to give this course the time that it needs in order for it to help you develop advanced literacy in Spanish. If attaining a respectable level of *bilingualism* is not your goal, then this course is not a good fit for you and you should drop it today.

Professor Cope’s Teaching Philosophy: My role is to support students in their endeavor to acquire proficiency, fluency, or mastery of Spanish as well as to challenge them to realize their maximum learning potential. I feel an obligation to hold my students to high (but reasonable) standards; but more than this, I expect my students to hold themselves to reasonably high standards. I invest my time in mentoring, tutoring, advising, and coaching any and all of my students who seek me out for these purposes. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you think I can be of assistance. I also welcome any student who comes to me in the interest of advocating for him/herself.

A few things about Professor Cope: I hold M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Spanish. My scholarly work explores the intersection of philosophy, literature, and film. As an undergrad, I double majored in Art History and Spanish, and I direct-enrolled for one year at the University of Salamanca (Spain). I am from Prunedale, California (pop. 17,000). My maternal grandparents migrated to CA from Nogales, México and their first language was Spanish. I began learning Spanish as a teenager in an environment where bilingualism was and still is common. I genuinely enjoy helping students learn Spanish, at all levels. This is my 15th year at the College of Wooster. My pronouns are he/his/him.

Grade Distribution (standard 10 point scale with + and -; below 60 is a failing grade):

Class Participation and Academic Engagement.....	10%
Homework Assignments.....	10%
Analytical papers (6).....	35%
Writing Portfolio.....	10%
Independent Research on fate, freewill <i>or</i> entrapment.....	10%
Presentation.....	5%
Final Paper.....	20%
Extra Credit.....	+1-3%

Primary Texts:

Novels

1. *La Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), anonymous (provided)
2. *Niebla* (1914), Miguel de Unamuno (request from Library or purchase from bookstore or Amazon)
3. *Nada* (1951), Carmen Laforet (request from Library or purchase from bookstore or Amazon)

Short Stories (provided)

1. *El brujo postergado* (c. 1330), Don Juan Manuel (adapted by Jorge Luis Borges)
2. *El licenciado vidriera* (1613), Miguel de Cervantes
3. *Las ruinas circulares* (1940), Jorge Luis Borges

Films (online or on reserve in the library)

1. *Tiempos Modernos* (1936), Charlie Chaplin
2. *La cabina* (1972), Antonio Mercero
3. *Hable con ella* (2002), Pedro Almodóvar
4. *Blancanieves* (2012), Pablo Berger

Attendance: Regular attendance and participation are essential for success in this course. Only absences due to circumstances deemed acceptable by the College will be excused. Documentation of these circumstances will

usually be required, and any situation or condition causing prolonged or habitual absences *must be* reported to the office of the Dean of Students before they will be excused. Please keep in mind that absences due to co-curricular activities are not automatically excused. Therefore, you should consult with me as soon as you become aware that your involvement in a co-curricular activity will lead you to miss class. Please understand that I am extremely reluctant to excuse more than any two such absences, as success in this course is predicated on your fullest possible commitment. Moreover, accumulating more than two absences due to being sick may lead me to not excuse later absences tied to a co-curricular commitment. Also, accruing **nine unexcused absences** will result in an automatic **F** in the course, regardless of the circumstances. Assignments not turned in due to unexcused absences will receive an automatic zero. Finally, habitual tardiness or coming and going during class will result in a reduction of your class participation grade. As a discussion-based course, your peers need you to be present—in mind and body—everyday. **Note:** *The only way to earn points for class participation is by attending class. Because the work done in class cannot be recuperated, there is simply no way to make up points that were lost by virtue of not attending class, even if the absence was excused. Therefore, for every absence, you will receive a zero for class participation for that given day. One score, however, will be dropped at the end of the semester.*

Class Participation and Academic Engagement: The success of this course depends on your daily preparation and active participation. In class, you will be asked to engage with your peers in structured conversations about the assigned readings and viewings. Your class participation grade will be calculated based on the *substance* of your contributions, your ability to remain focused and on task, and on your willingness to engage and work constructively with peers. You can expect to find a relaxed, informal atmosphere in the classroom. I view your willingness to volunteer as a sign that you are prepared and have completed the required assignments. Your reluctance to volunteer or unwillingness to participate will be viewed as lack of preparation. As the professor, my role is to facilitate discussions, lend support to you as you develop and hone your ability to read, understand and interpret complex literary and visual texts, and set the intellectual parameters within which you will carry out your own inquiries and reach your own unique understanding of the assigned material. In other words, the purpose of the course is not for me to bombard you with everything that I know about the subject matter, but rather to help you make your own discoveries in a controlled, systematic and relevant way. The interrelated topics selected for this course will challenge you to think critically about the questions and issues raised in the readings and viewings and to develop your own perspectives on them. You will always be encouraged to venture beyond the immediate scope of inquiry and to draw original associations, make relevant connections, and freely explore your ideas. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I expect the full and equal participation of all of the students, not just a select few. On this note, having little or nothing to say during class is the best way to lose what should be easy points. Conversely, you can do much to ensure your overall success by coming to class well prepared and willing to discuss and debate. Participation will be assessed periodically throughout the semester, and the following explains how the grades you receive should be interpreted. Receiving a particular grade means that all or some of the description for that particular range applies to you. Please note that absences, whether excused or unexcused, entail an automatic and cumulative reduction in your grade:

9-10 points (A): Student remained fully engaged and involved in the conversation for the entire class period; student participated regularly and voluntarily; student did his or her part to move the conversation along in a productive direction; student offered relevant and thoughtful comments on the assigned readings or viewings; student was noticeably well prepared and did not revert to English.

8 points (B): Student was deficient in one of the above categories, but overall made a notable contribution to the discussion.

7 points (C): Student was deficient in two of the above categories, but overall made an acceptable contribution to the discussion.

6 points (D): Student was deficient in three of the above categories or made little overall effort to contribute to the discussion.

5 points (F): Student was noticeably unprepared, did not do his or her part to move the conversation along in a productive direction, and offered either no comments on the assigned readings or viewings or comments that showed little to no understanding of the assigned material. Student receives 5 points for being present, paying attention and not impeding the flow of the discussion.

1-4 points (F): Student was noticeably unprepared, did not do his or her part to move the conversation along in a productive direction, and offered either no comments on the assigned readings or viewings or comments that showed little to no understanding of the assigned material. Moreover, student's lack of preparation impeded the flow of the conversation or the productivity of his or her peers.

0 points (F): Student was absent. Or, student exhibited disruptive behavior that impacted negatively on the learning environment.

Homework (timed reflections): These assignments are designed to encourage you to reflect on the reading and viewing assignments, make broad and meaningful connections, and practice your writing in Spanish. The questions for these assignments will be distributed at the end of the class period and collected at the beginning of the next. The following explains how the grades for the pre-discussion assignments are assigned:

9-10 points (A): Student has completed a thoughtful, well-written entry of at least one paragraph in length that demonstrates close familiarity with the assigned reading or viewing. Although this is not a formal essay, the entry contains a clear beginning, middle and end, uses correct grammar and punctuation, thoroughly explores an idea or spells out a valid and reasoned interpretation, is original and insightful, and serves as an excellent point of departure for the forthcoming class discussion.

8 points (B): Student's post shows some modest deficiencies, but makes a substantive contribution.

7 points (C): Student's post shows some notable deficiencies, but makes a substantive contribution.

6 points (D): Student's post shows some notable deficiencies and makes only a nominal contribution.

5 points (E): Student's post shows some glaring deficiencies and makes no substantive contribution.

0 points (F): Student failed to post anything.

Analytical Papers: You will write 6 papers (3+ pages in length) on specific topics relevant to the assigned readings and viewings. All papers must contain a well formulated and evident thesis statement, a cohesive and coherent argument in support of the thesis, and a relevant and logical conclusion. Essays must follow MLA format, as well as be word-processed and double-spaced. Times 12 is the required font size with standard margins of 1 inch (left, right, top, and bottom). The quality of thought will count for 75% of the grade, and the quality of writing will count for 25%. It is expected that your papers will: (1) exhibit a broad range of verb forms; (2) make use of subjunctive and compound verb forms; (3) show command of subject-verb and noun-adjective agreement; (4) utilize pronouns and prepositions effectively. After the first essay has been graded, you may be asked to meet with me to identify specific areas for improvement in your writing and to set specific goals for the semester. The criteria for evaluating the critical essays is posted on the course website. It is strongly recommended that you give the writing task the attention and time that it deserves. Successful writing entails following a process of outlining, composing, revising, more revising, even more revising, and polishing. If you follow this strategy, you will be successful. **Notes:** (1) Consider investing in a grammar manual and a writing manual. Links to very good online grammar and writing manuals can be found on the course website, and you can consult with me during office hours to review how to best utilize a grammar and/or writing manual for this and for future courses; (2) You may not ask other people to edit or correct your papers. If I have reason to believe that what I am reading is not your writing, I will consider it an act of cheating and assign an appropriate penalty. The most severe penalty is failure on the assignment and referral to the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement for academic dishonesty. There is no gray area here: if someone edits a portion of your paper for you and you submit it, it's cheating. Whenever I read a paper that you have submitted, my expectation is that I am reading only your work. As the semester proceeds, I will be thinking of ways to help you develop as a writer. If I am reading work that isn't yours, then the process doesn't work. However, please know that you will be afforded ample time to complete the writing assignments and that you can consult with me or the TA prior to submitting your work.

Writing Portfolio: A writing portfolio is a showcase of your written work that is preceded by an accompanying cover letter that introduces the reader to the subsequent collection of writing. The writing portfolio must contain the following: (1) a balanced self-evaluation that details the strengths and weaknesses that the papers in the portfolio exhibit and a statement of what you think you will need to continue to hone in the future; (2) the four analytical essays that you wrote during the semester (the draft that was originally submitted for a grade and a post-grading draft that incorporates all of the corrections and editing suggestions provided by the professor); (3) the grading sheets that you received from the professor for each of the four assignments. It is expected that the presentation of the portfolio will be thoughtful, neat, and professional. The due date for this assignment is posted on the schedule of classes; however, it should be completed as soon after receiving the graded fourth paper as possible.

Independent Research on fate, freewill or entrapment: Every reading and viewing assignment for this course deals directly or indirectly with at least one of these concepts. In anticipation of writing the final paper, you will be required to research *one* of them. Alternatively, you can propose to research a related concept (i.e. *agency*). What you discover about your chosen concept will enable you to develop a much richer understanding of the assigned texts than would be the case by relying only on the dictionary definition of it. A corollary to this assertion is that possessing a deeper and more nuanced knowledge of specific concepts enables each of us to better navigate the complexities of the modern world and even everyday life, and hence there is a practical benefit to this exercise. This project should be carried out in consultation with the professor, and I expect to see each student apply what she or he is learning about their selected concept to the assigned readings as

opportunities to do so arise during the class discussions. A 500-word report on your research and findings will be due by **Wednesday, April 22** at the beginning of class.

Presentation: During the final week of classes, each student will give a ten minute presentation on his or her research on *fate*, *freewill* or *entrapment* (or a related concept) and will discuss how a particular theorist's understanding of it can shed new and original insight onto one or more of the assigned readings or viewings for the course.

Final Paper: This assignment represents a culmination of the work done in the course, and you are encouraged to think creatively, take risks, and draw broad connections. Your task is: 1) to analyze, interpret, and compare two or more of the written or visual texts assigned for the course (or other courses in Spanish taken at Wooster) utilizing adeptly the concept that you have independently researched; 2) support your argument, address its possible weaknesses, and argue its validity using a selection of the available scholarship on your chosen text(s). The library databases that yield the most academic articles on the texts assigned for the course are JSTOR and MLA. Similarly, scholarly books can be found in Consort and OhioLINK. Projects that rely heavily on non-academic sources will receive an **F**. The criteria used to grade the final paper can be found on the course website, and papers that merit an A will demonstrate excellence in the following areas: organization, cohesion, clarity, complexity, depth, insightfulness, precision, and expression. Furthermore, it is expected that your final paper will: (1) exhibit a broad range of verb forms; (2) make use of subjunctive and compound verb forms; (3) show command of subject-verb and noun-adjective agreement; (4) utilize pronouns and prepositions effectively. Essays must be word processed (using a 12-point font) and formatted according to the specifications of the most recent edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. **Note:** Resources related to academic writing can be found on the course website as well as the website for the Writing Center. The required length of the paper is 2,500-3,000 words, and the paper must contain the following components:

- 1) Title Page
- 2) Synopsis (100-150 words)
- 3) Introduction that culminates in a strong thesis statement (250-500 words)
- 4) Literature review (250-500 words)
- 5) Discussion of your central concept (250-500 words, adapted from your research summary)
- 6) Analysis (1,000-1,250 words)
- 7) Conclusion (250-500 words)
- 8) Works Cited (# of words N/A)

The final paper is due via email by no later than **12:00 PM on Tuesday, May 5**. Please submit the paper as a Word document.

Information and Policies:

Spanish is the language of instruction for this course. Whenever the professor or TA are in the classroom, you should plan to be speaking in Spanish.

The **TA** for the course will participate in, and help lead, class discussions and can be consulted outside of class for: (1) advice on developing a successful study strategy for the course; (2) basic help with understanding the assigned material; (3) informal feedback on writing assignments before their submission.

Policy on Submitting Papers: Unless otherwise noted, all papers are due at the beginning of class stapled and in hardcopy form on the date specified on the schedule. Unstapled papers will receive a discretionary reduction of points.

Policy on Acceptance of Late Work: All written assignments are due when specified on the schedule of classes. Points will be deducted, as follows, for work received after the established deadlines: five points for papers turned in **6 hours late or less**, 10 for papers turned in **6-12 hours late**, fifteen for papers turned in **12-24 hours late**, and twenty-five for papers turned in **24-48 hours late**. All papers turned in more than 48 hours late will receive an automatic **F**. Remember, too, that sliding a paper under my door does not mean that it has been received and that late papers can be turned electronically so that the time of submission is documented. **Note:**

This policy applies *only* to written papers.

Policy Regarding Smart Phones and Laptops: Smart phones may be used in class for the purpose of using applications that facilitate learning or engagement with peers. Points will be deducted from your class participation grade if I *hear* your cell phone, or for any disturbances caused by failure to follow proper cell phone etiquette. The use of laptop computers during class is permitted. Points can be lost, however, if it *appears to me* that a device is being used in a manner that doesn't facilitate learning or engagement with peers.

Policy Regarding Conflicts with Academic Responsibilities: The College of Wooster is an academic institution and its fundamental purpose is to stimulate its students to reach the highest standard of intellectual achievement. As an academic institution with this purpose, the College expects students to give the highest priority to their academic responsibilities. When conflicts arise between academic commitments and complementary programs (including athletic, cultural, educational, and volunteer activities), students, faculty, staff, and administrators all share the responsibility of minimizing and resolving them. As a student you have the responsibility to inform the faculty member of potential conflicts as soon as you are aware of them, and to discuss and work with the faculty member to identify alternative ways to fulfill your academic commitments without sacrificing the academic integrity and rigor of the course.

Academic Integrity at The College of Wooster: As a student at The College of Wooster, you are expected to be familiar with the Code of Academic Integrity, to understand what constitutes academically dishonest behavior, and to avoid such behavior. Established violations of the Code will result in appropriate punishment and is recognized as grounds for failure in the course.

Cheating and Plagiarism: All of the written work that you submit for a grade in this course must be entirely your own. If I suspect that someone else did your work for you, you will be asked to see me during office hours and if in the course of our conversation my suspicion is confirmed, then penalties will be imposed, which may include failure on the assignment and meeting with the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement. Plagiarism, on the other hand, is the copying of a sentence (partial or full) or segment of discourse from another source without giving proper credit to its origins. The college has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism. *Significant* cases of deliberate plagiarism will receive an automatic **F** on the assignment and will be referred to the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement.

The Learning Center – APEX: The Learning Center, which is in APEX (Gault library) offers a variety of academic support services, programs and 1:1 meetings available to all students. Popular areas of support include time management techniques, class preparation tips and test taking strategies. In addition, the Learning Center coordinates peer-tutoring for several academic departments. Students are encouraged to schedule an appointment at the APEX front desk or visit the Learning Center Website for additional options. The Learning Center also coordinates accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities. At the beginning of the semester, students should contact the Learning Center (ext. 2595) to make arrangements for securing appropriate accommodations. Although the Learning Center will notify professors of students with documented disabilities and the approved accommodations, students are encouraged to speak with professors during the first week of each semester. If a student does not request accommodations or does not provide documentation to the Learning Center, faculty are under no obligation to provide accommodations.

***Spanish Table:** Spanish Table meets once a week, every Tuesday noon-1:00 pm in Lowry 250/251. I recommend attending for informal conversation in Spanish. The department's FLTA this year is María Angelica González Palacios (Colombia). She coordinates activities for the Luce Spanish Suite and oversees the Spanish Table. Her email is magonzalez@wooster.edu.

Important: (1) *It is expected that students will demonstrate courtesy, respect and professionalism towards their peers at all times, in accordance with the College's Core Values and the Wooster Ethic. Students can expect the same from the professor. A constructive attitude is appreciated by all. (2)* *The structure of the course and its governing policies are designed to accomplish the proposed objective and assure the fair and equal treatment of the students as responsible adults. Your presence in the class is an indication that you understand and agree to the requirements of the class as stipulated in the syllabus.*