LDST 390-04: Don Quixote in the Americas  
Spring 2018

Instructor: Professor Ernesto Semán  
Course location and time: Jepson 101, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00-1:15pm  
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Office: Jepson 233  
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:
We will spend fifteen weeks reading and discussing a 900+ page-book written more than 400 years ago, from the title page to the last paragraph. This is the main goal of this course. The experience of reading Don Quixote is a total immersion in a text that will transport us back to the beginning of modern fiction. Hopefully, this immersion will help us to see our present in a different light - a present in which fiction, truth, post-truth, authenticity and power are in question. Therefore, the purpose of the course is the course itself: Don Quixote won’t necessarily make you a better person, it won’t teach you lessons such as how to be a better leader. It is unlikely that reading Don Quixote will land you a better job. But if we work hard, the course will provide you with joy and with new ideas about writing and reading, about what is truth and what is not, about political imagination and envisioning radical changes, about love, about property and books, race, technology, identity and – why not? – about ourselves, if such a thing as the ‘self’ exists (about which Cervantes and the millions who have read his work have something to say.)

As we read Cervantes’ masterpiece, we will discuss the historical context in which it was written, the literary innovations it introduced, the ideas about fiction that it introduced that became relevant in the post-truth era, and the many cultural productions it has inspired. But throughout our conversation, a permanent dimension of the class will be Don Quixote in the Americas, the way it has been received and appropriated and consumed and reinvented on this side of the ocean. We will examine the radically different ways in which it has been understood in Latin America and in the United States, and what these understandings say about these societies, and about the dreams and nightmares in which our societies come into existence every day.

Requirements and Grades:

1. Class Participation: 10%
I expect that you will contribute actively throughout the entire course. I also expect that you come to class having read the texts, following Don Quixote’s story, and engaging with discussions about it and about how the additional texts apply. Specific and incisive discussions of the readings are particularly welcome; general statements that do not relate to Don Quixote’s story, or with your personal experience with the text, or with the other authors' arguments, or with the other students' points, are not.

2. Leading discussion: 15%
Each week, one student will lead the conversation about Don Quixote during the two classes. The student will bring to the class the most significant events from the chapters assigned,
the points that she considers relevant, the questions about which he would like to reflect. In order
to do so, the leading discussant will bring together a careful read of Don Quixote and the
additional texts.

3. **One mid-term exam: 25%**
   To be held on March 8.

4. **Two 500-word mini-essays: 20%**
   Students will write two mini-essays or reports in which they will answer one specific
   question based on their readings and the class’ conversation.

5. **Final Project: One new chapter for Don Quixote: 30%**
   As a final project is a two-part assignment. First, students will have to add one chapter of
   your own to Cervantes’ work. Topic, length, location within the novel—all will be
decided by author of Don Quixote’s novel chapter. We will dedicate the last two classes
to discuss your projects, the insights they provide, the reasons to write them, the
questions you might have. Second, students will write a mini-essay (no longer than 1,500
words) in which they will explain and analyze the added chapter, engaging with the
readings and class’ conversations.

**For the record:**

1. Class attendance is absolutely necessary. Each unexcused absence will lead to 2 percent
taken off your final grade.
2. You should arrive at class on time, no exceptions. You should not leave class before it
   ends, no exceptions. Late arrivals (more than 3 minutes) or early departures (more than 3
   minutes) will affect the percentage of your grade corresponding to class participation.
3. No food in the classroom.
4. I will respond to all emails within 24 hours of receiving them, but I will not respond to
   emails sent to me after 5pm until the following day. I can also give you feedback about
   your projects, but I will not read rough drafts sent 24 hours before they are due.
5. Plagiarism: Any plagiarism is grounds for failure for the assignment in question, for the
course, and for the school as well. When the ideas or writings of others are presented in
assignments, these ideas or writing should be attributed to that source. Special care
should be taken to cite sources correctly and to use quotation marks. Resources such as
the library and the Writing Center are available on campus to assist you. You are
encouraged to take advantage of these resources.

**Required texts (available at the bookstore and pretty much everywhere else):**


**Course Schedule**

**Week 1:**

January 16th.

Introduction, course overview, discussion of learning objectives and syllabus.
January 18th.
   Mary Gaylord: A True Giant, Interview with la Gazzette: https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/04/a-true-giant/
   Angelique Crisafis: “Don Quixote is the world’s best book say the world’s top authors.”
   The Guardian, 8 May 2002: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/may/08/humanities.books

Part I: The historical Context: literary fiction and political imagination
Week 2: Don Quixote, Part I: Introduction and Chapters I-X
January 23rd.

January 25th.

Week 3: Don Quixote, Part I: Chapters XI-XX
January 30th.

February 1st.

Part II: Reading Don Quixote for 400 years
Week 4: Don Quixote, Part I: Chapters XXI-XXVI
February 6th.
   Harold Bloom, Cervantes’s Don Quixote, New York: Chelsea House Pub, 2000, Excerpts

February 8th.

Part III: Don Quixote in the post-truth era. ‘Fictionable’ facts, truths, imagined futures.
Week 5: Don Quixote, Part I: Chapters XXVII-XXXV
February 13th.

February 15th.

Week 6: Don Quixote, Part I: Chapters XXXVI-LII
February 20th.

February 22nd.

**Week 7: Don Quixote, Part II: Introduction and Chapters I-XI**
February 27th.

March 1st.

**Week 8:**
March 6th. **REVISION**

March 8th. **MIDTERM EXAM**

**Week 9**
March 13th. **SPRING BREAK**

March 15th. **SPRING BREAK**

**Part IV: The Quixjotes in the Americas: Latin America, the US and Cervantes**

**Week 10: Don Quixote, Part II: Chapters XII-XXI**
March 20th.
Diana de Armas Wilson, *Cervantes, the Novel and the New World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001, Excerpt

March 22nd.
**NO CLASS**
(to watch at home: James March: Passion and Discipline: Don Quixote’s Lessons for Leadership, Stanford Graduate School of Business. [https://youtu.be/NYmbiv_cbn8](https://youtu.be/NYmbiv_cbn8))

**Week 11: Don Quixote, Part II: Chapters XXII-XXXV**
March 27th.
Special guest: Professor Aurora Hermida Ruiz

March 29th.
Gonzalo Santonja Gómez-Agero y María Antonia de Isabel Estrada, “El Quijote en la Cuba de Fidel Castro”, *La Colmena*, No 73, enero-marzo 2012.

**Week 12:** *Don Quixote, Part II: Chapters XXXVI-LIII*

April 3rd.
- Special guest: Professor Al Goethal: Don Quixote, the Hero and the Leader

April 5th.

**Week 13:** *Don Quixote, Part II: Chapters LIV-LXX*

April 10th.

April 12th.
- Clips on Don Quixote in the Americas:
  - Cuba:
  - Venezuela:
  - United States:

**Part 5: The Postmodern Quijotes**

**Week 14:** *Don Quixote Part II: Chapters LXXI-LXXIV*

April 17th.
  - For those watching Fight Club: Chapter 3
  - For those watching Brazil: Chapter 6
For those watching The Matrix: Chapter 7.

April 19rd.

Week 15:
April 24th. Individual Projects

April 26th. Individual Projects

Jepson School of Leadership Studies
Common Syllabus Insert

Awarding of Credit
To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities.

registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html

Disability Accommodations
Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact their instructors as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams.

disability.richmond.edu/

Honor System
The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. The shortened version of the honor pledge is: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.”

studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html

Religious Observance
Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance.

registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html
If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to consult with me. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

**Academic Skills Center** ([http://asc.richmond.edu](http://asc.richmond.edu), 289-8626 or 289-8956): Assists students in assessing their academic strengths and weaknesses; honing their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, and related techniques; working on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encouraging campus and community involvement.

**Career Services** ([http://careerservices.richmond.edu](http://careerservices.richmond.edu) or 289-8547): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major or course of study, connecting with internships and jobs, and investigating graduate and professional school options. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor early in your time at UR.

**Counseling and Psychological Services** ([http://wellness.richmond.edu/offices/caps](http://wellness.richmond.edu/offices/caps) or 289-8119): Assists currently enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include short-term counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

**Speech Center** ([http://speech.richmond.edu](http://speech.richmond.edu) or 289-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

**Writing Center** ([http://writing.richmond.edu](http://writing.richmond.edu) or 289-8263): Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.

**Boatwright Library Research Librarians** ([http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask](http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask) or 289-8876): Research librarians assist students with identifying and locating resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also provide research support for students and can respond to questions about evaluating and citing sources. Students can email, text or IM or schedule a personal research appointment to meet with a librarian in his/her office on the first floor Research and Collaborative Study area.