

CL 488.01

Self and Body in the Literature of the Americas

Prof. Craig Epplin

Course Description

This class focuses on contemporary writers from North and South America who question the relationship between one's body and the construction of a sense of self. They do so in ways that vary according to their particular circumstances, reflecting differences of gender, sexual orientation, race, immigration status, and language. Our goal in reading these texts is to arrive at a sophisticated understanding of how the multiple factors inherent in self-construction relate to bodily experience.

Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned texts in detail. Our meetings will involve a combination of lecture and discussion, and students should plan to participate actively in class conversation.

Your grade will be determined by the following criteria:

Attendance and participation: 20%

Short writing assignments: 10%

Midterm: 20%

Final exam: 20%

Final paper: 30%

Readings

César Aira, *The Little Buddhist Monk* and *The Proof*

Reinaldo Arenas, *Before Night Falls*

Ann Carson, *Autobiography of Red*

Ben Lerner, *10:04*

Clarice Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*

Valeria Luiselli, *The Story of My Teeth*

Maggie Nelson, *Bluets*

We will supplement these texts with various readings in recent literary and cultural theory.