

COURSE SYLLABUS

LIT 903 Hispanic Literature: Gary Soto

Instructor: Luetta Reimer

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Instructor's website: www.pdcourses.com

Number of Units: 3 Semester Units

Grade Level: K-12

Course Description:

The literary world has been greatly enriched in the last few decades by the emergence of many gifted Latino writers. Readers of all ethnicities now have more opportunity to share the richness of the culture as well as understand more fully what these people have experienced.

Gary Soto is one such writer. An acclaimed poet, essayist, and fiction writer, Soto's work is now published widely in anthologies and appears in many elementary literature texts. He has won numerous prestigious awards and fellowships. Soto, however, is unique because of his commitment to speak to young people. He wants to help children of all ages find dignity and self-worth as they explore their own stories and their own heritage.

The texts included reflect the range of Soto's work, which includes poetry, autobiography, short stories, novels, and plays. Some are written for young children, while others are more suitable for older readers. Soto's writing speaks to the need in education for outstanding work by persons from a variety of cultures and ethnicities. At the same time Soto helps build the self-esteem of Latino children, he promotes understanding and tolerance among readers from all ethnic groups.

Participants will be asked to read and respond to the short paperback texts and to design ways to use Soto's stories and poems to inspire their students to enjoy reading and writing.

This course is designed to meet the objectives identified in the Common Core State Standards in Language Arts as well as the five core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Students will be asked to make connections between their work and these standards or the standards of their own states.

Course Dates:

This course is self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to a year to complete assignments. No course should be completed in less than three weeks (one week per credit).

Course Materials:

The following texts by Gary Soto are included with this course:

- *Living Up the Street* (young adult) - Twenty-one recollections of growing up Chicano in Fresno, California. Winner of the Before Columbus Foundation's American Book Award. Autobiography.
- *Chato's Kitchen* (ages 4-8) - Chato, the cat, plots to catch the barrio mice by cooking Mexican food and inviting them for dinner.
- *Baseball In April* (ages 10-14) - Eleven short stories on everyday adventures of Latino young people growing up in central California.
- *The Skirt* (ages 7-12) - A short novel about a lost folklorico skirt and the adventures to retrieve it.
- *Taking Sides* (ages 10-16) - A novel for young adults about tension over divided loyalties and the importance of friendship.
- *Neighborhood Odes* (ages 8-12) – Twenty-one poems celebrate everyday activities and experiences in the neighborhood.

Materials for this course also include a folder with information about Fresno Pacific University, the Center for Professional Development, and the instructor, plus information on course policies and procedures.

Course Requirements:

To successfully complete this course, participants must submit

1. a 250-400 word typed response to each of the six Gary Soto texts.
2. three lesson plans, each focusing on one of the texts read in the course.
3. three lesson evaluations for the experiences designed above.

See the "Schedule of Topics and Assignments" for more details on these assignments.

All work should be typed and sent to the instructor at one time when the course is completed. Please make a copy of all work; work will not be returned. Students have one full year to finish the course but should not send completed work in less than three weeks from registration.

Send completed work by email attachments to: Lmreimer@fresno.edu

OR

Mail all the above items to:

Luetta Reimer
1549 S. Lind Avenue
Fresno, California 93727

IN EITHER CASE, request online grading: <http://ce.fresno.edu/cpd>

National Standards:

This course is designed to reinforce and support the English Language Arts Standards of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS). The Anchor Standards for Reading (Grades K-12) are listed here:

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: Five Core Propositions

In addition to the content standards referenced above, this course supports the following core propositions that characterize National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

Proposition 1: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning

- NBCTs are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They believe all students can learn.
- They treat students equitably. They recognize the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and they take account for these differences in their practice.
- NBCTs understand how students develop and learn.
- They respect the cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom.
- They are concerned with their students' self-concept, their motivation and the effects of learning on peer relationships.

Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students.

- NBCTs have mastery over the subject(s) they teach. They have a deep understanding of the history structure and real-world applications of the subject.
- They have skill and experience in teaching it, and they are very familiar with the skills gaps and preconceptions students may bring to the subject.
- They are able to use diverse instructional strategies to teach for understanding.

Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning.

- NBCTs deliver effective instruction. They move fluently through a range of instructional techniques, keeping students motivated, engaged and focused.
- They know how to engage students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to meet instructional goals.
- NBCTs know how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole.
- They use multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, and they can clearly explain student performance to parents.

Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience.

- NBCTs model what it means to be an educated person—they read, they question, they create and they are willing to try new things.
- They are familiar with learning theories and instructional strategies and stay abreast of current issues in American education.
- They critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice.

Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities.

- NBCTs collaborate with others to improve student learning.
- They are leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses.
- They work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development.
- They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of resources in order to meet state and local education objectives.

Learning Outcomes:

Participants will be able to

- 1) acknowledge, appreciate, and discuss the breadth of Gary Soto's works. (CCSS 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9 & 10; NBPTS Prop. 2)
- 2) identify and analyze literary terms and techniques. (CCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 10; NBPTS Prop. 2)
- 3) increase skills for building cultural/ethnic awareness and sensitivity through reading and discussion. (CCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 6; NBPTS Props. 1, 2, 3 & 4)
- 4) discover connections between literature and other disciplines. (CCSS 1, 2, 3, 7, 9 & 10; NBPTS Props. 1, 2, & 4)
- 5) develop lesson plans to effectively share Soto's stories and poems in the classroom. (CCSS 1 - 10; NBPTS Props. 1, 2, 3, & 4)
- 6) connect lessons to state or national standards. (NBPTS Prop 5)

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

A. Readings: Read each of these texts:

- *Living Up the Street*
- *Chato's Kitchen*
- *Baseball In April*
- *The Skirt*
- *Taking Sides*
- *Neighborhood Odes*

B. Response: Write a 250-400 word response to each of the texts, using the following prompts:

1. Name of work.
2. Briefly discuss the central idea or unifying theme of this text.
3. Identify specific contemporary issues or concerns that are addressed in the text. Which of these may be present in your own school or neighborhood?
4. Quote a section from the text (a paragraph, a few lines of poetry, etc.) that made an impression on you. Explain how and why you reacted to this part of the text as you did.

C. Classroom Integration: Design three lessons using Soto's works.*

1. **Design** three lesson plans, one each for utilizing three of Soto's works, and **teach** the lessons in your classroom.* You may follow the accepted lesson plan format for your district or a plan which is functional for your teaching situation. While it should be specific and detailed, it need not be more than one or two pages. Each plan should include (but is not limited to) the following elements:
 - a. Grade level
 - b. Date presented
 - c. Soto text used
 - d. Lesson objectives
 - e. Outline of presentation procedures
 - f. Methods for evaluating or assessing student progress and growth
 - g. State or national standards addressed
2. **Evaluate** the success of each lesson.* Write three short paragraphs responding to these questions.
 - a. How fully were your objectives met?
 - b. How did students respond?
 - c. How might you adjust the lesson or reinforce the concepts taught?

Suggestions for lessons incorporating reading and/or writing:

- Read an essay from *Living Up the Street* to your class and ask them to write a personal narrative on a similar experience.
- Read a collection of odes from *Neighborhood Odes* and invite students to write odes to the persons, places, and objects in their environments.
- Read aloud a chapter from one of the novels to the class each day. Encourage them to discuss issues raised in the novel and/or to respond in writing.
- After reading a short story, discuss with students the characteristics of an effective short story. Introduce the elements of fiction.
- Build a unit that explores one of the many issues which arise in Soto's writing. Some of these issues include
 - growing up poor
 - racial or ethnic prejudice
 - interpersonal conflict
 - family relationships
 - honesty
 - friendship
 - love
 - personal responsibility
 - disappointment and satisfaction
- Invite students to read one of the texts, either alone or in small groups. Assign them to prepare oral presentations or written reports on their experiences.
- Many sources related to Gary Soto and his work are available on the internet. Students with access to computers may be encouraged to explore this resource and become familiar with what is available for their use. Begin with the "official" Gary Soto website: <http://garysoto.com> or check out an interview with Soto at <http://www.hmco.com/mcdougal/lit/guest/soto/sotoans.htm>

***NOTE: If you are completing this course during summer break or when you are not teaching, you may omit the teaching and evaluation of the lessons in section C without penalty by preparing one additional lesson, for a total of four.**

Evidence of Learning:

- Instructor observed evidence of understanding of course objectives as demonstrated through student's reflective writing assignments. (Outcomes 1, 2, 4)
- Instructor observed evidence of understanding literary concepts and terminology as demonstrated through student's reflective writing assignments. (Outcomes 1, 2, 4)
- Student demonstrated his/her understanding of effective design of lesson plans. (Outcomes 5, 6)
- Student included the use of critical thinking skills and made connections to state content and/or professional teaching standards. (Outcomes 2, 3, 5, 6)
- Student demonstrated an understanding of course objectives by identifying how course content and terminology may be used in his/her teaching. (Outcomes 2, 3, 5, 6)

Grading Policies and Rubric:

Grades will be determined using the following percentages:

Reading responses to the six texts: 60%

Lesson plans for three pieces of literature: 30%

Three lesson evaluations: 10%

Total scores determine the final grade:

90 - 100% = A

80 - 89% = B

79% or below = no credit

All coursework must reflect a minimum "B" quality to receive credit. The discernment between an A and a B is at the discretion of the instructor, based on the quality of work submitted (see assignment rubric). Participants may request either a letter grade (A or B) or credit (CR). Coursework falling short of a "B" or CR grade will be returned with further instructions. Every person with a score of 80% or above will receive three semester units of credit.

Scoring Rubric

Type of Assignment	90 – 100 points Exceptional	80 – 89 points Adequate	70 – 79 points Not Acceptable
Written responses	Student's written responses show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is original and thorough. The student effectively organizes key insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the texts.	Student's written responses show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is complete, but lacks thoroughness and originality. The student sufficiently organizes insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the readings.	Student's written responses show little investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student does not show adequate thought or effort.
Lesson design	Lesson plans show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student consistently makes connections to local instructional goals/standards and implements research-based strategies and approaches.	Lesson plans show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student makes some connections to local instructional goals/standards and research-based strategies and approaches.	Lesson plans submitted by the student do not show adequate thought or effort, and may not address specific goals.
Lesson evaluations	Student includes the use of critical thinking and reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented.	Student includes the use of reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented, but may lack sufficient detailed analysis.	Student does not demonstrate critical thinking or reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented.
Presentation	Student effectively organizes key insights into a thoughtful and well-written presentation.	Student includes several key insights in an adequately written response.	Student response lacks key insights and is carelessly written.

Instructor/Student Contact

Students are warmly invited to contact the instructor at any time with concerns, questions, or comments related to course work. They are specifically asked to do so after reading the course texts (Assignment A). Please reflect, in general, on the value of using Soto's work in your classroom. At the completion of the course, the instructor will comment on the student's work and make suggestions, if needed.

Policy on Plagiarism

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled according to the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalog.

University Information

Graduate level course work reflects Fresno Pacific University's Desired Student Learning Outcomes as it applies to professional development to demonstrate the following:

- Oral and written communication in individual and group settings
- Content knowledge, and application of such knowledge in the student's area of interest to affect change
- Reflection for personal and professional growth
- Critical thinking
- Computational/methodological skills to understand and expand disciplines, including an understanding of technological systems