

SPRING 2023 COURSE OFFERINGS

UNDERGRADUATE

ENGL 3350.01 - **Gallery** Britt Haraway

ENGL 3351 - **Creative Writing I**  
(required for all English majors)

3351.01 Robert Moreira

3351.02 Robert Moreira

3351.90L Robert Moreira

3351.93L Jo Reyes-Boitel

(listed under L.E. Pérez)

(.93L also counts for MAS credit)

3351.95L José A. Rodríguez  
and Andrés Torres-Scott

ENGL 4350.01 - **Advanced Creative Writing Poetry** Steven Schneider

ENGL 4352.01 - **Advanced Creative Writing Fiction** Robert Moreira

ENGL 4353.01 - **Forms & Techniques in Creative Writing** Eric M. Williams

ENGL 4354.01R - **Advanced Creative Writing Graphic Literature** Jean Braithwaite

ENGL 4359.01R - **Manuscript Preparation**  
Emmy Perez

GRADUATE COURSES

AREA I COURSES

ENGL 6346.90L - **Creative Nonfiction**  
Jean Braithwaite

SPAN 6332.01 - **Spanish Creative Writing**  
(Playwriting), Elvia Ardalani

AREA II COURSES

ENGL 6339.90L - **F & T: The Novel**  
Eric Williamson

ENGL 6344.01 - **ST: Writing Literary Genres**  
Britt Haraway

AREA III COURSE

ENGL 6351.90L - **Teaching Creative Writing**  
Steven Schneider

Newsletter design by jo reyes-boitel.

**Chair's Welcome**



Happy spring semester and welcome to the first issue of our department newsletter, where we highlight some of our recent activities and celebrate some of our student, faculty, and alumni accomplishments.

In September 2022, I was appointed chair of the department and have enjoyed collaborating with our wonderful and talented GTA's/GA's/student staff jo reyes-boitel, Nathan "Kenan" Phillip, Maribel Sanchez, and Andrés Torres-Scott. We collaborated on our Visiting Writers Series, supported by Student Services Fee funding and various campus co-sponsors. In October, we had the honor of hosting U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón and Texas Poet Laureate Lupe Mendez in a joint, hybrid reading with Q&A in the Student Union Theater with Webinar and livestream options. After the reading, Mendez led a generative writing workshop in the Ballroom to a full house. The event was co-sponsored by FESTIBA, Center for Mexican American Studies, Center for Diversity & Inclusion & DREAM Resource Center, Center for Latin American Arts, Department of Literatures & Cultural Studies, and College of Fine Arts.

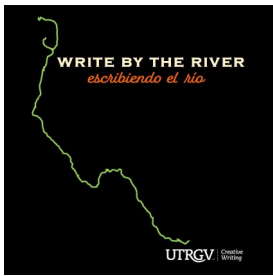
Later that same evening, Mendez joined McAllen Poet Laureate Victoria Lopez at the McAllen Public Library, where our department and CMAS co-hosted the event, part of the South Texas Book Festival, with the library.

In November, we also had the honor of hosting Rubén Degollado, author of *The Family Izquierdo*, and Leticia Urieta, author of *Las Criaturas*. Students and community joined us in the Borderlands room and via livestream for the reading and Q&A. Another highlight of our fall reading series was a student and community open mic in the Clark Gallery, a collaboration between the Unfolded Poetry Project and our department, co-hosted by Victoria Lopez and Kenan.

In December, we celebrated MFA graduates and undergraduate graduates at graduation. MFA graduates and their thesis chairs also met for a celebratory dinner. Congratulations to all of our graduates!

Last semester and continuing this semester, Maribel and Andrés took the lead in creating an original podcast for our department: "Write by the River: Escribiendo el río." Several episodes featuring guest writers are now available on various podcast platforms. Check it out! As a bit of MFA program history, the podcast title was inspired by an early MFA program brochure "Write Along the Border," which Dr. Steven Schneider came up when we officially launched our program around 2007.

Since those early days of our program, which began even before the official launch, we're proud of our numerous student, faculty, and alumni accomplishments. Please send your news to MFA@utrgv.edu. For the latest information and upcoming events, follow us on our new social media sites on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, which will also serve as archives of our department activities and news.



*Write by the River/Escribiendo el río* is the new podcast for the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley's Creative Writing Department, welcoming authors and poets as they read and discuss their literary work and the process of creating that work. *Write by the River/Escribiendo el río* is developed by/for those living in/with connections to the Rio Grande Valley, the University, and the local/regional/national literary communities. Listeners will have the opportunity to dive in deep with artists who share their experiences and also listen to exclusive readings. The first few episodes, featuring co-hosts Maribel Sanchez and Andres Antonio Torres-Scott, are up now! Find them on podcast streaming applications like [Spotify](#), [Anchor](#), [Amazon](#), or [RSS Feed](#).

## Episode 1: Dr. Elvia Ardalani

### Episode 1.1: *Pelo de Gato*- Reading and Discussion

Dr. Elvia Ardalani is a Mexican writer, poet, and storyteller and an Professor at UTRGV. She's the author of several poetry collections and the novel *Pelo de Gato*. In this episode we discuss Dr. Ardalani's experience as a professor with UTRGV, some exciting details about UTRGV's Spanish Department, and an exclusive look into *Pelo de Gato*.



About the book: Ever since she was a little girl, Romina loved cats, her only solace in a desolate childhood. It's only when she befriends Romelia, a peculiar girl, that Romina begins to share the complexities of her childhood. There's something strange, however, about Romina's life. Ardalani masterfully shows the complexity of female relations and the ease with which one can be erased from their own memory. Grab your copy [HERE](#).

## Episode 2: J. Villanueva

### Episode 2.1: *Roadside Fruteria* - Reading and Discussion

J. Villanueva is a Chicano writer/poet from deep south Texas and a current MFA student at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. When he is not agonizing in front of his computer, he is building and riding his motorcycles. J. has words featured or forthcoming in *Taco Bell Quarterly*, *Alebrijes Review*, *The Indianapolis Review*, and *Gutslut Press*. Follow J. on Twitter at @jay\_theaztec. In this episode we discuss J.'s experience as an MFA student, his writing workshops, and get an inside look of his newest chapbook, *Roadside Fruteria*. Grab your copy [HERE](#).

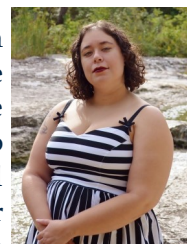


"J. Villanueva balances the reader between an untethered weightlessness and a familial connection. *Roadside Fruteria* utilizes return as a motif to pull the reader into a cyclical, emotional landscape. This book felt like the grief of continuity and the wonder of finding a new side street in your hometown." – Keagan Wheat, poet"

## Episode 3: Leticia Urieta

### Episode 3.1: *Recent Poems* - Reading and Discussion

Leticia Urieta is Tejana writer from Austin, TX and graduate of Agnes Scott College, with a BA in English/Creative Writing. She holds an MFA in Fiction writing from Texas State University. She works a teaching artist in the Austin community with a focus on the pedagogy of equity in creative writing. She is the Regional Program Manager for Austin Bat Cave and is the director of Barrio Writers, a free college level youth writers workshop founded by author and activist Sarah Rafael Garcia. Leticia's creative work appears in *PANK*, *Chicon Street Poets*, *Lumina* and many others. Her book, *Las Criaturas*, explores the intersections of Latinx identity with folklore, stories and the supernatural or speculative.



## Episode 4: Dr. José A. Rodríguez

### Episode 4.1: *Tender* - Reading and Discussion



Dr. José A. Rodríguez is a memorist, poet, translator, and professor with UTRGV. He's a member of the Texas Institute of Letters, Macondo Writers' Workshop, and CantoMundo. His work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Missouri Review*, *Pleiades*, and the Academy of American Poets website. His most recent publications include his book of poetry, *This American Autopsy: Poems* and work within the new anthology *Nepantla Familias*.

In to this episode we discuss course offerings, dive into creative nonfiction and literary translation, and discuss Dr. Rodríguez' poetry and memoir. "Tender", a recent poem by Dr. Rodríguez, was featured in *The New Yorker*, found [HERE](#). Visit his website for a list of his publications [HERE](#).

# congratulations

## To Our Fall MFA Graduates



L to R: Jennifer Gutierrez, Chris E. Garcia, JoAnn Balderrama, Gerry Rodriguez.

### JoAnn Balderrama

**Thesis Title:** *Winds & Waves: A Collection of Short Stories & Poems*

**Thesis Committee:** Profs. Emmy Pérez (Chair), Jean Braithwaite, and David Bowles

### Chris E. Garcia

**Thesis Title:** *Monsters & Men* (Illustrated Poetry)

**Committee:** Profs. Jean Braithwaite (Chair), Paul Valadez, and Emmy Pérez

### Jennifer Gutierrez

**Thesis Title:** *Mosaico de Fantasía: A Collection of Microrrelatos and Short Stories* (Fantasy and Science Fiction)

**Committee:** Profs. David Bowles (Chair), Britt Haraway, and Steven Schneider

### Nubia Reyna

**Thesis Title:** *INTENSA: Writings in English and Spanish from a Feminist Immigrant*

**Committee:** Profs. Elvia Ardalani (Chair), Michelle Escajeda, Gabriel González Núñez, Cathryn Merla-Watson

### Julietta Rivera

**Title:** *Growing Up Butchona On The Texas-Mexico Border: A Marimacha Memoir* (Mixed Genre)

**Committee:** Profs. Jean Braithwaite (Chair), Lilia Cabrera, and Britt Haraway

### Gerry Rodriguez

**Thesis Title:** *Victim Does Not Remember* (Playwriting)

**Committee:** Profs. David Carren (Chair), Emmy Pérez, and Marci McMahan

## Student, Faculty, and Alumni Updates

**Julieta Corpus** (MFA, 2016) has her debut poetry collection, *Of Love and Departures/De Amor y Despedidas* (2021). She also translates literature, including the short story collection “Flesh to Bone” by ire’ne lara silva, which garnered Corpus a Tasajillo Writer’s Residency.

**César L. de León** (MFA, 2018) was awarded the Texas Institute of Letters' John A. Robertson Award for Best First Book of Poetry for his 2021 debut poetry collection, *speaking with grackles by soapberry trees*. His book was also recently awarded the 2022 best book of poetry by the Philosophical Society of Texas. de León is currently a lecturer in the Department of Literatures & Cultural Studies and, in his position, also teaches for LCS in Brownsville and at the UTRGV Collegiate High School in Harlingen.

**Daniel García Ordaz** (MFA, 2017) has been named McAllen’s 2023 Poet Laureate.

**Rodney Gomez** (MFA, 2009), who was in the initial MFA cohort, was awarded a Creative Writing Fellowship with the National Endowment for the Arts. Gomez also won awards or was a finalist in several book awards, including the Helen C. Smith Memorial Award for Best Book of Poetry (2021), for his publication *Arsenal with Praise Song*. Gomez also established the Bougainvillea Prize at FlowerSong Press, which supports a working class writer’s full-length collection.

**Noreen Graf** (current MFA student) had two literary comics accepted in *MER: Motherhood Literature & Art* and six poems accepted in *Sixfold*.

**jo reyes-boitel’s** (current MFA student) book, *Michael + Josephine*, was chosen as part of Albuquerque’s National Hispanic Cultural Center’s monthly book club and will be discussed in May.

**Dr. José A. Rodríguez** (current MFA faculty) had his poem “Tender” appear in *The New Yorker*.

**J. Villanueva’s** (current MFA student) debut chapbook, *Roadside Fruteria*, was published by Bullshit Lit.

Send updates to [MFA@utrgv.edu](mailto:MFA@utrgv.edu) so we know what you are up to!

# WRITE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

<https://www.utrgv.edu/creative-writing/>

FOLLOW  
US



## Follow Us This Spring for Performances, Workshops & Pláticas

Sponsors for some of these events include but are not limited to the Department of Creative Writing, Center for Mexican American Studies, Mexican American Studies Program, Department of Literatures and Cultural Studies, UTSA Democratizing Racial Justice, Gallery Magazine, FESTIBA, and South Texas College.



### FEATURING

**Andrea “Vocab” Sanderson**  
Poet, Performer, Singer  
Current San Antonio Poet Laureate  
February 27 & 28

**Gris Muñoz**  
Poet and Performer  
February 28

**Fernando A. Flores**  
Author  
March 1 & 2

**Mathew Betancourt**  
Author  
March 2

**Thomas Ray Garcia**  
Author, Scholar and Educator  
March 3

**Dr. Robert Moreira**  
Author, Scholar and Educator  
March 3

<https://www.utrgv.edu/festiba/>



### *Community as Rebellion: A Syllabus for Surviving Academia as a Woman of Color*

**Dr. Lorgia García Peña**  
Writer, Activist, and Scholar  
specializing in Latinx studies  
with a focus on  
Black Latinidades.  
Author of several books,  
including *Community as  
Rebellion* (Haymarket, 2022).



**Friday, February 17**  
11am CST

UTRGV EEDUC 2.216 or join via webinar  
Register in Advance



## CHARREADA Mini-Symposium

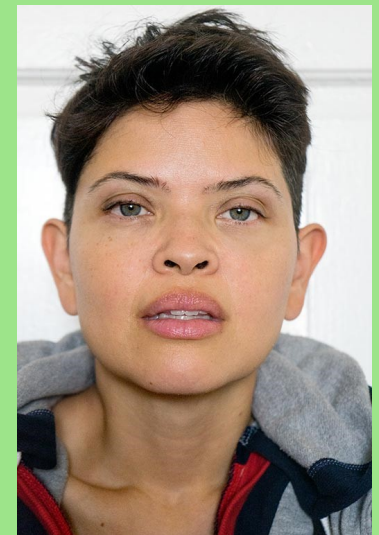
Featuring Presentations by

César L. de León    Dr. Erika Rendón-Ramos

Dr. Noreen Rivera    Dr. José A. Rodríguez

Emmy Pérez moderating

**Wednesday, February 22, 2023    1:00pm – 3:00pm**  
at UTRGV Brownsville Campus



**Special Guest**  
**Myriam Gurba**  
Writer, Artist and Critic  
Webinar TBA