ENGL 5920 Intellectual Movements
Bang, Boom, Pow: The Latin American Boom in Context
Mejia
MW 1:25-2:45
BU C 207

The international publishing phenomenon of the so-called "Boom" of the 1960s has had a lasting impact on English-speaking readers' interest in contemporary Latin American fiction. Shaped as much by political changes in the region (notably the Cuban Revolution) as by a contemporary spirit of aesthetic experimentation, the Boom has retained an aura of a singular event, a radical break with complacent tradition, a heroic narrative of emergence substantially composed by friendly chroniclers and critics and the predominantly male authors considered to be the Boom's core: Carlos Fuentes (Mexico), Julio Cortázar (Argentina), Mario Vargas Llosa (Peru), and Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia). In this course, we'll contextualize the Boom with a look at some precursors, their history of literary experimentation and their longstanding concerns with issues of Latin American identity, foreign intervention, and economic and racial inequity. Through this lens, we'll consider two central novels of the Boom, Fuentes's *The Death of Artemio Cruz* (1961) and García Marqués's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1965), as well as some short fictions by Cortázar. We'll conclude with a look at how subsequent generations of Latin American authors have responded to and complicated the personal, political, and literary narratives of the Boom, while continuing to push prose experimentation toward new horizons, reacting to changing political realities of the region, such as the repressive dictatorships of the 1970s and '80s and the growing waves of migration north. In addition to Cortázar, Fuentes, and García Márquez, readings will include work by Jorge Luis Borges, Silvina Ocampo, Alejo Carpentier, Juan Rulfo, Gracilano Ramos, Roberto Bolaño, Clarice Lispector, Luisa Valenzuela, Diamela Eltit, Yuri Herrera, Horacio Castellanos Moya, Cesar Aira, Alberto Fuguet, and Mariana Enriquez.