Directions: On a separate piece of paper, respond to the following questions, in paragraph form, in order to prepare for the seminar. Submit to turnitin.com and bring a hard copy as your ticket into the seminar.

Inner Circle:

1. Amy Tan writes in her essay, “Mother Tongue,” that “I decided I should envision a reader for the stories I would write. So with my reader in mind – I began to write stories using all the English’s [languages] I grew up with” (Patters 491). Explain how Rudolfo Anayla’s use of Spanish mirrors the same sentiment as Amy Tan in the use of multiple languages. Do you believe Analya’s language excludes/or includes specific audiences? Why or Why not?

1. There are many Biblical allusions throughout *Bless Me, Ultima*, especially in chapter 11. What are the references to the Garden of Eden, forbidden fruit, and original sin? How is the legend of the Golden Carp similar to the story of Jesus Christ? Is Tony committing a sin by seeking the golden carp? How is his search for the golden carp a search for self-identity and religious understanding?
2. Magical Realism is a literary device developed by Latin American artists in which **“the common and the everyday transform into the awesome and the unreal. . . . Time exists in a kind of timeless fluidity and the unreal happens as part of reality”** (Angel Flores, Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction. *Magical Realism*. Ed. Zamora and Faris, p. 113-116).

Read an overview of Magical Realism (see Weeby) and then discuss where you see “magical” breaks in the narrative, *Bless Me, Ultima*. Describe at least one scene. Explain why you think Anaya chooses this literary device. What are possible the messages?

1. Many writers use a country setting to establish values within a work of literature. For example, the country may be a place of virtue and peace, or one of primitivism and ignorance. Explain how the settings of *Bless Me, Ultima* function within a scene and how that scene shapes the meaning of the work as a whole.
2. The most important themes in literature are sometimes developed in scenes in which a death or deaths take place. Explain how a specific death scene in *Bless Me, Ultima* helps to illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole.

Outer Circle:

1. In some works of literature, childhood and adolescence are portrayed as times graced by innocence and a sense of wonder; in other works, they are depicted as times of tribulations and tears. Compare and contrast how *Bless Me, Ultima’s* uses all of these characterizations of childhood and how it shapes the meaning of the work as a whole. Use concrete examples from the text to illustrate your characterizations.
2. One hallmark of Postmodernism is the deconstruction of binary oppositions. Make a list of oppositional forces in *Bless Me, Ultima* (at least 10 pairs). For example luna (the moon) and el mar (the sea). How do the novel and the binary oppositions you selected reinforce the concept of separation? How does the book attempt to unify contrasting forces? Why do you think Anaya articulates this series of juxtapositions? How do they contribute to the themes in the novel? What roles do Tony and Ultima play as unifiers?
3. Look up and explain the legend of La Llorona, the historical figure of Le Melenche, and the Judeo/Christian story of Lillith (you can find links on Weebly). How do these archetypal stories of woman compare and contrast with the women in *Bless Me, Ultima*? Analyze the portrayal of women throughout the novel using the following two categories: saint-like, whore/witch. Comment on how Ultima takes on a “dual role between religious piety and indigenous paganism.”
4. In Gloria Anzaldua’s essay, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” she uses the term ***Linguistic Terrorism***. How does the use of Spanish within an essay help empower Mexican American writers? What are the implications of Anzaldua stating, “I am my language” (36)? How does the use of Spanish in *Bless Me, Ultima* empower a bilingual (English/Spanish) reader? If you do not speak Spanish, how did having to decode-Spanish words negate your assumed privilege? How did you feel trying to enter a new cultural paradigm?
5. Think about the title of this assignment, “Blended Identities: Hybrid Language, Religion and Culture.” How do these themes play out in *Bless Me, Ultima*? Do you think it is possible to still have “pure” cultural identities in a globalized world? Why are the characters in the novel afraid to either step forward into a new culture? Or step back into their older cultures? Do you think retaining cultural identity is a challenge that still faces Americans today? How well are we doing as a “blended” nation?