Questions to consider as we approach this new culture:

- What is the history of your culture?
- What shall we call you (naming)?
- What is your language and how does the difference with the dominant culture language affect your “story”?
- What should we understand about other major artistic forms?
- How do we outsiders come to the culture (what preconceptions / stereotypes do we bring)?
- What complicates our understanding of your culture?
  - Unwillingness to work with new forms / new languages
  - Stereotypes / preconceptions
  - Lack of understanding of history
  - Belief in assimilation over cultural preservation
  - Differing ways of seeing the world / “reality”
  - Different traditions / translations
- What new characteristics do we find as we study this new culture?

Choose two from the following and essay your response:

- Use your brainstorm list from the questions above and write your “essay” this week by explaining the ways in which you come to this culture, positive or negative, but be specific and honest.
- What is Latin American Literature? Explain Fuentes’ thesis in his essay *Mexico, the United States, and the Multicultural Future*.
- Discuss two places you realize that you are from. You might consider geographic places (e.g. Chicago and Corvallis, or the South and the Northwest, or the city and the country or poverty and riches or . . . ). And they don’t have to be physical places: Consider psychological, emotional, imaginative places. Do you feel more of an insider or outsider in one or the other? In what ways do you build bridges back and forth?
- Find out more about Cisneros, her heritage, and her writing style. Of her style in *Mango*, she has written “I had found a way to write stories that were a cross between poetry and fiction . . . I wanted stories like poems, compact and lyrical and ending with reverberation.” Are you inspired to write in this style about your own “culture”? Do so, then write a short prose explanation of the ways in which you were influenced by Cisneros’ form and content (Latina).