

## English 278: Multicultural Literature in America

Fall 2006; 3 Credits (T/TH 1:00-2:15), HU/ES/IS

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Office Hours: M 10:30-12, T 3-4:30,  
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“Our passion for categorization, life fitted neatly into pegs, has led to an unforeseen, paradoxical distress;...[to] confusion, a breakdown of meaning.” James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*, 1955

### COURSE GOALS

Our purpose this semester is to examine the categories of race, ethnicity, and culture in the United States by analyzing literature. To do so, we will ask many questions: What is race? What is ethnicity? Who is ethnic, and by what and whose definition? What constitutes ethnic writing? Does race or ethnic writing include stories that tell about racial or ethnic groups, regardless of by whom they are written? Or does some particular literary style or trope characterize such writing? And, in what ways are these categories meaningful and meaningless?

Through an investigation of select literary works, read in conjunction with presentations by guest lecturers, we will explore the relationship between race, ethnicity, culture, and literature in order to

- 1) broaden and deepen exposure to and understanding of the literature of multicultural America, and
- 2) become familiar with the history, values, and cultures of these groups.

### REQUIRED MATERIALS

*Literature, Race, and Ethnicity: Contesting American Identities* Joseph T. Skerrett, ed. New York: Longman, 2002. (LRE)

*Ceremony* (Leslie Marmon Silko)

*The House on Mango Street* (Sandra Cisneros)

*The Bluest Eye* (Toni Morrison)

Readings on our course D2L site (see course calendar for when to print, read, and bring to class)

Paper, pens, and folder for in-class notes; paperclips/staples for turning in papers

### GRADE CALCULATION

**Participation, Discussion, Attendance, and Preparation (10%)**

**Assignments and Quizzes (35%)**

Ethnic Autobiography—15 points

Responses to Guest Lectures (on D2L)—15 points

Connections Oral Presentation—5 points

Short writing assignments and quizzes

**2 Literary Analysis Papers (30%)**

**Comprehensive Final Exam (25%)**

#### GRADE SCALE

A = 3.67-4.00	D+ = 1.01-1.33
A- = 3.34-3.66	D = .67-1.00
B+ = 3.01-3.33	D- = .60-.66
B = 2.67-3.00	F = 0.00-.59
B- = 2.34-2.66	
C+ = 2.01-2.33	
C = 1.67-2.00	
C- = 1.34-1.66	

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS, OR, HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE**

**Attend Class:** Attendance is mandatory for every class. As a matter of courtesy, please contact me in advance via e-mail if you are going to be absent. **If you are absent, you are responsible for the material you will miss.** In-class assignments, such as quizzes, will not be available for “make up” work. Excessive absences will negatively influence your participation grade.

**Participate:** The success of this class depends on your preparation and involvement; therefore, you must come to class prepared to participate in discussion. To facilitate critical discourse, I encourage dialogue and argument: all *thoughtful* comments will be entertained. There may be controversial issues discussed in class, so I expect you to act with tolerance and civility toward others. The rule here is simple: *show respect*. Participation also includes being prepared for class and having the necessary materials with you.

**Practice Academic Honesty:** Academic honesty requires that you include conventional citations of any outside sources in your papers. For this reason, papers with inadequate Works Cited sheets will not be graded. *Any involvement with plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated.* Academic misconduct is an act in which a student: (a) seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation; (b) uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise; (c) forges or falsifies academic documents or records; (d) intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others; (e) engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student’s academic performance; or (f) assists other students in any of these acts. The above acts are subject to disciplinary action. Further information may be found in the UW Colleges Student Rights and Regulations Handbook at: [http://www.uwc.edu/student\\_services/student\\_R&R.pdf](http://www.uwc.edu/student_services/student_R&R.pdf). The instructor may request to see your sources and an electronic copy of your paper if needed.

**Turn Papers and Assignments in On Time:** Any assignment handed in after the beginning of class on the due date is considered late and the ultimate **grade on the paper will be lowered by one half grade** (from an “A” to an “B,” for example) **for each day it is late. No papers will be accepted seven calendar days after the due date.** This policy is subject to extenuating circumstances, if I am aware of the complications **before** the paper is late in the first place. Because of the seriousness of this penalty, I urge you to let me know immediately if you are having problems. Make note of important due dates:

**DUE DATES**

Connections Oral Presentation:	_____ (write yours in)
Ethnic Autobiography:	Thursday, October 5 <sup>th</sup>
Responses to Guest Lectures (on D2L):	Tues., Sept. 19; Thurs., Sept. 21; Thurs., Oct. 12; Tues., Oct. 31 Tues., Nov. 14; Tues., Nov 21
Literary Analysis Paper 1:	Thursday, October 19 <sup>th</sup>
Literary Analysis Paper 2:	Thursday, December 7 <sup>th</sup>
Final Exam:	Thursday, December 21 <sup>st</sup> , 1-3 pm

**Use Inclusive Language:** Written work in this course should employ inclusive language, which shows that the writer honors the diversity of the human race by not using language that would universalize one element of humanity to the exclusion of others. For example, two areas where this

exclusion commonly occurs are religion and gender. Scholarly conventions include using BCE (Before Common Era) instead of B.C., and CE (Common Era) rather than A.D., and using *men and women* or *people* or *humans* instead of the “generic *man*”; use *they* or alternate *he* and *she*. Moreover, language denigrating someone because of his or her race or sexual orientation is always inappropriate, unless, of course, the language itself is the subject of discussion.

**Follow General Assignment Requirements:** All papers and assignments are **due at the beginning of class** on the specified dates. Please use **12-point font** and use **MLA style format and citations** when needed. **Any paper that uses outside sources must also be accompanied by a Works Cited sheet.** If a paper is missing any of its requirements, the paper will be returned to you and late penalties will apply. Also, all materials should be submitted in an organized fashion (e.g., use staples, paperclips, or a folder). Detailed information about requirements and expectations of assignments will be distributed and discussed in class.

### WHERE TO GET HELP

**Visit office hours:** Make an appointment to see me during my office hours any time you like in Andrews Hall, room 249. If my office hours do not accommodate your schedule, please let me know and we can schedule an appointment or conference over email. I am always available to help you in any way I can.

**Visit the Learning Support Center:** If you are looking for more help on a paper, a good resource to use is the **FREE one-on-one conferencing** available at the Learning Support Center, which is on the second floor of Andrews Hall, Room 231. You can make appointment by calling **758-6519**.

**Use the Online Writing Lab (OWL):** The OWL is a service that affords UW-Colleges students the opportunity to e-mail drafts of their writing to the OWL staff and receive feedback from a peer writing tutor. The OWL is part of the Study-Center Tutoring Program at UW-Waukesha, which is certified by the College Reading & Learning Association. Check it out at: <http://waukesha.uwc.edu/academics/owl/>

### UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – ROCK COUNTY POLICIES

**Assessment:** The UW Colleges-wide assessment program was established to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum, programs, and services of the institution. The institution-wide assessment activities focus on analytical, quantitative, and communication skills because they are of primary importance in the general education of our students. This semester, students in composition will be assessed on communication skills, specifically the ability to communicate clearly, precisely, and in a well-organized manner.

**Campus Email Policy:** All email correspondence to your instructors **MUST** be sent through your official campus email account. For safety against computer viruses and to remove SPAM email messages, your instructor **may delete without reading** any email originating outside our campus email system. If you use any other email account to contact your instructor – you **MUST ASSUME** that the message **WILL NOT** be read. Students are encouraged to read their campus email regularly. If you need assistance in accessing your campus email account, please contact Campus Network

Administrator, Barb Palmer (office W07, [barb.palmer@uwc.edu](mailto:barb.palmer@uwc.edu)), or Campus Instructional Technologist, Judy Konkel (office A51, 758-6570, [judy.konkel@uwc.edu](mailto:judy.konkel@uwc.edu)).

**Sexual Assault and Harassment:** Respect for human dignity is essential to an appropriate university environment. Thus, sexual harassment of students and employees is impermissible and unprofessional conduct and will not be tolerated. Conduct determined to fall within the definition of sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with applicable due process requirements, including, but not limited to, reprimand, temporary suspension, expulsion, or discharge of the harassing individual. Further information may be found in the UW Colleges Student Rights and Regulations Handbook at: [http://www.uwc.edu/student\\_services/student\\_R&R.pdf](http://www.uwc.edu/student_services/student_R&R.pdf)

**Students with disabilities:** Qualified students with disabilities (those who have been admitted and can provide documentation of their disability) have the right to request accommodations from the university, as stipulated within Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1976 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students needing accommodations should provide early notice to staff in the campus Student Services Office because of the time required for arranging accommodations. Students may also contact the coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities in Madison at 608-262-2001 (voice) or 608-265-5766 (TDD/TTY) for information and assistance. More information may be found at: [http://www.uwc.edu/student\\_services/disability\\_services.asp](http://www.uwc.edu/student_services/disability_services.asp)

## Course Calendar

### UNIT ONE: DEFINING RACE, CULTURE, AND ETHNICITY

- T SEPT 5 Introduction to Course and Classmates; Definition of Key Terms
- TH SEPT 7 “Culture” in the United States; “Defining Race” Activity  
**Read:** “Introduction” (LRE (*Literature, Race & Ethnicity*) 1-8)
- T SEPT 12 NOTE: OUR CLASS WILL START AT 1:30 ON THIS DATE DUE TO CONVOCATION  
**Guest Lecture 1: Dr. Tricia Clasen, Communication:** “Understanding ‘Ideal’ vs. ‘Lived’ Culture”  
**Read:** Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur; *Letters from an American Farmer*: “Letter III: What is an American?” (LRE 24-36 )

### UNIT TWO: ETHNIC AMERICANS AND ASSIMILATION/EXCLUSION

- TH SEPT 14 **Guest Lecture 2: Dr. Elizabeth Jozwiak, History:** “Immigration to the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century”  
**Read:** “The Immigrant Act of 1790”; “Indian Removal Act of 1837”; “No Irish Need Apply” (LRE 36-37; 50-52; 73)
- T SEPT 19 **Read:** Zitkala-Sa “The School Days of an Indian Girl”; Eva Hoffman “Lost in Translation: Life in a New Language” (LRE 55-63; 115-127)  
**Due:** Response to Guest Lecture 1 on D2L

TH SEPT 21 **Read:** Frederick Douglass, from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (on D2L); Frances W. E. Harper, “The Slave Auction” (LRE 44-45)  
**Due:** Response to Guest Lecture 2 on D2L

T SEPT 26 **Read:** Maxine Hong Kingston, from *The Woman Warrior*, “No Name Woman” (on D2L); Bienvenido Nuqui Santos, “Immigration Blues” (LRE 178-188)

### UNIT THREE, PART ONE: ETHNICITY & BORDERS/BOUNDARIES—THE RESERVATION

TH SEPT 28 **Read:** Erdrich, “The Bingo Van”; Alexie, “A Drug Called ‘Tradition’” (LRE 340-351; 441-446)

T OCT 3 **Read:** Paula Gunn Allen, “Where I Come from Is Like This” (278-283)

TH OCT 5 **Guest Lecture 3: Dr. Roland Rodell, Anthropology/Sociology “Native American Anthropology”**

**Read:** Start reading *Ceremony*

**Due:** Ethnic Autobiography

T OCT 10 **Read:** Silko, *Ceremony* (pp. 1-100)

TH OCT 12 **Read:** Silko, *Ceremony* (pp. 100-78)  
**Due:** Response to Guest Lecture 3 on D2L

T OCT 17 **Read:** Silko, *Ceremony* (pp. 178-262)

### UNIT THREE, PART TWO: ETHNICITY & BORDERS/BOUNDARIES—JAPANESE INTERNMENT

TH OCT 19 **Read:** Lawson Fusao Inada, “Kicking the Habit”; Yamada, “To the Lady” (on D2L); Hisaye Yamamoto, “Seventeen Syllables” (on D2L), “The Legend of Miss Sasagawara” (LRE 308-311; 238-248)  
**Due:** Literary Analysis Paper 1

T OCT 24 **Guest Lecture 4: Dr. Nathan Zook, Political Science “WWII and Japanese Internment”**  
**Read:** “Executive Order 9066”; J. & J. Houston, “Farewell to Manzanar” (LRE 237; 248-252); Start reading *The House on Mango Street*

### UNIT FOUR: ETHNICITY, LANGUAGE, AND IDENTITY

TH OCT 26 **Read:** Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*

T OCT 31 🍷 **Read:** Gina Valdés, “English Con Salsa” (LRE 312-313); Richard Rodriguez, from *Hunger for Memory*, “Aria” (on D2L) 🍷  
**Due:** Response to Guest Lecture 4 on D2L

TH NOV 2 **Read:** Gloria Anzaldúa, “To live in the Borderlands” (on D2L); Victor Villanueva, “Whose Voice Is It Anyway?” (on D2L)

**UNIT FIVE: ETHNICITY AND RACE: AFRICAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE**

- T NOV 7      **Guest Lecture 5: Dr. Phil Groth, Anthropology “African Americans in America”**
- TH NOV 9      **Read:** James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues” (on D2L); Ralph Ellison, from *Invisible Man*, “Battle Royal” (on D2L)
- T NOV 14      **Guest Lecture 6: Dr. Jeff Suarez, Music “Jazz and the African-American Experience”**  
**Read:** Zora Neale Hurston, “How it Feels to Be Colored Me” (on D2L)  
**Due:** Response to Guest Lecture 5 on D2L
- TH NOV 16      **Read:** Nella Larson, “Passing”; Alice Walker, “Everyday Use” (on D2L)
- T NOV 21      **Read:** Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, (pp. 1-58)  
**Due:** Response to Guest Lecture 6 on D2L
- TH NOV 23      ● CLASS EXCUSED FOR THANKSGIVING BREAK ●
- T NOV 28      **Read:** Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, (pp. 58-93)
- TH NOV 30      **Read:** Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, (pp. 93-158)
- T DEC 5      **Read:** Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, (pp. 158-206)

**UNIT SIX: WHITENESS AS AN ETHNIC IDENTITY?**

- TH DEC 7      **Read:** Dorothy Allison, from *Trash*, “Mama” (on D2L); Lloyd Van Brunt, “Whites Without Money” (LRE 296-298)  
**Due:** Literary Analysis Paper 2
- T DEC 12      **Read:** Dorothy Allison, from *Trash*, “Gospel Song” (on D2L); Ishmael Reed, “America: The Multinational Society” (LRE 502-505)
- TH DEC 14      Reflecting on Multicultural Literature: Course Conclusions and Review

**FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1:00-3:00 PM**