Literature of Ethnic Minorities in America

Office:
Office hours:
Voicemail:

“The greatest reward of an education is to face the world with an open mind.”  R.M. Sherfield

Course Description: We will read, analyze, and discuss literary works by American writers of minority ethnicity. Course assignments will include writing responses to literary works and writing essays to explore and synthesize your understanding of how race, ethnicity, gender, and class characterize multi-ethnic writers’ experiences in America. You can expect to research the historical and cultural contexts for the time period in which each text was written to better understand events that have shaped writers’ ethnic identity.

Student Learning Objectives: English 345 stresses critical thinking, writing, and analysis of literary works by ethnic minority writers in America. The following student learning outcomes will be fulfilled for this course. Students will:

• Describe what forces affect the ways in which individuals grow up within an ethnic group and develop an identity in American culture. (CO 10)
• Describe the perceptions, viewpoints, or life experiences of people in societies or cultures of non-dominant or marginalized groups within the United States (CO 10)
• Identify the complex elements important to members of diverse cultural groups in relation to their history, values, politics, economy, or beliefs and practices (CO 10)
• Employ and understand literary terms to analyze course readings.
• Write and think critically about how the literary works characterize minority experience in American literature.
• Critically examine and articulate how one’s identity has developed through one’s education and family and how this impacts one’s worldview. (CO 13)
• Write a final project that synthesizes and explains the cultural context for the literature of ethnic minority writers in America (CO 13)
• use advanced search strategies in library research databases and tools to find primary and secondary sources for a presentation or essay. (CO 3)
• produce a well-supported argument that makes an original contribution to the field and could be submitted for publication in an undergraduate journal. (CO 1)

Silver Core CO:
This course satisfies CO10 (Diversity & Equity).

Description of CO10: Diversity & Equity
Students will demonstrate an understanding of diversity through courses that focus on topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, physical ability, language, and/or social class with an emphasis on the analysis of equity. Students will apply and evaluate approaches or modes of inquiry used to analyze diversity and equity and the social barriers to these goals.
Course assignments and grading (100 points total)

30 points: To satisfy CO 10, students will write three compositions (5 pages each) which identify the complex elements important to members of diverse cultural groups in relation to family, culture, and education. You’ll research, develop, and revise one of these essays to present as your final project. Prompts are listed on a separate handout.

15 points:
- Participate in writing groups/workshops: share your compositions and offer feedback toward revising each person’s personal essay on identity. To get full credit for each workshop, plan to:
  - arrive on time with x number of copies of your typed draft AND a brief cover letter that asks for specific kinds of responses from your group (ie., where do I need to expand? what is the point, as you read this?)
  - be prepared to read and write commentary on group members’ essays;
  - read and write comments on each group member’s essay draft. This means you write your responses on each essay to assist each writer in focusing, researching, developing, and revising the essay.
  - communicate with group members and instructor if you aren’t getting the feedback you need on your writing.

Workshop grades are determined by your participation (4 points each) and your self-and-group evaluations. To get credit, plan to arrive on time and stay for the whole workshop. Please refer to the workshop handout to learn what’s expected and how to get all the points for each workshop sequence.

15 points: Write 5 short essay responses (3 pts each) to on our course texts. Check the assignment sheet for prompts and formatting instructions. Responses are due in class when assigned.

15 points: Panel presentation on a course text. You and a small group will lead class discussion by presenting a ten-minute short introduction to each author/work. You’ll sign up for a date and author that works for your group. A separate handout will detail the grading criteria; your group should research the historical and cultural time period in which the book was written to deepen our understanding of the issues surrounding the text

20 points: Final exam: essay and short answer exam, Mon, Dec. 16.

5 points: Present and read your final project/essay to the class after the Thanksgiving holiday.

We will meet one-on-one for a conference to discuss plans for your final project during the week before Thanksgiving.

Instructor expectations and course policies:

Attendance:
According to UNR policy, there are no excused absences. See: http://www.unr.edu/student-
conduct/policies/university-policies-and-guidelines/academic-standards/policy.

Attendance is particularly important in capstone courses because so much of the learning happens in class, especially during workshops, writing activities, and class discussion. **After three absences, your semester grade is lowered.**

- If you show up late once or twice, no problem. Just come in and get to work. If you are habitually late (or leave early), however, I will count late arrivals as absences.
- Late work loses one point for each day late. If you are ill or have a family emergency, please let me know as soon as possible to arrange for you to get the work in.
- **All work must be completed to PASS English 345.**
- **Turn off electronics and cell phones when class begins.** Texting or sleeping in class will result in your being marked absent for that class. If problems persist, you will be dropped from the class. Read this study to learn about the perils of multitasking and your brain: http://news.stanford.edu/pr/2009/multitask-research-release-082409.htm
- You need to be able to access webcampus for course assignments and information.
- Please see me in my office to discuss grades. Federal privacy laws prohibit my emailing this information to you.

**Plagiarism and Scholastic Honesty**

Turning in work that is not your own as your own or any other form of scholastic dishonesty--including turning in a paper written for another class without the express prior permission of both myself and the other professor--**will result in a major course penalty** (including possible failure of the course). The following statement is quoted from the Academic Standards section of the UNR general catalog and will be upheld in ENG 345:

Academic dishonesty is against university as well as the system community standards. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Plagiarism: defined as submitting the language, ideas, thoughts or work of another as one’s own; or assisting in the act of plagiarism by allowing one’s work to be used in this fashion.

Sanctions for violations of university academic standards may include the following: (1) filing a final grade of “F”; (2) reducing the student’s final course grade one or two full grade points; (3) awarding a failing mark on the test or paper in question; (4) requiring the student to retake the test or resubmit the paper.

A report of any incident will be made to the Office of Student Conduct.

Read and understand the policies on scholastic honesty (above) and civil discourse, quoted here from the UNR catalog:

“No employee or student, either in the workplace or in the academic environment, should be subject to discrimination. It is expected that students, faculty and staff will treat one another and campus visitors with respect.”

**ADA Statement:** The University of Nevada supports equal access for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, I will work with you and the Disability Resource Center (Thompson, room 107). Please provide written documentation within the **first two weeks** of the semester.

**Academic Success Services:** you are encouraged to use the services that your student fees are paying for. These include:
Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring-center), and University Writing
Center (784-6030 or http://www.unr.edu/writing-center). The mission of the University Writing Center is to assist students in any stage of the writing process through peer-to-peer consultation and small group instruction. The staff offers free writing consultations to all undergraduate, graduate, and faculty members. Writing consultations range from 30 minutes to one hour.

*Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.*

**Course Texts:**
Alexie, Sherman, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven.* “This is What it Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona,” is the story we’ll read from that text; it will be on course reserve.
Hansberry, Lorraine, *A Raisin in the Sun*
Lahiri, Jhumpa, *The Namesake*
Morrison, Toni, *Sula*
Otsuka, Julie, *When the Emperor Was Divine*
Rodriguez, Richard, *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*
Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*

**Course Schedule:** any changes will be announced in class and posted to webcampus.

**UNIT 1: AFRICAN AMERICAN DRAMA AND CIVIL RIGHTS**

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Intro to course and assignments. Start reading <em>A Raisin in the Sun.</em></th>
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<td>Mon/Aug 26</td>
<td>Introductions in class. <em>A Raisin in the Sun</em> intro: what terms are useful for discussing a play?</td>
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<td>Start reading <em>Raisin,</em> and write a practice (1 page) response for Wednesday, Sept. 4. See response assignment sheet for prompts.</td>
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<td>Wed/Aug 28</td>
<td>Reading due: first act of <em>A Raisin in the Sun</em>; be sure to read the Langston Hughes poem on first page. In-class writing exercise: annotating the text: 5 ws and reactions.</td>
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<td>• see excerpt from “Eyes on the Prize.”</td>
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*Week 2: Monday, Sept. 2 no class—Labor Day Holiday.*

*Wed/Sept. 4* → Writing due: practice response (see response assignment sheet) due today on Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun.*

Reading due: Acts 2 and 3 of *A Raisin in the Sun*

See excerpt from the film, *A Raisin in the Sun.*

**UNIT 2: SULA AND INTERSECTIONS OF RACE AND GENDER**

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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Identity: race, gender, and place</th>
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<td>Mon/Sept. 9</td>
<td>Writing due → first graded response paper due in class on <em>Sula.</em></td>
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<td>Reading due: <em>Sula,</em> all of part 1 (1-85).</td>
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<td>Prewriting/discuss literary terms useful in discussing the novel.</td>
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<td>Form panel discussion groups (today or Wed) and sign up for presentation date.</td>
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*Wed/Sept. 11* Confirm presentation dates and topics with all groups: first panel is next Wed.
Reading due: *Sula*, part 2 (86-149)

*Literary terms for nonfiction/fiction—handout.*

**Week 4:**  
Identity: friendship and family

Mon/Sept. 16  
Reading due: *Sula* page 150-174.  
see Toni Morrison video interview/Moyers

**UNIT 3: FORMING IMMIGRANT IDENTITIES**

Wed/Sept. 18  
→**First panel presentation** on *A Raisin in the Sun* OR *Sula*, by:  
Reading due: *Rodriguez’s Hunger of Memory* through p. 96, in “Credo.”

**Week 5:**  
First composition assignment is due Wed/Sept 25—see “composition prompts” assignment sheet.

Mon/Sept. 23  
Reading due: *Rodriguez’s Hunger of Memory* through p.174.  
Review workshop and writing group procedure and prompt for the composition.

Wed/Sept. 25  
→**writing due:** Composition due on home, place, and identity.  
5 page composition for first writing group meeting. Bring X number of copies (for workshop group) for workshop in class.  
see *Bracero Stories*

**UNIT 4: ASSIMILATION VS. DIVERSITY**

Week 6:  
Education and religious beliefs

Mon/Sept 30  
→second response due: on *Rodriguez’s Hunger of Memory.*  
Reading due: *Rodriguez’s Hunger of Memory* through conclusion.

Wed/Oct 2  
→Second **panel presentation on Rodriguez or Otsuka,** by  
Reading due: Otsuka’s *When the Emperor Was Divine*, 1-83;  
see *Remembering Manzanar* and discuss history of Japanese-American Internment during WW2.

**Week 7:**  
Identity and internment

Mon/ Oct. 7  
Reading due: Otsuka’s *When the Emperor Was Divine*, 85-139;  
→third response due: on *Otsuka’s Emperor*

Wed/Oct 9  
Reading due: Otsuka’s *When the Emperor Was Divine* 106-end.

**UNIT 5: THE STRUGGLE TO MAINTAIN CULTURAL TRADITIONS**

Week 8:  
Displacement and assimilation—the importance of story.

Mon/Oct. 14  
See handout on webcampus for understanding *Ceremony* and Laguna Pueblo culture.  
Reading due: Silko, *Ceremony* (through p. 101)

Wed/Oct. 16  
Reading due: Silko, *Ceremony* (through p. 169)  
→**Fourth panel presentation on Silko’s Ceremony** by

**Week 9**  
second composition assignment due Wed/23rd, on friendship/marriage. See “composition prompts” assignment sheet. This response should also synthesize
perspectives you’ve gained from the readings so far.

Mon/Oct. 21  Reading due: *Ceremony* (through p. 218)
in-class writing on identity and themes in *Ceremony*

Wed/Oct. 23  →**writing due: 5 page composition for second writing group meeting.** Bring X number of copies (for workshop group) to class for workshop.
see: *Running on the Edge of the Rainbow: Laguna Stories and Poems, with Leslie Marmon Silko* (video)

Week 10  Native American Identity—war, myth, and material culture

Mon/Oct. 28  Reading due: *Ceremony* (through end)
→fourth response due: on *Ceremony*

Wed/Oct. 30  Reading due: *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight… “This is What It Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona,”* (available on reserve—please download and bring annotated copy see excerpt from *Smoke Signals*

UNIT 6: NAMES AND CULTURAL PRACTICES
Week 11
Mon/Nov. 4  Reading due: *The Namesake*, by Jhumpa Lahiri, through p 96.

Wed/Nov. 6  →**Fifth panel presentation on Lahiri by**

Week 12  Monday, Nov. 11 is Veteran’s Day—no class.
third composition due Wed—you are almost there!

Wed/Nov. 13  →**writing due: 5 page composition for third (and last) writing group meeting.**
Bring X number of copies (for workshop group) to class for workshop.

UNIT 7: SYNTHESIS—TIME FOR FINAL PROJECTS
Week 13  Living in two worlds
Mon/Nov. 18  sign up for conferences today for your final project
Reading due *The Namesake*, by Jhumpa Lahiri, 188 through end.

Wed/Nov. 20  see excerpt from the film, *The Namesake.*
sign up in class for your presentation date today.

Week 14  conferences this week to discuss your final project:
**bring a draft of your project/essay to ask questions about focus and purpose and revision.**

Mon/Nov. 25  conferences, per sign ups.
Wed/Nov. 27  (meetings till 4:30ish) conferences, per sign ups

Week 15  presentations begin
Mon/Dec. 2  Begin presentation of final projects for ENG 345
→**writing due: fifth response on *The Namesake***
Wed/Dec. 4  Presentation of final projects for ENG 345
  → writing due: two practice essay questions for review (please type).
  
  On-line course evaluations available—please bring your device to class today: you
  will have time in class to fill out electronic course evaluations.

Week 16
Monday, Dec. 9: last day of class: presentation of final projects for ENG 345

Mon, Dec. 16: Semester exam: short-answer essays.
  ENG 345 final exam period is 2:45-4:45.