

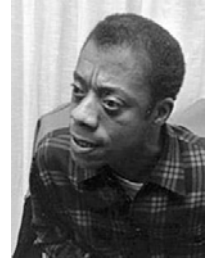


Gloria Anzaldúa

ENGLISH 355-01: AMERICAN ETHNIC LITERATURE

Fall 2008

Wednesdays, 6:00 PM – 8:40 PM
Knutti Hall, Room 203



James Baldwin



David Henry Hwang

Dr. Timothy K. Nixon
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Office Hours: MF 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM
and R 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM



Zitkala-Sa

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the literatures of various American ethnic groups, including African American, Native American, Hispanic, and Asian American literatures. Emphasis will be placed on the the ethnic groups' twentieth-century written texts. Prerequisite: ENGL 204.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This course will explore, deeply and deliberately, the twentieth-century literary expression of major racial and ethnic groups in the US. Through discussion and through critical thinking and writing about significant literary works, students will come to understand the diversity—and the commonality—of the American experience. And just as suspect as assertions of a unified “white” opinion must be, students will come to distrust and challenge monolithic views of racial and ethnic communities. Successful completion of ENGL 204, Survey of American Literature, is required for participation in this class. Thus, students are expected to enter this course with an understanding and appreciation of major movements, figures, and themes in America's literary heritage.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Anaya, Rudolfo. *Bless Me, Ultima*. New York: Grand Central, 1999.
Baldwin, James. *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. New York: Dell, 1985.
Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage, 1991.
Hwang, David Henry. *Golden Child*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2001.
Islas, Arturo. *The Rain God*. New York: Avon, 1991.
Momaday, N. Scott. *House Made of Dawn*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1999.
Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Plume, 1994.
Zitkala-Sa. *American Indian Stories*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2003.

Although it is not a required text, per se, students should have access and refer often to a copy of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th edition, by Joseph Gibaldi.

Additional short readings will be distributed in class. These are designated on the Course Schedule with the abbreviation HO.

ASSIGNMENTS

Critical Analysis, 40%
Encyclopedia Entry, 15%
Theory Assessment, 15%
Web Postings, 15%
Participation, 15%

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

On November 12th, students will submit thesis-driven, critical essays on either material covered in the class or other material previously cleared with the instructor. These papers will be 10 – 12 pages in length. In these essays students should interpret or critique a literary work or works. These papers will be used to assess students' critical skills, and at this level of collegiate study, the incorporation of outside sources that strengthen the argument, establish credibility, and situate the papers in a larger critical conversation is expected. The students will receive grades reflecting their success at literary analysis, style and clarity, paragraphing, use of sources, grammar and mechanics, and adherence to the MLA format.

The critical analysis must be typed and double-spaced. *Everything* in the papers should be double-spaced, including block quotations and the works cited list! Black ink on white paper is customary for scholarly work. Students should use one-inch margins on all four sides of the page and a legible, fairly standard font when preparing their papers. (Examples of acceptable fonts include Times New Roman 12 pt. or Arial 11 pt.) There should *not* be an extra line between paragraphs, but paragraphs should begin with a half-inch indentation. The student's name, the course title, the instructor's name, and the date should appear in the upper left-hand corner of the paper's first page. Students should number all pages in the upper right-hand corner. *The entire package is to be stapled together before being submitted for a grade!* Students should not come to class expecting the instructor to have a stapler for their use. References to all works under consideration and any secondary sources should be documented following Modern Language Association (MLA) conventions, and a works cited list, adhering to the sixth edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, should be included as part of the paper.

WEB POSTINGS

Over the course of the semester, each student will post frequent observations to the class discussion forum located at www.blogger.com. These postings must be completed by midnight each Monday and should be about the readings being discussed that week in class. (In other words, the posting should appear *before* the discussion occurs.) Postings should be specific and focused in their observations, but raising questions about the readings is appropriate, too. A minority—no more

than three (3)—of the student's postings can be about either thoughts he or she has had following class discussions or a response to someone else's posting. Should students choose the latter, they should be civil and respectful in reacting to a classmate's prior posting! These postings should be a minimum of fifty (50) words. Students should spread these postings out over the course of the semester and not leave them all for the last couple of weeks! If the student wants to earn at least a C- on the postings, he or she must do eight (8). To earn at least a B-, he or she must do nine (9). To earn at least an A-, he or she must do ten (10). The postings will be graded largely on the fact that they have been done; distinctions between + and - work will be made for the quality and sophistication of the postings.

PARTICIPATION

The Participation component of the student's grade is to be taken quite seriously. Merely showing up for class will not suffice. This course will be run in a seminar style, and contributing to class discussions in an active, respectful, and thoughtful manner is expected of all students. Even the most brilliant writing must be complemented by active participation for students to finish this course with an A.

GRADING SCALE

This course will employ the grading scale recommended by the Department of English and Modern Languages:

A	100 – 90
B	89 – 80
C	79 – 70
D	69 – 60
F	59 – 0

SPECIAL NOTE

Any student who may need an accommodation due to a disability should make an appointment to see the instructor during his office hours or at another mutually agreed upon time. This meeting should occur as early in the semester as is possible so the instructor can make appropriate arrangements.

CLASS POLICIES

Students are expected to be present, on time, and prepared for discussion whenever the class is scheduled to meet. However, things conflicting with class attendance invariably arise. If there is some extenuating circumstance that prevents the student from attending class, he or she should talk with the instructor before or after class or during his office hours about this matter. Students who miss more than two (2) class sessions will not receive any points for the participation component of their course grade. For his part, the instructor reserves the right to fail a student who misses four (4) or more sessions.

Plagiarism is a serious matter and contrary to the ethos of higher education. Students should make every attempt to ensure that their work is original and others' words and ideas are attributed appropriately. The

minimum penalty for plagiarism is a failing grade on the assignment. Depending on the offense, plagiarizing may also result in failure of the course or expulsion from the University.

Out of respect for colleagues and the instructor, students are asked to turn off (or leave at home) cell phones and pagers before coming to class. Text or instant messaging during class, no matter how subtle, is the surest way to offend the instructor!

If a student wants to discuss a grade, she or he should meet with the instructor in his office during office hours or at a mutually agreed upon appointment. The instructor will not discuss grades in the classroom.

COURSE SCHEDULE

8/20	Introductions and review of syllabus. "My Lucy Friend Who Smells Like Corn" by Sandra Cisneros (HO). Theory—Excerpt from <i>Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza</i> by Gloria Anzaldúa (HO).
8/27	<i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> by Rudolfo Anaya.
9/3	Due: Encyclopedia Entry. <i>The House on Mango Street</i> by Sandra Cisneros.
9/10	<i>The Rain God</i> by Arturo Islas.
9/17	"Theme for English B" by Langston Hughes and "Banneker" by Rita Dove (HO). "Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self" by Alice Walker (HO). Theory—"Talking Black: Critical Signs of the Times" by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" by Alice Walker (HO).
9/24	<i>Go Tell It on the Mountain</i> by James Baldwin.
10/1	Continue the discussion on <i>Go Tell It on the Mountain</i> by James Baldwin. "Heritage" by Countee Cullen (HO).
10/8	<i>The Bluest Eye</i> by Toni Morrison.
10/15	"Yellow Woman" and "Lullaby" by Leslie Marmon Silko (HO). "Earth and Rain, the Plants & Sun" and "Vision Shadows" by Simon Ortiz (HO). Theory—"Kochinnenako in Academe: Three Approaches to Interpreting a Keres Indian Tale" by Paula Gunn Allen (HO).
10/22	<i>American Indian Stories</i> by Zitkala-Ša.
10/29	<i>House Made of Dawn</i> by N. Scott Momaday.
11/5	Continue the discussion on <i>House Made of Dawn</i> by N. Scott Momaday. "Call It Fear" and "White Bear" by Joy Harjo.
11/12	Due: Critical Analysis. Tonight's class will run for three full hours! We will watch the film version of <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> by Amy Tan.

11/19 "Mrs. Spring Fragrance" by Sui Sin Far (HO) and "No Name Woman" by Maxine Hong Kingston (HO). "Persimmons" by Li-Young Lee (HO). Theory—"Theory, Area Studies, Cultural Studies: Issues of Pedagogy in Multiculturalism" by Rey Chow (HO).

11/26 ***No class—Thanksgiving Holiday!***

12/3 *Golden Child* by David Henry Hwang.

Note: **If not submitted earlier in the semester, the Theory Assessment must be in the bin on the instructor's office door before 2:00 PM on Wednesday, December 10th!**