

ENGLISH 284 – Introduction to Ethnic Literature of the United States
Fall 2017

Professor: Lauren Gantz
Meeting Times: T TH 2:00-3:15PM in SCI D224
Email: lgantz@uwsp.edu
Office: CCC 428
Office Hours: M 2:00PM-3:00PM, T 12:00-2:00PM, by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Most of us are probably familiar with the maxim that “America is a melting pot,” a place where peoples from across the globe come together to coexist and blend peacefully. While this idealized vision of multiculturalism might make us feel good, it is perhaps overly simplistic. Closer examination of current and historical events illustrates that America has, from its founding, been a site of racial conflict and widespread resistance to groups perceived as “Other.” Likewise, a critical examination of the American literary canon illustrates that certain writers—women, writers of color, immigrant writers, etc.—have often been ignored, underappreciated, or relegated to “minor” status. In this class, we’ll be reading works of literature by writers who have challenged that canon, including authors from Asian American, Latina/o, African American, and Native American communities. To encourage depth of comprehension and analysis, our readings represent a strategic sampling of ethnic literatures rather than an exhaustive survey.

All the writers we’ll read question what it means to be simultaneously “American” and “ethnic.” Throughout the semester, we’ll draw on elements of critical race theory and postcolonial theory to help supplement our discussions of these works. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the historical and cultural contexts from which each of these texts emerged—particularly on the variety of ways in which ethnic communities have become American: voluntary immigration, colonization, the redrawing of national boundaries, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. By the end of the course, students should have a clear understanding of the practice of intersectional analysis, as well as of the nuance and variety of American ethnic literatures.

Ongoing questions for consideration will include:

- How does the way that someone becomes American shape his/her American identity?
- How does one define one’s own ethnic identity? How do factors such as class, gender, and citizenship status affect that process of identity formation?
- How does one live life “on the hyphen,” occupying two cultural spaces at once?
- How have writers of color sought to complicate, undermine, or expand the canon of American literature?
- How can ethnic literatures help us to imagine American multiculturalism in a way that acknowledges both its problems and its possibilities?

TEXTS

Available at the UWSP University Store (or online):

George Washington Gómez: Mexicotexan Novel, by Américo Paredes

Brown Girl, Brownstones, by Paule Marshall

Love Medicine, by Louise Erdrich

The Boat, by Nam Le

Available on D2L:

Secondary readings on the historical and cultural context of each work (these will be uploaded and announced throughout the semester)

ABSENCE AND LATENESS POLICY

You will be given **two free absences** for the semester. Absences beyond those two—for any reason other than religious observance—will impact your participation grade for the semester (see grading criteria for explanation). Please ensure you arrive to class on time; **three tardies will count as an absence, and if you are more than fifteen minutes late, you will be marked as absent for the meeting.**

If you have to miss class, you will still be responsible for turning in all assignments due on the date of your absence, and for completing the assigned course readings. I would also advise contacting a classmate for notes. Do not email me asking, “[Did I miss anything?](#)” The answer will always be, “Yes.”

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

By UWSP policy, you must notify me of a pending absence due to a religious holy day within the first three weeks of class. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Some of the assignments in this class will require the use of sources. When you use sources in a writing assignment, you **must** cite them. MLA citation style is preferable, but use any format with which you are familiar. The use of an unacknowledged source will result, *at minimum*, in your being required to redo the assignment for reduced credit. Depending on the nature and extent of the misuse, such behavior may result in a zero for the assignment or an automatic F for the course. If you are unsure how to cite a source properly, you are welcome to ask me. Other forms of academic dishonesty, such as purchasing work, copying the work of classmates, cheating on exams, etc., will also result in a major course penalty, including possible failure of the course. A report may also be submitted to the Dean of Students. For more information about UWSP’s policies regarding academic misconduct, see: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>

EMAIL

Your UWSP email account is the university's standard method of communication with you, and you should check it regularly. I may at times use email to contact the class as a whole or individual students; I will routinely use the course home page in D2L for reminders and announcements.

Be advised that while I do check my email regularly throughout the week and on weekends, I only read and respond to messages between 7AM-7PM. If you need to contact me, please do so during those hours unless it's an emergency.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Computers and tablets can be used for taking or referring to notes, checking D2L, or accessing class readings, *if* you can resist their temptations. However, if you are found using these devices for purposes unrelated to our class, I will ask you to turn them off and put them away. Repeated issues may result in a ban on such devices for the entire class. Stay on task, and be considerate of my time and your classmates' time.

Cellphones should be put away, and turned off or silenced. Refusal to comply with this policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability and need accommodations for this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services. Call 715-346-3365, email dissv@uwsp.edu, or visit the Office in room 609 of the Learning Resource Center.

SAFE SPACE POLICY

We are all required to be respectful of each other's identities and opinions. There will be zero tolerance for slurs, derogatory language, harassment, or belittlement of ideas. If you need clarification, please refer to UWSP's Community Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (<http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf>). As a general rule, use common sense and treat others as you wish to be treated. If you feel troubled or unsafe in any class discussion, please speak to me immediately so that we can resolve the problem.

GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS

Reading and preparation for class: For all class meetings, there will be assigned readings with specific suggestions of things to look for or to think about as you read. Doing the reading, thoughtfully, *before class* is necessary preparation for you to be able to participate fully in, and benefit from, the class meeting. You should also take some notes on your observations and reactions. I may call on individual students orally, have you write briefly about the reading early in class, or give a brief reading quiz as a way to check preparation and begin discussion.

Attendance and participation: You should attend class regularly and participate to the best of your ability. Class activities will include discussion and workshops. See page five for grading criteria.

Reading responses: Reading responses will be informal, low-stakes writing assignments. They're meant to help you reflect on readings and explore ideas. Prompts for these will be posted on D2L.

Exams: This course will have two exams. We'll discuss the format for each in the weeks leading up to exam dates.

Essays: You'll write a midterm essay (5-7 pgs.) and a final essay (6-8 pgs.) outside of class. Details about these assignments, including grading criteria, will be provided in handouts, posted on D2L, and discussed in class. The final draft of each essay should be submitted to D2L. All other materials associated with that project (peer review drafts, feedback, etc.) should be submitted in a folder at the beginning of class on the due date.

Peer review: Midterm and final essays must go through the peer review process—I will not accept projects that haven't been peer reviewed. On peer review days, you must bring a *completed* draft of your essay. If you do not have a completed draft, you will be sent home and marked absent for that class period. If you have to miss class on a peer review day, or do not have your draft completed in time for peer review, it is *your responsibility* to find a classmate to review your paper on his/her own time.

Peer review will count toward your participation grade (under the “contributions” category). For each workshop, you will complete a questionnaire that will be turned in for points credited. The quality of your answers to those questions will be used to determine your grade for the workshop—simple yes/no answers are unlikely to receive full credit. Take your time. Offer your classmates thorough, constructive, and thoughtful advice about how to improve their writing.

Revision: You will have the opportunity to revise your midterm essay. Your original grade and your revision grade will be averaged in order to determine your final score for that project. Details about revision expectations and deadlines will be included on the assignment sheet for that project.

Your grades will be determined using the following rubric:

Reading responses and quizzes	15%
Exams	25%
Midterm essay	20%
Final essay	30%
Participation	10%

I will be using the plus/minus system for final grades. Please note: to ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. Thus a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999.

A = 93-100	A- = 90-92	B+ = 87-89	B = 84-86	B- = 80-83	C+ = 77-79	C = 74-76
C- = 70-73	D+ = 67-69	D = 64-66	D- = 60-63	F = 0-60		

Criteria for Participation

	Ideal	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attendance	Is present for the entirety of each class meeting, or (rarely) is absent for a compelling reason, which is shared with the instructor promptly.	Attends consistently (at least 85% of the time). Occasional absences or late arrival are mostly for a valid reason.	Missing class, arriving late, or leaving early, more than 15% of the time, or less often but without explanation.
Preparation	Always gives evidence of preparation when called on or quizzed.	Gives evidence of preparation when called on or quizzed at least 85% of the time.	Gives evidence of being unprepared more than 15% of the time.
Attentiveness	Consistently comes equipped (book, notebook, etc.) to class. Is always listening actively when not speaking.	Usually comes equipped and is listening actively when not speaking.	Attends to something other than class activities (e.g. texting, Facebook, studying for another class).
Quality of Contributions	Makes comments that stand out for the level of careful thought they demonstrate about the material and the unfolding conversation.		Makes comments that reflect inattentiveness to others' contributions, are irrelevant, or otherwise tend to derail the conversation.
Classroom Community	Improves the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. helps draw others out, makes extra effort to contribute if shy, etc.)		Impairs the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. dominates discussion, talks while others are talking, treats other students or their ideas with disrespect.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND LATE WORK:

Take-home assignments: In order to pass the course, you must complete every assignment. Take-home assignments are due *by the beginning of class* on the due date.

Late take-home assignments will lose a letter grade **for each calendar day (note: not each class day)** they are late. Extensions are negotiable: if, knowing your own academic schedule and obligations, you anticipate needing more time for an assignment, you must speak with me in person **at least two calendar days before the assignment is due.** Together we will arrive on a later due date that must fit into the syllabus (i.e., the new due date must precede any other due dates for the unit). I will hold you to that new due date and deduct points if you miss it. Do not e-mail me the day

before something is due to ask for an extension; I will refuse. Plan ahead.

You must build in time for possible technological failure (“my computer crashed”) or contingency (“I left my flash drive with my paper on it at home”). Late work is late, regardless of circumstance.

In-class assignments and activities: In-class work (quizzes, exams, etc.) can **only** be made up under extraordinary, unavoidable circumstances. You must provide me with documentation of the reason for your absence.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Copies of all course documents and additional resources will be available in **Desire2Learn**.

The **Tutoring-Learning Center**, located in the basement of the library (Room 018), can provide help with writing and many other skills you will need to succeed in college. Their regular hours are Monday – Thursday 9:00am – 8:00pm, Friday 9:00AM – 1:00PM. Appointments are recommended but not required. Phone 715-346-3568 or email tlctutor@uwsp.edu.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**Subject to change at instructor's discretion*

T 9/5	Introduction to the Course Useful terms and concepts
TH 9/7	Refresher/Crash Course: Close Reading Strategies Read <i>George Washington Gómez</i> Part I and Part II chs. 1-2
T 9/12	Read <i>George Washington Gómez</i> Part II chs. 3-12 Read “The History” from <i>Refusing to Forget Project</i> (available on D2L)
TH 9/14	Read <i>George Washington Gómez</i> Part III chs. 1-7 Read “Juan Crow” from <i>¡Viva La Raza!</i> (available on D2L) and watch one video about life under Juan Crow Due by Friday at 5PM: Reading Response 1
T 9/19	Read <i>George Washington Gómez</i> Part III chs. 8-end
TH 9/21	Reading Quiz Read <i>George Washington Gómez</i> Part IV chs. 1-7 Read Gloria Anzaldúa, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” (available on D2L)
T 9/26	Read <i>George Washington Gómez</i> Part IV chs. 8-end
TH 9/28	Read <i>George Washington Gómez</i> Part V Read Richard Rodriguez, excerpts from <i>Brown</i> (D2L) Due by Friday at 5PM: Reading Response 2

T 10/3	Exam 1 (in-class or take home, class decides)
TH 10/5	Introduction to Midterm Essay Prompts Read <i>Brown Girl, Brownstones</i> Book 1 Read Philip Kasinitz, “The Three West Indian Immigrations” Due Friday at 5PM: Reading Response 3
T 10/10	Read <i>Brown Girl, Brownstones</i> Book 2 and Book 3 chs. 1-3
TH 10/12	Read <i>Brown Girl, Brownstones</i> Book 3 chs. 4-10 Read Carole Boyce Davies, “Writing Home” (available on D2L) Due Friday at 5PM: Topic Proposal for Midterm Essay
T 10/17	Read <i>Brown Girl, Brownstones</i> Book 4 chs. 1-6
TH 10/19	Reading Quiz Read <i>Brown Girl, Brownstones</i> Book 4 chs. 7-11 Read Mary C. Waters, “Growing Up West Indian and African American” (D2L)
T 10/24	PEER REVIEW FOR MIDTERM ESSAY
TH 10/26	Revision Workshop for Midterm Essay
T 10/31	Read <i>Love Medicine</i> , “The World’s Greatest Fisherman” and “The Beads”
TH 11/2	Midterm Essay Due Read <i>Love Medicine</i> , “Saint Marie” and “Wild Geese” Read Doerfler, Sinclair, and Stark, “Bagijige: Making an Offering” (available on D2L)
T 11/7	Read <i>Love Medicine</i> , “The Island” and “The Plunge of the Brave”
TH 11/9	Read <i>Love Medicine</i> “Flesh and Blood” and “Love Medicine” Due Friday at 5PM: Reading Response 4
T 11/14	Read <i>Love Medicine</i> , “Crown of Thorns” and “Resurrection”
TH 11/16	Reading Quiz Read <i>Love Medicine</i> “The Good Tears” and “Crossing the Water” Read Bonita Lawrence, “Mixed Blood Native Identity in the Americas” (available on D2L)
T 11/21	Introduction to Final Essay Prompts Read <i>The Boat</i> , “Love and Honor and Pity and Pride and Compassion and Sacrifice” Read Kryss Lee, “Should We Still Be Using the Term ‘Ethnic Literature’?” (available on D2L)
TH 11/23	THANKSGIVING

T 11/28 Read *The Boat*, “Hiroshima”
Read David Palumbo-Liu, “Introduction” to *Asian/American* (available on D2L)

TH 11/30 **LIBRARY SESSION**
Due Friday at 5PM: Topic Proposal and Outline for Final Essay

T 12/5 Read *The Boat*, “Halflead Bay”

TH 12/7 Read *The Boat*, “The Boat”
Read Isabelle Thuy Pelaud, excerpt from *This is All I choose to Tell* (available on D2L)
Due Friday by 5PM: Reading Response 5

T 12/12 **PEER REVIEW FOR FINAL ESSAY**

TH 12/14 **INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES**

Final Exam Period 12/20, 2:45-4:45PM

Exam 2

Final Essays Due by midnight 12/20