

Spring 2021
Lecturer: Dr. Jason Siegel

English 284: Introduction to Ethnic Literatures of the United States (HC, ES)

Time and Place:

TuThF 9: -9:50 am

Room: Virtual Classroom

Office Hours

TTh 11:00 am-12:00 pm

E-mail: jsiegel@uwsp.edu

Although the United States is a country made up of immigrants from various racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds and our Declaration of Independence states that “all men are created equal,” many of the immigrant groups that constitute our nation have been victims of egregiously unequal treatment. The purpose of this course is to explore the literatures of several ethnic groups that have been marginalized by America’s dominant white Christian male culture. We will closely read great works of African American, Latinx American, Native American, Asian American, and Jewish American Literature in order to encounter the perspectives of multiple American cultures. The goal is not only to become more sensitive and sympathetic to the plights of minority populations, but also to see the world through different eyes and to confront and challenge our own unconscious assumptions about race, culture, and creed.

While cultural themes will orient our discussion of literary texts, much of our time will be spent developing critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. In class you will be given the opportunity to develop your own interpretations of the literary works under discussion, and exchange opinions with your peers in a way that can stimulate thought and broaden your perspective on the course readings. You will also devote a great deal of time to honing your writing and interpretive skills through various exercises, handouts, and short writing assignments. By the end of the course, you will learn to write persuasive prose about literature. Finally, this class will give you the opportunity to appreciate some of the finest works of literary art that Americans have produced, while enriching and deepening your experience of life. I hope you enjoy it!

Required Texts, in order of use, available at the College Bookstore

Invisible Man, Ralph Ellison

The House on Mango Street, Sandra Cisneros

The Round House, Louise Erdrich

The Joy Luck Club, Amy Tan

Goodbye, Columbus, Phillip Roth

Additional readings available on Canvas

Course Requirements

Essay 1 (15%)

3-4 pages

Essay 2 (20%)

5-6 pages

Midterm (20%)

Take-home exam

Participation (20%)

Based on regular attendance, preparation, and frequent contribution to class discussion.

Final Exam (25%) Friday, May 17, 8-10 AM

Take-home exam. The identification portion of the exam will deal only with material covered after the midterm, but the essay portion will draw on all of the course texts.

Grading Scale: A+=98-100; A=93-97; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-=80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76; C-=70-72; D+=67-69; D=60-66; F=0-59

Attendance/Participation

English 284 is being run in a Virtual Classroom format, which means that all class meetings will take place synchronously online through Zoom. However, if you are unable to join the Zoom meetings synchronously, you have the asynchronous option to watch a recording of the class session and post comments in the “Discussions” section of the Canvas site for the course. I will post a recording of each class session in the “Zoom” section of the Canvas site, and there will be a forum for each class session labeled by the date of the class in the “Discussions” section. By joining the synchronous Zoom meeting for a class and taking part in discussion, OR by watching the recording and posting a two-paragraph (150 word) comment about any topics discussed in class to the Canvas site, you will earn full participation credit for the day. If you do not log into the Zoom meeting AND do not post comments online, you will get a zero for the day. In other words, synchronous attendance is not required, but participation is absolutely required.

The reason for this is that English 284 is a seminar-like, discussion-based course, so your presence (either synchronous or asynchronous) matters for your own learning, as well as for the contributions you can make to the learning of others. Therefore, you need to take part one way or another in every single meeting. However, because I realize there are times when you must miss class or cannot complete the asynchronous alternative due to illness, a family emergency, or other pressing matters, you will be allowed two free unexcused “absences” without penalty. If you know you have to miss class, send me an email ahead of time whenever possible. The participation grade will be lowered for each additional “absence” beyond the first 2 “absences” (An A will become an A-, an A- will become a B+, and so on). An “absence” beyond 6 unexcused absences (not counting the two free “absences”) will result in a student failing the course. To clarify, you will be marked absent only if you do not join the synchronous Zoom meeting AND you do not post comments in the “discussions” section of the Canvas site. If you do one or the other, you will be marked “present.”

Obviously, I will take into account *extraordinary* reasons for an absence such as a severe accident or illness, a family emergency or death, a recognized religious holiday, or jury duty. Just let me know!

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism, or taking credit for words or ideas not your own, is a serious offence and will lead to dire consequences. The penalty for plagiarism ranges from failing the course to expulsion from the university. See the *Student Rights and Regulations* handbook for more information about plagiarism and its consequences. If I think you have plagiarized, I will meet with you and refer your name to a disciplinary committee responsible for overseeing the investigation of academic crimes. Except for acknowledged quotations, all of your work is to be written in your own words. You may not copy from a book, another student's paper, a webpage, or any other source. If you do so, you will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

UWSP @ Wausau Writing Center

Writing Center tutors are successful UWSP@ Wausau students who are available to discuss all types of writing at any stage of the drafting process, including brainstorming, conducting research, editing, or handling citations. Tutors work with experienced as well as struggling writers. One-time and regular appointments are available, free of charge to all students.