

ENL 236.01: Diverse Voices in Fiction

UDM, Winter 2006-7 3 cr.
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Course Description and Objectives:

This course is intended to be an introduction to the literatures and cultures of minority groups in the United States. In it we will examine works by Native Americans, Chicano/as, Asian Americans, Jewish Americans, African Americans, lesbians and gay men, and the rural and urban poor. Our texts will come from a wide range of fictional works including the novel, short story, drama, and film. Because we are approaching these works as examples of "diverse voices," a large part of our work together this semester will be to develop a critical vocabulary and set of reading and writing practices for approaching cultural, ethnic, racial, regional, class, gender, and sexual diversity. We will need these critical tools as we ask ourselves:

- How might we devise ways of reading and viewing the fictional works in this class that do not reduce them to ethnographic representations of a particular region or identity?
- What happens when we read these texts against one another rather than against "mainstream" or "dominant" discourses?
- How do legal and cultural forms of censorship influence what voices are heard in U.S. society and academia? How do different authors negotiate and represent the relationships of the aesthetic, the cultural, and the political in their works?
- How is our sense of the "United States" or "American Literature" altered or affirmed as a result of our new critical practice?

Other major themes and topics in this class will include the politics of representation in popular culture and the means by which we evaluate literature and the arts. Through reading, speaking, and writing about diverse voices in U.S. fictions students will develop their critical thinking and analytical writing skills and reflect on the relevancy of course issues to their own experiences. By the end of the semester, students should be conversant with the basic elements and terminology used in the study of fictional works and have an awareness of a variety of critical perspectives.

Required Texts:

ENL 236.02 Course Pack (can be purchased in the CLAE office, first floor, Briggs—BEFORE LEAVING THE OFFICE, BE SURE TO OPEN THE PACK AND MAKE SURE YOUR TABLE OF CONTENTS PAGE SAYS "WINTER 2007")

Dorothy Allison. *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure*

Louise Erdrich. *Tracks*

David Henry Hwang. *M. Butterfly*

Arturo Islas. *The Rain God*

Moises Kaufman *The Laramie Project*

Maxine Hong Kingston *The Woman Warrior*

Toni Morrison. *The Bluest Eye*

Art Spiegelman. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History & Here My Troubles Began (boxed set)*

Crash. Paul Haggis (video)

Smoke Signals. Dir. Chris Eyre (video) Based on the book *Tonto and the Lone Ranger Fist Fight in Heaven* by Sherman Alexie, author of the screenplay.

Additional Course Information:

Students are required to turn off cell phones and pagers before entering the classroom.

In an effort to provide easy access to resources and to facilitate communication between all of its members, this course has a web site: <http://weatherr.faculty.udmercy.edu/MinorityDiscourse/Home.html>. In addition to information about the course, the web site includes links to biographical and critical information about our authors, and to information about minority identity groups, literature, and other discourses

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

(all reading assigned for a particular day is to be completed before the beginning of that day's class period)

- T 1/9 Course Introduction
Your goals for the course
- Th 1/11 Course Introduction, continued
Horace Miner, "Body Ritual Among the Nacerima" (Course Pack—CP)
- T 1/16 *The Woman Warrior* reading guide (CP) and Chs. 1, 2
- Th 1/18 *The Woman Warrior*, Ch. 3
Sau-ling Cynthia Wong, "Autobiography as Guided Chinatown Tour?: Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and the Chinese-American Autobiographical Controversy" (CP)
* * *In-class debate on: freedom of expression, censorship, social responsibility of the artist * * *
- T 1/23 *The Woman Warrior*, Chs. 4, 5
- Th 1/25 *M. Butterfly*, Act 1
Reading guide, Introduction and Afterword (CP—read AFTER Act 1)
- T 1/30 *M. Butterfly*, Acts 2 and 3
The "real" butterfly story (optional, CP—if read, read AFTER Acts 2 and 3)
- Th 2/1 *The Rain God*, reading guide (CP) and Ch. 1 "Judgment Day" and Ch. 2 "Chile"
- T 2/6 *The Rain God*, Ch. 3 "Compadres and Comadres," Ch. 4 "Rain Dancer"
- Th 2/8 *The Rain God*, Ch. 5 "Ants" and Ch. 6 "The Rain God"
- T 2/13 "The Indian Question," Ronald Takaki (CP)
Smoke Signals (video, to be viewed in class)
- Th 2/15 *Smoke Signals* (video, to be viewed in class)
Tracks reading guide (CP) and Chs. 1-3
- T 2/20 *Tracks*, Chs. 4-6
Distribute Essay questions
- Th 2/22 *Tracks*, Chs. 7-9
Discuss Essay questions
- T 2/27 Toni Morrison, "Recitatif" (CP)
In-class debate on: Inter- vs. Intra-group racism
- Th 3/1 *The Bluest Eye* reading guide (CP) and "Intro" and "Autumn"
- 3/5-3/9 -- SPRING BREAK -- (No DB entry 3/11)
- T 3/13 **ESSAY PROSPECTUS DUE**
The Bluest Eye, "Winter," first part of "Spring" (stop at section about Cholly starting, "seefatherheisbig")
- Th 3/15 *The Bluest Eye*, second half of "Spring," "Summer"
- T 3/20 **CONFERENCES THIS WEEK**

	<i>Crash</i> (video to be viewed in class)
Th 3/22	<i>Crash</i> (video to be viewed in class)
T 3/27	ESSAY DUE Discuss <i>Crash</i>
Th 3/29	<i>Two or Three Things I Know for Sure</i> reading guide (CP) <i>Two or Three Things I Know for Sure</i> (first half)
T 4/3	<i>Two or Three Things I Know for Sure</i> (second half)
Th 4/5	<i>The Laramie Project</i> , Introduction/beginning materials, Act I
T 4/10	<i>The Laramie Project</i> , Acts II and III (end)
Th 4/12	Distribute Final Exam <i>Maus</i> reading guide (CP) <i>Maus</i> , Book I
T 4/17	<i>Maus</i> , Book II
Th 4/19	Last day of class Course summary and response Course evaluations
W 4/25	Final due IN MY MAILBOX IN LIBERAL ARTS OFFICE BY Wednesday, 4/25 11:00 a.m. You may, of course, turn your exam in earlier. No late exams will be accepted.

Assignments for ENL 236

Requirements for this course include student participation, quizzes and homework, one essay, weekly contributions to an online discussion thread, and a take home final

A. Participation (100 points / 10% of grade)

This course is designed to be discussion and student-driven; it is not a lecture course. Therefore, your individual participation in the class is directly linked to the value you will get out of the class. Baseline ("C" level) in-class participation requirements include coming on time to each class session having completed the day's reading. Contributing interesting and thoughtful comments during most classes will raise your participation grade to a "B." Consistent contribution of interesting and thoughtful comments and providing leadership in class discussions will raise your participation grade to an "A." **After 6 excused or unexcused absences, you will be asked to drop the class or given an "F" as your final grade if it is too late to drop.**

Because I expect a great deal of participation from you as a student, you may expect a great deal of participation from me as a teacher. This includes holding regularly scheduled office hours and being available outside those office hours for additional appointments, providing extended office hours for conferences about your papers, and access to me via email and telephone. **If you have any concerns or questions at any time during the course of the semester about the texts, requirements, objectives, or activities for this course, please do not hesitate to let me know.** I very much welcome the opportunity to get to know and to work with you on an individual basis.

B. Reading Quizzes (100 points / 10% of grade)

Throughout the semester several in-class reading quizzes will be given. These quizzes are designed to

complement and facilitate our in-class discussion. Quizzes can cover readings/films or the discussion board, and will be given at the beginning of class, therefore, it is important to be on time to class and check with me whenever you miss a class to make sure you have not missed an assignment. If you have an excused absence, you will have one week to make up any missed exercises and quizzes. No make up opportunities are available for unexcused absences.

C. One essay (250 points / 25% of grade)

Your essay should 5 to 7-pages and use MLA citation. You will have several topics from which to choose as detailed in your course pack. The topics will be discussed later in the semester. Each student will meet with me for a conference about his or her essay.

D. Weekly Online Discussion (250 points / 25% of grade, approximately 250 words each week)

Once a week, **starting the second week of class and up to and including the last week of class**, you are required to read over your classmates' entries and to submit your own comments and observations to the online discussion board of this class. The online discussion board can be found at Blackboard (<http://knowledge.udmercy.edu>). It should be listed on your personal Start page or you can search the "Course Catalog" for "**ENL236-01**" (no spaces). If you are registered for the course, you should already be enrolled with an account in our Blackboard site. If not, you may create an account and then enroll yourself in the course using the password "**minority**". While I will read your entries weekly and may occasionally add my own comments, this virtual discussion section is intended to provide you with opportunities to interact with one another, and to make sure each student has an opportunity to respond to the issues and topics raised in the week's reading. **Your contributions should be submitted no later than 9:00 p.m., Sunday, of any given week (for example, your first discussion entry should be made by 9:00 p.m. 1/21).**

Your responses can be in the first person ("I") and do not require the use of outside sources, however, they must be thoughtful and well written (if you think of them as one-page essays, you will be on the right track). They should not be a collection of random thoughts you had while reading. Possible topics for discussion might include but are not limited to:

- * questions and ideas from our reading guide handouts
- * passages, themes, or events in the texts that struck you as particularly interesting or significant
- * questions you have about the week's reading
- * the author's prose style
- * comparisons between different texts we read in the course
- * questions of audience
- * contributions these texts make to our larger understanding of "U.S. literature" or "U.S. identity"
- * a response to a point raised by another classmate
- * a discussion of the ways in which the texts resonate with or contradict your own life experiences

Your online discussion grade is based on the frequency of your entries (at least once a week), their length (at least 250 words), and their quality. Each discussion entry is worth 20 points. Weekly entries turned in after 9:00 p.m. on Sunday but before 9:00 p.m. on Saturday of the following week receive no more than 10 points. After one week has passed, you cannot make up a missed entry. **A word of caution: Do not fall behind on the Discussion Board. It can often make or break your final grade.** Examples of good and poor entries are available for you under Discussion #1.

E. Take Home Final (300 points / 30% of grade)

Essay and short answer format. **Due in my mailbox in the Liberal Arts office by 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, 4/25.**

F. Grading Scale

Final grades are determined using a point system. There are 1000 potential points to earn over the course of the semester. Your total earned points are divided by 1000 resulting in a percentage that equals your final grade. For example, if your total points earned are 900/1000, your final percentage is 90% which is an “A-“. If your final points end in a number equal to or greater than “5”, your percentage will be rounded up (e.g., if your final points are 825/1000, your percentage will be rounded up to 83% which is a “B”). On the other hand, if your final points are 824/1000, your percentage will be rounded down. It will be 82%, which is a “B-“.

925-1000 points	A	725-774 points	C
895-924 points	A-	695-724 points	C-
875-894 points	B+	675-694 points	D+
825-874 points	B	625-674 points	D
795-824 points	B-	< 625 points	F
775-794 points	C+		

G. Late Papers Policy:

Papers drop one grade step (e.g., from an A to an A-) for every day they are late. If you are having difficulty with an assignment, please contact me BEFORE the due date to receive assistance.

H. University’s Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

As members of an academic community engaged in the pursuit of truth and with a special concern for values, students are expected to conform to a high standard of honesty and integrity in their academic work. The fundamental assumption under which the University operates is that work submitted by a student is a product of his/her own efforts. Among the most serious academic offenses is plagiarism, submitting the style of another author or source without acknowledgment or formal documentation. Plagiarism occurs when specific phrases or entire passages, whether a sentence, paragraph or longer excerpt, are incorporated into one’s own writing without quotation marks or documentation. One also plagiarizes by paraphrasing the work of another, that is, retaining another writer’s ideas and structure without documentation. Students are advised always to set off another writer’s exact words by quotation marks, with appropriate references. Students avoid plagiarism by concentrating on their own words and ideas and by fully crediting others’ words and ideas when they find their way into the writing. Whenever in doubt, cite the source. Students who purchase essays from other students or agencies or who copy from one another or from prohibited sources, commit the most serious type of academic dishonesty. The consequences of plagiarism, or any act of academic dishonesty, may range from failure on an assignment or in a course to dismissal from the University. Any student caught plagiarizing material in this class—**intentionally or unintentionally**—will receive an automatic "F" for the assignment. A second episode of plagiarism and that student will receive an "F" for the course and his or her case will be referred to the appropriate dean. If you have any questions about what constitutes the proper or improper use of outside sources, please see me for clarification.

I. Racist/Sexist/Homophobic Language Policy

While no subjects are off limits for discussion in this course, the abusive use of racist, sexist, or homophobic language has no place in ENL 236.

J. Writing Center:

The McNichols campus Writing Center is located in Briggs 225. Writing Center tutors can provide students with free assistance in generating ideas, organizing a paper, developing support, writing clearly, and a host of other useful activities. To schedule a session with the WC tutors, visit the web site <http://ids.udmercy.edu/twc/>.

K. English Major Senior Portfolio

Upon declaring the major, English majors begin keeping a portfolio of their writings completed in English

courses. The portfolio is to be kept by each student's adviser and is submitted to the Department the eighth week of his or her last semester, senior year. The portfolio is required for graduation. **All current and potential English majors in this class should keep the essay assignment sheet and the copy of their essay with my written comments on it to give to their advisors.** More information about the English Major Senior Portfolio can be found at: <http://liberalarts.udmercy.edu/english/portfolioguidelines.htm>.

L. Course evaluations

Student course evaluations are an important source of information for curricular and teaching improvement in the College of Liberal Arts and Education. As such, all students enrolled in CLAE courses are required to complete an online course evaluation. You will receive e-mails explaining how to complete the evaluation online. In addition, I will remind you of the deadline for completing this course requirement. After each semester the English Department and I carefully review your comments re: what works well and what can be improved in my courses. Past student comments in ENL 236 have led to changes in paper due dates, texts taught, types of assignments, etc. The bottom line: although it might take a bit of effort to complete evaluations, I and the Department very much appreciate your willingness to do so and the time you put into the process.

M. Students with Disabilities

If you need accommodations because of a documented disability, and/or if you have medical information to share with me, please discuss this with me before our second class meeting. Please feel free to e-mail me as well. Students with disabilities who are seeking accommodations must contact the UAS/Disability Support Services Office to register for services, and to request accommodations each semester. Every effort is made to ensure equal access to programs and activities, both academic and extra-curricular. If you have not already obtained proper documentation from UAS/Disability Support Services, please contact Emilie Gallegos, Director of University Academic Services/Disability Support Services, at (313) 578-0310 or gallegem@udmercy.edu.

N. Extra Credit: (you may complete one of the following for up to 20 points extra credit)

- a. Take 5 tests on the Harvard Implicit Association Test site—a site which enables you to evaluate your underlying beliefs about different identity groups. Print out and turn in your 5 score pages: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/index.jsp>
- b. Attend an event announced in class as relevant to our course and write a 250-word response to it. This response can be similar to a discussion board entry but should be turned in. It should discuss your thoughtful reaction to the event rather than summarize it. Here are a list of events that already are approved for extra credit write ups:

Jan. 18 -- 12:45-2:00 pm -- LS 113

Panel on Contemporary Civil Rights (Speakers include Elliott Hall, Eric Smau, and others)

Jan. 23 -- 12:45-2:00 pm -- LS 113

Panel on the Sweet Trials (Speakers include Daniel Baxter, Matthew Daley, Gary Maveal)

Feb. 1 -- 7:30 pm -- Fountain Lounge

Lecture by Kevin Boyle, author of National Book Award-winning book, ARC OF JUSTICE, on the Sweet Trials

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR: Important Dates - Winter 2006-2007

January 8

Classes Begin

January 12

Registration Ends for Weekend College Classes

January 12	Last Day to Declare Audit or Pass/Fail Option
January 12 - 13	Weekend College Classes Begin(11 Week)
January 15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (No classes/Offices Closed)
January 16	Last Day to Add a Class
January 16	Last Day for 100% Refund*(NON-WEEKEND)
January 17-22	75% Refund Period
January 26	Application Deadline for May/June/August 2007 Graduation
January 23-29	50% Refund Period
January 30-February 5	25% Refund Period
February 2	Last Day to Drop a Class without a "W"
February 9	Deadline for Fall Term I 2006-2007 "I" Grades
February 27	Mid-term grades Due from Faculty
March 5-10	Mid-Winter/Spring Break (No classes/Offices Open)
March 12	Advising for Fall term I 2007-2008
March 19	Registration for Fall Term I 2007-2008 Begins
March 30 - March 31	Weekend College Final Exams(11 week)
April 6-8	Easter Recess - University Closed
March 30	Last Day to Withdraw from Class for Winter
March 25	Honors Convocation
April 13	Weekend College Intensive Courses Begin
April 23-28	Final Exam Week
April 28	Official End of Term II Winter 2006-2007
April 30	Grades Due for Term II Winter 2006-2007
May 12	Baccalaureate/Commencement 2007