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## ENG 3705-001: American Multiculture Literatures

Robert Martinez

*Eastern Illinois University*

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English 3705, section 001:  
American Multicultural Literatures  
Fall 2022 | Coleman 3691 | T/TH 11.00 AM-12.15 PM

**Instructor:** Dr. Bobby Martínez

**Office:** Coleman 3371

**E-mail:** rlmartinez@eiu.edu

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 10-11 AM and 12.20-1.20 PM; Wednesdays, 11 AM-1 PM; Thursdays, 12.20 PM-1.20 PM and 3.30-4.30 PM; by APPOINTMENT

**Class Websites:** D2L course page

**Course Description:**

A study (3-0-3, FS) of multicultural literatures of the Americas with emphasis on pluralism (ethnicity, race, language/dialect, religion, socio-economic status, gender, sexuality, ability, among others). (WI)

**Learning objectives:**

In this course, students will aim to do the following:

- Explain, compare, and complicate the concept and definitions of “multiculturalism.”
- Focus on the social, historical, and cultural conditions which inform the multicultural literatures of the U.S.
- Explore the historical and theoretical relationships among canonical and non-canonical texts in American literature.
- Learn to identify and interpret major works from the canon of American multicultural literature.
- Interpret and implement diverse philosophical and aesthetic points of view.
- Recognize and critique how different multicultural literary texts portray such cultural issues as race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality.
- Produce written and oral compositions of that analyze cultural issues pertaining to multicultural literary texts.

**Required Texts (at TRS, Textbook Rental Services):**

- Sandra Cisneros, *House on Mango Street*
- Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*
- Walter Dean Myers, *Monster*
- Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*
- Erika Sánchez, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*
- Nafissa Thompson-Spires, *Heads of the Colored People: Stories*
- Rudolfo Anaya, selected stories (D2L)

**Possible Film Screenings:**

- Cary Fukunaga, *Sin nombre* (D2L)
- Allison Anders, *Mi vida loca* (D2L)
- Gregory Nava, *El norte* (D2L)
- Spike Lee, *Do the Right Thing* (D2L)
- Emmanuel Osei-Kuffour Jr., *Black Box* (D2L)

### **Screenings in and Readings for Class:**

You are required to attend all class film screenings and to do all assigned reading for this course. More importantly, you are expected to read all assignments and watch all films **carefully and conscientiously**, meaning you are to make note of your reactions to the readings/films and be prepared to share your critical thoughts and interpretations of the works we cover. If you do not understand something in the reading, you should read it again and work at its meaning; likewise, if something about a film is perplexing, watch it again and think about it carefully. This process is what is known as “critical reading” and “critical thinking”: you must study a writer’s language or filmmaker’s films and think critically about its meanings and ramifications.

The text listed above is available from Textbook Rental (TRS). Other required readings will be available online via our course page on D2L. On the day that a text is to be discussed, you must have that work with you in class. For **electronic readings (PDF or Web documents)**, you must have readable access to those documents in class on the day the material is discussed. Since this course emphasizes careful reading and writing, you must either print out the document(s) or use a laptop, desktop, iPad, Kindle, or Nook to view them. *Using Smartphones to view readings for class discussion is not acceptable, unless directed to do so by the instructor.*

### **Required Attendance, Materials & Editions:**

- Check Panthermail (e-mail) **daily**
- Sign-up for and use “Remind” app for class texting
- Use text editions found at Textbook Rental
- Attend class and participate daily in discussion
- Attend all film screenings
- Complete any assigned forum posts
- Check for additional readings via handouts or D2L

Attendance in English 3705 means that you are present in class each day in both *body and mind*—that is, I expect you to come to class each day having completed any required reading or listening or viewing assignments and ready to share your thoughtful, considered ideas. **Missing class and not completing assignments are not acceptable.** If you become ill or experience family or personal difficulties beyond your control, then you must notify me of your absence as soon as possible. Not completing daily assignments and not contributing to class discussion will result in poor participation grade scores. If you miss more than three (3) classes, your final course grade will be penalized: starting with the fourth (4th) absence, a “+” or “-” will be deducted from your final course grade.

### **Content Warning:**

Contemporary, and especially postmodern, texts (“texts” meaning novels, films, music, poems, etc.) often use violence and disturbing misappropriations of sex (rape and other forms of sexual abuse) as a way to get readers’ attention and tell stories that represent realities and challenges they see in their worlds. Some of our texts may prove either emotionally painful for or morally offensive to you. If you’re unwilling to read such material, please consider switching to another course. If you consider this literature worth reading but find yourself upset by it, always feel free to talk to me during my office hours, and to bring up your concerns during class if you are comfortable.

**Smartphone/Social Media Policy:**

To protect the safety of the classroom and the privacy of the students, usage of cell phones or smartphones during class to videotape, to text, and to access social media sites or apps (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, YouTube, etc.) **is strictly forbidden**. Smartphone or cell phone use during class will only be permitted with the prior approval of the instructor.

**Turning in Assignments & Feedback:**

Assignments turned in via D2L Dropbox must be in **Microsoft Word format**. Instructor feedback will be embedded in graded writing. Be sure to review and save your graded essays. One of your most important tools for improvement will be the comments and corrections I make in or suggest to your writing. *If you wish to see your writing improve and your grade rise as the semester progresses, you must carefully refer back to these written comments as you write subsequent essays.*

**Guidelines for Specific Assignments:**

All written work should be formatted thus:

- Use Microsoft Word
- Use Double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman or Cambria font
- Use 1" (top/bottom) and 1.25" (left/right) margins
- Include your name, course name, professor's name, and date on the front page
- Include a creative or informative title for your essays
- Place your name and page numbers in the headers of your essays
- Turn in all written work electronically via D2L Dropbox

**Grading Scale:**

- A = 94-100
- A- = 90-93
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 84-86
- B- = 80-83
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 74-76
- C- = 70-73
- D = 60-69
- F = below 60

**Grading of Assignments:**

- Analysis Paper #1 (5-7 pages): 15%
- Analysis Paper #2 (6-8 pages): 25%
- Participation in class discussions: 20%
- Discussion Leader exercise: 15%
- Final Exam: 25%

**Assignment Descriptions:**

- Discussion Leader Assignment: This assignment requires you to prepare for and lead one class discussion on a course film. To prepare for this assignment, you should zero in on a particular scene of a film that supports the ideas you have to share with the class to generate class discussion.

- **Class Discussion:** All students should strive to complete weekly D2L Forum posts to prepare for weekly class discussion. The more that you actively share your critical interpretive thoughts or questions about our films, the more points you earn towards class participation.
- **Analysis Papers:** You must choose to write about one of the novels or films we have covered in the course. You should identify a specific topic of interest to you in the novel or film and develop an argument that interprets that aspect of the novel or film. For example, you may wish to discuss the treatment of a certain character or theme, the use of a recurring image, motif, or word/phrase in a given work, but make sure your topic is focused. Remember, this paper must present a convincing interpretation of the work you have chosen. Outside research is not required for this paper; it should simply be your analysis of the text at hand.
- **Final Exam:** This exam will assess your understanding of core skills and ideas you have learned throughout the course. The exam will consist of identifying passages or scenes from materials read/watched and discussing the thematic and intellectual significance of the passages/scenes. Students will also be asked to complete short answer and longer essay questions that will assess their ability to synthesize and make intelligent arguments and observations about themes and ideas between literature, film, and theoretical/cultural/historical concepts.

#### **The English Department Statement on Plagiarism:**

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Office of Student Standards. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources. **Failure to cite ideas or writing not your own will constitute plagiarism.**

#### **Students Pursuing English Education/Teacher Certification:**

Students seeking Teacher Certification in English Language Arts should request each of their English Department professors to complete the "Application for English Department Approval to Student Teach" before the end of the semester. This online evaluation form is available here: <https://www.eiu.edu/english/machform/view.php?id=19831>.

#### **Student Academic Integrity:**

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

#### **Disability Services:**

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by McAfee Gym, Room 1210, or call 217-581-6583.

**Student Success Center:**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call [217-581-6696](tel:217-581-6696), or go to McAfee Gym, Room 1301.

**Tech Support:**

If you need assistance with D2L, call D2L Support toll free at 1-877-325-7778. Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. E-mail and Chat options are also available on the "My Home" page after logging in to D2L. Other D2L resources including a D2L Orientation course for students are available on the same page. For technical questions regarding other software, hardware, network issues, EIU NetID/password, or Panthermail, please contact the ITS Helpdesk at 217-581-4357 during regular business hours (8 am-5 pm) or submit a help ticket at <https://techsupport.eiu.edu/>. If you have a question regarding course content, contact your instructor.

**COVID-19 Practices & Expectations on EIU's Campus:**

***All students, regardless of vaccination status, may wear face coverings during class.***

Students may sit in any classroom seat where they are most comfortable. All reasonable efforts will be made to provide modifications to classroom seating arrangements if needed; however, this may not be possible in all situations.

***Students should not attend class if they are ill or feel sick and should consult the student health clinic if they have any COVID-19-like symptoms.*** Everyone in the campus community is responsible for following practices that reduce risk. If you have a health condition that may require a potential classroom accommodation or variation from current EIU COVID-19 policy, please contact Student Disability Services ([studentdisability@eiu.edu](mailto:studentdisability@eiu.edu) or 581-6583) to determine what options may be available based on current CDC guidance.

To view the latest EIU COVID-19 related information and any policy updates, please visit <https://www.eiu.edu/covid/>.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS FOR ENGLISH 3705 – FALL 2022**

| <b>Date</b>     | <b>What's Happening in Class</b>  | <b>Homework</b>  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Tues.,<br>8/23  | Introduction to course; introduction to the post-World War II era and course themes                                   | - Watch and discuss Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story" (D2L)<br><br>- Read poems by Sandra Cisneros and Fatimah Asghar (D2L)<br><br>- Start reading Sandra Cisneros, <i>The House on Mango Street</i> (1-20); take notes as you read |
| Thurs.,<br>8/25 | - Discuss Adichie's talk and poems by Cisneros and Asghar<br>- Discuss opening of <i>Mango Street</i>                 | Read Cisneros, <i>The House on Mango Street</i> (21-75); take notes as you read  |
| Tues.,<br>8/30  | Discuss <i>The House on Mango Street</i>  | Finish reading <i>The House on Mango Street</i> (76-110); take notes as you read   |
| Thurs.,<br>9/1  | Discuss <i>The House on Mango Street</i>  |  |
| Tues.,<br>9/6   | -Start watching <i>Mi Vida Loca</i>   | Watch Allison Anders's <i>Mi Vida Loca</i> (D2L); take notes as you watch the film   |
| Thurs.,<br>9/8  | Finish watching and start discussing <i>Mi Vida Loca</i>  | - Read Anaya's stories "Road to Platero," "Children of the Desert," and "Dead End" (D2L); take notes as you read   |
| Tues.,<br>9/13  | Wrap up discussion of <i>Mi Vida Loca</i><br><br>Discuss Anaya's stories  | - Start reading Erika Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> (1-40); take notes as you read   |
| Thurs.,<br>9/15 | Wrap up discussion of Anaya's stories<br><br>Start discussing Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> | Read Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> (41-111); take notes as you read  |
| Tues.,<br>9/20  | Discuss Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i>   | Read Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> (112-162); take notes as you read   |
| Thurs.,<br>9/22 | Discuss Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i>   | Read Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> (163-243); take notes as you read   |

|                  |  |  |
|------------------|--|--|
| Tues.,<br>9/27   | Discuss Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i>              | Read Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> (244-294); take notes as you read           |
| Thurs.,<br>9/29  | Discuss Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i>              | Finish reading Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> (295-340); take notes as you read |
| Tues.,<br>10/4   | Finish discussion of Sánchez's <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> | Watch Nava's <i>El norte</i> (D2L); take notes as you watch the film                                     |
| Thurs.,<br>10/6  | Start watching Nava's <i>El norte</i>  | Finish watching <i>El norte</i> (D2L) for homework; take notes as you watch                              |
| Tues.,<br>10/11  | Discuss Nava's <i>El norte</i>   | Start reading Michelle Cliff's <i>No Telephone to Heaven</i> (1-50); take notes as you read              |
| Thurs.,<br>10/13 | Discuss Cliff's <i>No Telephone to Heaven</i>                                | Read Cliff's <i>No Telephone to Heaven</i> (51-182); take notes as you read                              |
| Fri.,<br>10/14   | <b>Literary Analysis Paper #1 Due in D2L Dropbox by 5 PM</b>                 |  |
| Tues.,<br>10/18  | Discuss Cliff's <i>No Telephone to Heaven</i>                                | Finish reading Cliff's <i>No Telephone to Heaven</i> (183-224); take notes as you read                   |
| Thurs.,<br>10/20 | Finish discussion of Cliff's <i>No Telephone to Heaven</i>                   | Read W.E.B. DuBois's "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" (D2L); take notes while you read the essay             |
| Tues.,<br>10/25  | Discuss DuBois's "double consciousness"                                      | Begin reading Toni Morrison's <i>The Bluest Eye</i> (1-40); take notes while you read                    |
| Thurs.,<br>10/27 | Discuss <i>The Bluest Eye</i>  | Read Toni Morrison's <i>The Bluest Eye</i> (pp. 41-111); take notes while you read                       |
| Tues.,<br>11/1   | Discuss <i>The Bluest Eye</i>  | Read Toni Morrison's <i>The Bluest Eye</i> (112-152); take notes while you read                          |
| Thurs.,<br>11/3  | Discuss <i>The Bluest Eye</i>  | Finish reading Morrison's <i>The Bluest Eye</i> (153-206)  |



|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Tues.,<br>11/8                              | Discuss <i>The Bluest Eye</i>  | Start reading Thompson-Spires's <i>Heads of the Colored People</i> (1-50)     |
| Thurs.,<br>11/10                            | Discuss <i>Heads of the Colored People</i>   | Read Thompson-Spires's <i>Heads of the Colored People</i> (51-117)            |
| Tues.,<br>11/15                             | Discuss <i>Heads of the Colored People</i>   | Read Thompson-Spires's <i>Heads of the Colored People</i> (120-157)           |
| Thurs.,<br>11/17                            | Discuss <i>Heads of the Colored People</i>   | Finish reading Thompson-Spires's <i>Heads of the Colored People</i> (159-197) |
| <b>Mon.,<br/>11/21-<br/>Fri.,<br/>11/25</b> | <b>No Classes - Thanksgiving Break</b>   | Finish reading Thompson-Spires's <i>Heads of the Colored People</i> (159-197) |
| Tues.,<br>11/29                             | Discuss <i>Heads of the Colored People</i>   |   |
| Thurs.,<br>12/1                             | Start watching Spike Lee's <i>Do the Right Thing</i>                                   | Take notes while watching the film!   |
| Tues.,<br>12/6                              | Finish watching <i>Do the Right Thing</i> and begin discussion                         |   |
| Thurs.,<br>12/8                             | Last Day of Class<br>Finish discussion of <i>Do the Right Thing</i><br>Final Exam Prep |   |
| Fri.,<br>12/9                               | <b>Analysis Paper #2 Due in D2L<br/>Dropbox by 5 PM</b>                                |   |

**Final Exam: Monday, Dec. 12, 10.15 AM-12.15 PM**