

Fall 8-15-2018

## ENG 3705-600: American Multicultural Lit

Tim Engles  
*Eastern Illinois University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english\\_syllabi\\_fall2018](https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2018)



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Engles, Tim, "ENG 3705-600: American Multicultural Lit" (2018). *Fall 2018*. 59.  
[https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english\\_syllabi\\_fall2018/59](https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2018/59)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2018 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2018 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact [tabruns@eiu.edu](mailto:tabruns@eiu.edu).

## Multicultural Coming of Age Narratives

### English 3705–Fall, 2018

Instructor: Tim Engles

Office hours: Via email, and by appointment if you like in our course's Online Rooms; if you are on campus, you can meet with me in person during my regular office hours: 12:15 to 2:15, Tuesdays and Thursdays, or by appointment (3831 Coleman Hall)

**Books from Textbook Rental (listed chronologically by initial publication date, instead of in the order in which we will read them):**

Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (1970)  
Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street* (1984)  
Helena María Viramontes, *Under the Feet of Jesus* (1995)  
Walter Dean Myers, *Monster* (1999)  
Brian Ascalon Roley, *American Son* (2001)  
Tayari Jones, *Leaving Atlanta* (2002)  
ZZ Packer, *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere* (2003)  
Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (2006)  
Daniel Woodrell, *Winter's Bone* (2006)  
Gene Luen Yang, *American Born Chinese* (2006)  
Chen Chen, *When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities* (2017)

### COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**(these words constitute our contract; much of the following may seem familiar or tempting to skim over, but you really need to read it all carefully)**

Catalog description: (3-0-3) Emphasis on race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality in literatures from 1700 to the present, featuring African-American, Asian-American, Native-American, Latino/a writers and immigrant American Writers. Prerequisite: ENG 1002G.

Instructor's description: We will be working with texts from various cultural traditions that more or less conform to the basic plotline and rules of a literary genre, the *bildungsroman*. A brief definition of this term has two important parts:

[1] *a novel that recounts the development (psychological and sometimes spiritual) of an individual from childhood to maturity, [2] to the point at which the protagonist recognizes his or her place in the world.*

This type of novel first arose in Germany during the eighteenth century, which is why we still use the German term to describe it (*bildungsroman* translates to “novel of education”). Hundreds of American novels now conform to this format—probably thousands. Those that have become canonized or otherwise famous are typically written by middle-class, white, heterosexual

American writers and they commonly contain middle-class, white, heterosexual protagonists. How, we will repeatedly ask in this “multicultural literature” course, does such a story differ when the writer and protagonist live outside these norms? We will also study the sometimes unconventional storytelling methods and themes that multicultural authors often use for representing identity formation and maturation.

We will take a sociological/anthropological approach to our material, considering along the way such relevant factors as race, class, gender, sexuality and region, and how these factors play out differently in different societal contexts.

You will definitely need to do the assigned readings to get through this course! Doing well will require dedicated daily work, as well as biweekly quizzes, discussion forum participation, regular response papers, a final formal essay and online presentation, and a final exam.

Because success in online courses requires especially active student engagement, it is crucial that you keep up with the reading and related assignments, and that you do so with careful attention. Note that while you can to some extent work at your own pace in this course, there are strict deadlines for various assignments (always 11:59 p.m. on the due date). You also will not be able to work all that far ahead—we will be working together in some ways, so course material will be rolled out during the semester on a biweekly basis. This schedule means that at any given time, you will have to wait to do the activities and assignments coming up in the following weeks.

**Learning Objectives:** The following objectives apply to all of the biweekly Modules. More generally, upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Better interpret literary works that express a wide range of cultural perspectives and values, and think more critically and write more analytically about them.
2. Demonstrate a solid apprehension of the conventions of coming-of-age narratives and the differences that can arise when such material is set in varied cultural contexts.
3. Demonstrate an increased understanding and appreciation for varied social, cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic ideas and methods.
4. Better apprehend academic scholarship and better utilize concepts and terminology drawn from it.
5. Produce effective written critique of multicultural literature and the issues it raises.
6. Use improved research skills to find useful secondary materials, and properly apply the principles of documentation.
7. Apply concepts and terminology from other fields of research to the study of literature, and vice versa.

**Technical requirements:** Students in this course should already have taken the [D2L Student Orientation](#). Students must have regular access to the Internet while using a laptop or desktop computer. Students must know how to download and upload email attachments, access YouTube, install software, and (if requesting an individual conference) use a webcam and microphone. You must have access to Adobe Reader (free download) or Preview (for Macs).

**A note about reading:** Since one skill you will be developing in this course is the art of textual

analysis, you must give the readings and viewings more than a quick skimming over. Instead of wolfing them down and rushing to complete them, set aside enough time on a regular basis to read and view carefully. Consider taking notes as you read, and then decide for yourself what each author is trying to describe and bring to light. In an online course, because we will not meet regularly in a classroom, you are also more responsible for pacing yourself as you read, establishing your own schedule so that you complete reading (and other) assignments on time.

Also, to ensure that your final grade reflects your reading effort, we will have quizzes on required readings and other course materials. Quizzes in this course will have a required completion date and they cannot be made up.

**Academic integrity:** Remember also that this course follows the Academic Integrity policy followed by all Eastern Illinois University students. Plagiarism and cheating are not tolerated, and the consequences are severe. For any concerns you might have in this area, see EIU's [Code of Conduct](#). If you have specific questions about whether any particular method you want to use might violate this code, be sure to ask Dr. Engles about it, either by email or during his online office hours.

**Cheating** in this course includes, but is not limited to:

- Sharing information during a quiz or the final exam
- Doing homework or taking a test or quiz in place of another student, OR asking someone else to take a test, quiz or do homework for you
- Submitting the same paper for multiple classes without permission
- Taking credit for work that is not your own
- Not citing a source where submitted material was found or used
- Lying to protect yourself or another student who has cheated

**Grades, assignments, and significant deadlines:** Unless otherwise indicated, I will grade assignments within three days of their due date. All assignments in this course will be graded on a 100-point scale (90-100 = A, 80-89 += B, etc.), and your final course grade will be determined in the following way. Note that “class participation” includes not only written Discussion forum posts, but also the reading of significant numbers of posts by other students, the reading of instructor comments on your graded Response Papers, and the complete viewing of each of the instructor’s online PowerPoint presentations (remember, I have background ways of seeing whether you are regularly doing each of these activities).

Class participation	15%
Average of Response Papers (usually 750-1000 words each)	25%
Average of Biweekly Quizzes	15%
Final Project (2000-2500 Word Paper and Online Presentation)	25%
Final Exam (2000-2500 words total in response to essay questions)	20%

Course materials will appear regularly as biweekly Modules. To a limited extent, students can work at their own pace. However, given the possibility at any point that software and internet connections may be down or working slowly, and because (as explained more fully below), late

assignments are not accepted in this course, I *strongly* recommend against waiting until just before deadlines to complete assignments.

**General grading rubric:** Aside from the more specific grading rubric for formal essays that you will receive near the end of the semester regarding your Final Essay, your assignments in this course will be graded in the following terms:

**A grade of A** indicates work that is truly outstanding in every way. In addition to completely and promptly following the guidelines for the assignment, work that receives an A grade provides a depth of analysis that adds substantive insight to the conversation surrounding the literary text and/or related issues. This level of work engages deeply with the themes, issues and ideas involved in a particular text and often links those themes, issues and ideas to the larger ones reflected in our overall course. In this way, such work helps all who read it understand the literary text and/or related issues better and more deeply. A-level work is rare, and it should be noted that merely writing MORE than what was assigned does not necessarily merit a grade of A.

**A grade of B** indicates that, in addition to completing the assignment on time and completely, you have provided a depth of insight and analysis that shows that you have thought deeply about the assignment and its implications, that you have engaged actively with the reading or viewing, have thought carefully about it, and that this thought is reflected in clear, cogent and insightful writing. Such work engages with deeper meanings of the text, perhaps by connecting it to others and with some overall themes of our course. In other words, B-level work does more than simply complete the assignment; it engages deeply with the assignment. Again, it should be noted that merely writing MORE than what was assigned does not necessarily merit a grade of B.

**A grade of C** indicates that you have completed the assignment as required in an adequate, satisfactory and punctual manner. All necessary components of the assignment are present and completed according to what was required. The writing is clear and grammatically correct. In other words, merely doing the assignment adequately and on time will earn you a grade of C.

**A grade of D** indicates that the work does not meet the requirements of the assignment in some major respect(s). Although parts of the assignment may be satisfactory, an assignment that merits a D is incomplete or does not otherwise adequately address the requirements of the assignment. In other words, work might be given a D if it does not engage adequately with the question or the literary text in question. Note that a grade of D may be given to work that partially completes the assignment, but is incomplete.

**A grade of F** indicates that the assignment is either extremely incomplete or that it does nothing to engage with the question asked or with the literary text being discussed.

**Regarding formal written Assignments:** The Response Papers and the essay portion of the Final Project must be submitted in Word format, according to MLA guidelines when applicable. One exception is that the Response Papers DO NOT require a Works Cited page. If you are unfamiliar with MLA guidelines, you should consult [Purdue's Online Writing Lab](#).

**Regarding assignment due dates and missed assignments:** Deadlines for assignments and discussions will be clearly labeled in each biweekly Module. Note that with the exception of the first Module, labeled Introduction, the other Modules will appear biweekly, and they will be labeled numerically as they appear (Module One, Module Two, and so on). Each two-week Module will appear by 3 p.m. on the previous Friday afternoon.

Unless otherwise noted, the deadline for each assignment will be 11:59 p.m. of the listed day. With the exception of deadlines missed due to documented emergencies, **no late assignments will be accepted**. Assignments may only be turned in late if the student provides documentation of an emergency. Proper documentation must be an official, original scanned document containing the student's name; it must also cover the date(s) in question and be signed by a professional (e.g., a doctor). An email that merely describes why you want to turn in your assignment late is not proper documentation.

**Academic Support:** Students who need tutoring or academic support should contact the Student Success Center at 217-581-6696 for help with course assignments, tutoring, and other academic issues. The English Department's Writing Center can also help students improve their performance in this course. For more information visit their website. To schedule an appointment, call 217-581-5929, or if you're on campus, stop by Coleman Hall, Room 3110 during their open hours.

**Information for Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Student Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

**Technical Support:** As noted above, students in this course should already have taken the D2L Student Orientation. In order to succeed in this online course, students should have technological skills that include (but are not limited to): navigating an online course management system (in this case, Desire2Learn), composing emails, accessing online files and web links, submitting properly formatted assignments via the D2L Dropbox system, and producing a PowerPoint presentation with recorded audio (instructions regarding the latter will be provided later in the semester).

For technical support with D2L, you can contact the ITS Help Desk at 217-581-4357 or [itshelp@eiu.edu](mailto:itshelp@eiu.edu) or CATS Training Services for Students at 217-581-8358.

**Help with course content and procedures:** As explained in the Introduction Module, our course has a "Need Help?" Discussion Forum where students can ask questions about the course that I (Dr. Engles) can likely answer. Asking a question there about course content and procedures is a good idea, because others (who may well have the same question) will be able to see my answers. If you have questions that you want to ask me individually, email is of course okay, either in D2L or to [tdengles@eiu.edu](mailto:tdengles@eiu.edu). Unless otherwise indicated, I will respond to the Discussion Forum questions and any student email within twenty-four hours (and usually much sooner).