ENG 3705-001: American Multicultural Literatures: Complicating Social Justice

Jeannie Ludlow
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2012

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2012/101

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2012 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2012 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.
AMERICAN MULTICULTURAL LITERATURES: COMPLICATING SOCIAL JUSTICE
ENG 3705 sect. 001, CRN 93617

Dr. Jeannie Ludlow
Fall, 2012
1:00-1:50 p.m. MWF
in Coleman 3150
Office: 3139 Coleman Hall
E-mail: jzldlow@eiu.edu, via WebCT, please!
Mailbox: 3351 Coleman Hall
Office Hours: MW 10-10:50 a.m.
M 2-5 p.m., and by appointment.
Phone: English Dept. faculty no longer have phones in our offices. The best way to reach me is via email (expect about 24 hours answer-time). If you really need to reach me immediately, please call either the English Dept. main office (581-2428) or the Women’s Resource Center (581-5947) and leave a message for me.

Course Description for ENG 3705 from Undergraduate Catalog: “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.” In this section of ENG 3705, we will examine how these authors address human rights and social justice.

ENG 3705 is a Writing Intensive course. From the EIU website: “In such courses several writing assignments and writing activities are required. These assignments and activities, which are to be spread over the course of the semester, serve the dual purpose of strengthening writing skills and deepening understanding of course content. At least one writing assignment is to be revised by the student after it has been read and commented on by the instructor. In writing-intensive courses the quality of students’ writing should constitute no less than 35% of the final course grade.” (www.eiu.edu/~writecurr/purpose.php)

Course Format: This is a writing-intensive, discussion- and participation-oriented course; assignments function as preparatory work for and the bases of the learning process, not as ends in themselves. Students have primary responsibility for the focus and tone of class discussions. Written work may be revised at the discretion of the professor and within a reasonable time frame.

Course Expectations: It is my educational philosophy that each of us is responsible for her/his own education; the role of the professor is to guide and facilitate learning, not to tell students what (or how) to think. Therefore, it is expected that students will come to class having done all assignments, fully prepared to engage in discussions, activities, etc., that revolve around the assigned materials. All opinions and ideas are encouraged in this class; it is never expected that students will agree with everything they read, see or hear. Students will not be evaluated on their opinions but on their ability to analyze and evaluate texts and concepts and express their own opinions clearly and thoughtfully. Critical thinking and articulation of disagreements are encouraged.

Student Learning Objectives—students will:
a. learn to identify and interpret major works from the canon of American multicultural literature.
b. improve your understanding of diverse philosophic and aesthetic points of view.
c. be able to recognize how different multicultural literary texts portray such cultural issues as race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality.
d. produce written and oral texts of your own, demonstrating accomplishment of objectives a to c.

Special circumstances: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact EIU’s Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible. If you require assistance with any other circumstance that arises, please do contact me as soon as you can, so we can work out a good plan of action together.

Required texts:
You are required to do all assigned reading for this course. Seven required texts for this course are available from Textbook Rental. Some required readings will also be available only on-line via WebCT or on the internet.

**TRS TEXTS**
Gillian and Gillian, eds. *Unsettling America: An Anthology of Contemporary Multicultural Poetry.*
Hahn. *The Narrow Road to the Interior.*
Islas. *The Rain God.*
Johnson. *Incognegro.*
Silko. *Almanac of the Dead.*
Valdez. *Early Works.*

Other Requirements:
You will also need regular access to a computer and e-mail and the ability to use WebCT. If you need help with this, let me know right away.

Literary Studies Podcast: Instructions for subscribing to the Close Reading Cooperative appear on the English Department’s website:
http://www.eiu.edu/~english/
IN ORDER TO PASS THIS CLASS, YOU MUST COMPLETE FOR GRAADING:
ALL THREE EXAMS;
IN-CLASS PRESENTATION WITH WRITTEN REPORT;
PROPOSAL, FIRST DRAFT, AND REVISED DRAFT OF THE FINAL RESEARCH PAPER.
EXCESSIVE ABSENCE WILL RESULT IN AUTOMATIC FAILURE OF THIS COURSE.

GRADES will be earned through the following components, each of which will be assigned a letter grade:
25% Participation (includes attendance, in-class activities, discussion based on successful completion of all reading, and in-class writing)
25% Three exams (#1 = 5%; #2 = 10%; #3 = 10%)
15% In-class oral presentation and presentation written report
35% Final research paper (proposal = 5%; first draft = 10%; revised draft = 20%)

NOTE: There will be no makeup for in-class writing assignments. In-class writing will usually be the first activity in every class session; if you are late to class, you may miss it. Makeups for other assignments may be permitted in cases of documented hardship or emergency. If you experience hardship or emergency, please let me know as soon as is reasonable.

LATE POLICY: Late work is strongly discouraged. However, late is better than not at all. Work will depreciate in value one letter grade for each school day it is late, beginning at 1:00 p.m. on the day it is due, unless we negotiate an agreement in advance. All work is due at the time noted in the schedule.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: University students are adults and should make your own choices about attending class; do remember that any choice one makes comes with consequences. In this class, the consequence for absence may be a lower grade or failure of the course. I take attendance using a student sign-in sheet. If you are late, it is your responsibility to remember to sign the sign-in sheet at the end of class that day; if you forget, you are absent. In-class assignments are accepted for grading only on the day they are done and only if you are in attendance (no exceptions). In addition, please keep in mind that you will be responsible for everything that is said, viewed, assigned, etc., during any class sessions that you miss. If you miss a class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed (from a peer or during my office hours) and for making sure that you get copies of handouts, worksheets, etc. Please do not e-mail me and ask, “did I miss anything?” and please do not interrupt the whole class to ask what you missed.

E-mail guidelines: (NOTE: this is good advice for e-mailing all your instructors) When you communicate with your instructors, whether by e-mail, by phone, or in person, you are engaging in a professional exchange. Please be sure to reflect this professionalism in your communication. All e-mails must have: an appropriate salutation (“Dear Jeannie,” “Hello, Dr. Ludlow,” etc.); the course info in the subject line (e.g. ENG3705); and a recognizable signature. Your e-mails should be written with complete words and in complete sentences (“May I schedule an appointment with you?” not “Can I C U?”). Also, please note that I only check my e-mail two or three times each school day. It often takes me one full school day (24 hours, M – F) to answer any e-mail message—I typically do not check my campus e-mail on weekends. ALL COURSE-RELATED E-MAILS SHOULD BE SENT VIA WEBCT.

CLASSROOM BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES—the following constitutes an agreement between the students and professor for this course.

Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the right to work in a harassment-free, hostility-free environment; harassment of others and explicit or deliberate hostility are not tolerated.

Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the right to be treated with respect and dignity at all times, even in the midst of heated disagreement.

Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the responsibility to behave as a competent adult and to be open and polite to one another.

Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and academic guests) has the responsibility to come to every class fully prepared to listen, to participate, to learn and to teach.

Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the responsibility to work together to create, in this class, an environment in which active learning, including responsible and respectful questioning, is encouraged.

The professor has the responsibility to treat all students fairly and to evaluate students’ work accurately, in terms of the skills that any student in this course is expected to gain.

The professor has the responsibility to make assignment requirements and evaluation criteria clear.

Students have the right to feel confident that their work is being evaluated on its own merits, not on the basis of the students’ personal opinions.
Students have the responsibility to view their professor as a partner in their education, not as bent on causing students anxiety and frustration. Students have the responsibility to understand that the professor is not primarily responsible for making students understand; it is students’ job to study, ask questions, and learn. Students have the responsibility to keep an open mind and to try to comprehend what the professor and the texts are trying to get across to them. Students have the responsibility to read the assignments carefully, noting important ideas and rephrasing information in their own words. Students have the responsibility to work through examples in the assignments and in class discussions or lectures and to ask questions if they do not understand concepts or examples. Students have the responsibility to do every bit of assigned homework with proper attention and thought. Students have the responsibility to ask for help when they need it; help is available from the professor, from other students, from the Writing Center, the Student Success Center, and the Reading Center, and from other resources on campus. Students have the responsibility to accept that their work will be evaluated in terms of the skills any student in this course is expected to gain. Students have the responsibility to try to integrate the information from this course into other courses and into other areas of their lives.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: In this course, we will comply with EIU’s academic integrity policy (see your catalog). I have no tolerance for plagiarism or cheating. Please note that “plagiarism or cheating” includes (but is not limited to):
1. quoting from a source without fully and correctly citing that source and/or without using quotation marks
2. paraphrasing from a source without fully and correctly citing that source
3. turning in a paper with an incorrect or incomplete works cited list
4. falsifying data
5. turning in someone else’s work as your own—this includes (but is not limited to)
   a. copying another’s work from a quiz or assignment
   b. turning in work that someone else wrote
   c. using on-line or hard copy paper mills
6. turning in your own work that was written for another course, without prior permission from both professors.

Violations of EIU’s academic integrity policy will result in an automatic failing grade in this course and notification of the Office of Student Services. For more information, see www.eiu.edu/~judicial.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS
All in-class writing for grade (quizzes, exams, daily writings) will be hand-written in ink. All out-of-class writing will be typed, double-spaced, in a standard font, with your name and page numbers on every page and submitted to me via WebCT. Please do not include cover pages and do not submit paper copies to me, if you can avoid it—I am a big fan of conserving natural resources. When you submit papers via WebCT, please be sure that all parts of the paper are in one document; never submit the Works Cited as a separate document. I will do my best to acknowledge receipt of your submission very quickly, so you know that your emailing was successful. If I forget, please ask!

PARTICIPATION
Participation consists of regular attendance and productive participation in class discussions and in-class activities. The items in bold are the most important.

A = almost perfect attendance and almost never late; active and substantive participation in class discussions, explicitly about the materials assigned for that day or unit, involving obvious critical thought and making connections to other materials or examples; avoidance of “side” conversations in class; leadership role in group activities and discussion; professional interactions with others in class, even when disagreeing strongly, and in all communications with professor; consistent attentiveness to cell phones, laptops, ipads, and other electronic devices during class

B = almost perfect attendance and almost never late; consistent participation in class discussions and activities, even when confused or struggling with ideas; professional behavior in class (including not carrying on “side” conversations and not being rude) and in all communication with professor; attentiveness to cell phones, laptops, ipads, and other electronic devices during class

C = consistent attendance with full preparation of course materials but little to no verbal participation in discussions unless required; professional behavior in class and in all communications with professor; consistent “follower” role in group activities; OR consistent enthusiastic participation in
discussions and activities, with no explicit evidence of full preparation of course materials; professional behavior in class and in all communications with professor; inattention to cell phones/electronic devices during class

D = frequent lateness or absence; unprofessional, rude, or inappropriate behavior in class or on discussion boards (including, but not limited to, doing homework for other classes, reading newspapers, occasionally attending to cell phones, “side” conversations, etc.)

F = absence; disruptive or hostile behavior in class or on discussion boards; frequent attention to cell phones, laptops, ipads, and other electronic devices during class.

THREE IN-CLASS EXAMS
Exams are designed to reward students who keep up with the readings all term and who think critically about the issues raised in class. Exams will cover all assigned materials, all in-class presentations, activities and texts (including class discussions, and group activities). Each exam combines short-answer questions with a take-home essay.

IN-CLASS ORAL PRESENTATION
Each student will be randomly assigned to a presentation team, and teams will be randomly assigned to a presentation topic. The purpose of the in-class presentation is to provide a breadth of background information about the cultural/ethnic group whose literature we are reading. Each team will be given a list of vocabulary terms that they must present correctly to the class. Each team member must also submit to me (via WebCT) one discussion question for the assigned texts, at least 24 hours before the presentation (no duplication!—talk with one another about your discussion questions in advance). Creativity and enthusiasm (along with accuracy, of course) in presentations will be substantially rewarded. Each team must meet with me at least one week before presenting.

WRITTEN REPORT FOR ORAL PRESENTATION
No more than one full week after your oral presentation, you will turn in (either paper or via WebCT) a written report of no more than 1500 words (approx. 5 pp., typed, double-spaced) in which you: report what you learned doing the research for your oral presentation and connect what your team presented to the assigned text in that unit; write a short (300-word) answer to one of the discussion questions submitted; and write a complete evaluation of yourself and your team members, in which you assign letter grades to each individual (including yourself) and write a short explanation for why that person earned that grade.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER
For this assignment, you will choose one literary text from class and one literary text that we did not read for class and write a research paper in which you apply a critical lens to the two texts together and/or in comparison with one another. (Alternate topic: you may choose any critical or thematic topic related to one of our assigned readings about which to write, as long as your paper examines at least one literary text that we did not read for class in addition to the course text.) Your research for this paper should include at least four secondary sources (criticism, interviews, reviews, contextual information, etc.); one of these must be a source assigned in class, and the other three may not be from our course readings. This assignment has three parts, all of which must be completed in order for you to pass the course.

1. the proposal (5% of final grade), due Fri., Oct. 19 (via WebCT), will give me a tentative title, a short (150 words or less) description of your project, and bibliographic record and short description of at least two sources that you might use for your paper (these should be legitimate literary sources)—I may require a conference to go over this proposal;

2. the first draft (10% of final grade), due Fri., Nov. 9 (via WebCT), is neither a rough draft nor an incomplete one. Your paper should be as finished as possible at this point, including full and correct citation of all sources, correct standard American grammar and writing conventions, and arguable thesis that is argued throughout the paper (if you need help with any of this, go to the Writing Center or meet with me early in the process)—I will mark this draft and conference with you about it by Nov. 15, in order to give you time for full revisions;

3. the revised draft (20% of final grade), due Wed., Dec. 12 by 4 p.m. (via WebCT), will reflect your full attention to my feedback to your first draft.

Students in this course are strongly encouraged to submit their research papers for inclusion in the English Department’s spring student research conference and/or in essay contests.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION STUDENTS: Students seeking Teacher Certification in English Language Arts should provide me with a copy of the yellow “Application for English Department Approval to Student Teach” before the end of the semester. These forms are available from a rack outside the office of Dr. Donna Binns (CH 3851).
**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**
*always subject to revision!*

*UA = Unsettling America by Gillan and Gillan*

## UNIT 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</th>
<th>IN CLASS</th>
<th>KEY CONCEPTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| M 8/20 | no reading due  
read in class: Erdrich, "Dear John Wayne" (UA 54-5); Weaver, "Improvisation for Piano" (UA 229-30); Shapiro, "Tattoo" (UA 34-5); Baca, "So Mexicans Are Taking Jobs from Americans" (UA 115-6); Divakaruni, "The Brides Come to Yuba City" (UA 23-4) | introduction to course, syllabus, materials, presentation teams  
in-class activity: reading diversity | diversity, cultural specificity, American, identity, Other |
| W 8/22 | read: Grobman, "The Value and Valuable Work of Multiethnic Literature" (WebCT) | discussion: why do we study literature? and why, in 2012, are we studying multiethnic literature in a separate course? | multiethnic literature, canon, literary value, aesthetics, transformation, epistolary form |
| F 8/24 | read: Edelstein, "Multiculturalisms Past, Present, and Future" (WebCT)  
**IMPORTANT:** there is a lot of information in this essay that will shape and form our discussions this semester; please bring to class in writing a strong outline of the essay, a list of questions you would like to ask about/of the essay, and a vocabulary list drawn from your reading of the essay. Please derive your vocab definitions from the essay itself (to the best of your ability); do not use a dictionary for this assignment!  | discussion: what is the role of multiethnic literature in promoting multiculturalism? is multiculturalism something we hope to promote? how does Edelstein expand and/or contradict Grobman? | multiculturalism, normative, demographics, politics, ethics, cultural, pluralistic, universality, race, racial formation, positionality, standpoint theory, perspectivism, intersectionality, relationality, "contact zone," privilege, identity politics |
| W 8/29 | read: Diagne, "Individual, Community, and Human Rights" and Wingo, "The Odyssey of Human Rights" (WebCT) | discussion: what is at stake in this debate? what are the main ideas and points? | historical specificity, social construction, essentialism |
| F 8/31 | read: Mullins, "Seeking Asylum: Literary Reflections on Sexuality, Ethnicity, and Human Rights" (WebCT) | discussion: what contribution(s) might literature make to the discussion of Human Rights? | humanities, sexuality |
| M 9/3 | no classes—Labor Day | | |
| W 9/5 | read: Erdrich, "Indian Boarding School: The Runaways" (UA 26-7); Okita, "In Response to Executive Order 9066" (UA 44); Weaver, "Black and White Galaxy" (UA 68-70); Smith, "What It's Like to Be a Black Girl" (UA 102-3); Djanikian, "In the Elementary School Choir" (UA 215-6); Blaeser, "Certificate of Live Birth" (UA 337-8) | discussion: Human Rights in poetry; application of key concepts |