

English 348: Ethnic Literature of the U.S.

(Gen Ed, Multicultural; Eng 280 highly recommended as prereq)

Session: Fall 2016

Instructor: Dr. Marjorie Allison

Mailbox: 122 Simpkins Hall

Office Ph.: no phone; main office: 298: 1103

Office: 115/16 Simpkins Hall

Office Hours: M, W 10-11:30,

F 10:30-11:30, and by appt.

Email: MC-Allison@wiu.edu

Required Texts:

Adichie, Chimamanda. *Americanah*

Castillo, Ana. *So Far From God*

Okada, John. *No-No Boy*

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*

Welch, James. *Winter in the Blood*

Wilson, August. *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*

Yamanaka, Lois-Ann. *Blu's Hanging*

MN Humanities Commission. *Braided Lives*

Students may also need to access articles placed in a course folder at WesternOnline.

Depending on how the class runs, we will view two films together in class.

\*\*\*Students should also own a copy of the MLA Handbook or another Handbook.

**\*Bring Relevant Textbook or Printout to Every Class\***

Course Description:

This course will explore the connections between literature, culture, and ethnic identity in the U.S. We will read authors from a variety of traditions including African-Americans, Native Americans, Latino, and Asian-Americans. Themes we will explore and address include the construction of the "self" and the way ethnic communities shape American identity, the role of immigrants in American literature, culture, history, and the metaphors we use to explain our diversity such as "melting pot," "salad bowl," "tapestry," multicultural, and majority-minority. The power and popularity of storytelling to create and renew our cultural identities makes this course important to understanding American society.

As always, this course will also have the goal of increasing each student's critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. Further, we will explore the aesthetic choices the authors have made – why might they choose to write as they do?

Requirements, Assignments, and Grading:

Participation: In this course students are expected to participate fully in class discussion. This is not a lecture course and each student must come to class each day ready and willing to raise questions and make comments about the text at hand. Students will be asked to bring in outside materials at times. The success and quality of the course is in the hands of the students—only full participation and commitment will make the course "work" to its fullest potential. Each student will be asked to help lead class discussion at least once this semester. (Class Participation is worth about 15% of the final grade, or 150 points).

Participation will be evaluated using the following general criteria:

- A:** Student contributes *daily* and *significantly* and always actively focuses on class discussion.
- B:** Student contributes *regularly* and always actively focuses on class discussion.
- C:** Student contributes *sporadically* and/or always actively focuses on class discussion.
- D:** Student contributes *rarely* and/or frequently does not stay actively focused on the discussion.
- F:** Student does not contribute and does not stay actively focused on the discussion.

I do not expect nor require students to have the “right” answer or to provide groundbreaking analysis but merely to engage in the process of discussing and analyzing the literature. Remember that quality is better than quantity but quantity is better than no quantity.

In order to participate at the level required, you will need to read the assignments carefully and critically. Here are some helpful guidelines for reading critically:

- Read the work of literature or article in advance (not right before class),
- Reread the work or sections of the work that are tricky or dense,
- Take reading notes – both summative and critical,
- Identify and question subtextual ideas and concepts,

**Reading Response/Journal:** Most weeks you will turn in a page (or more if you so choose) typed response to one or more of the readings for that week. In your response you can pose questions; explore how various texts are interrelated; consider the role of culture in the text; record your response to characters, plot, setting; consider the text’s place in the course or in literature in general; or other topics that seem of interest. I am not interested in a restatement of class discussion – I was there; I don’t need to hear it repeated. However, at times you may want to consider comments that others made in class to highlight **YOUR OWN VIEWS**. I will not accept late responses. Better grades will go to those students who demonstrate an honest attempt to engage with the texts on a meaningful level. (Responses collectively will be worth about 15% of the final grade, or 150 points).

**Formal Essays:** You will write two formal essays. Each essay will be about five pages long. In the essay you will respond to one or two of the texts and explore a question of interest to you. (The first essay will be worth about 15% of the final grade, or 150 points. The second essay will be worth about 20% of the final grade, or 200 points).

**Exams:** You will take two exams which will be comprised of short answer and essay questions. (The midterm will be worth about 15% of the final grade, or 150 points. The final exam will be worth about 20% of the final grade, or 200 points).

### **Grading Scale:**

<b>A</b>	93-100%	<b>B+</b>	87-89 %	<b>C+</b>	77-79%	<b>D+</b>	67-69%	<b>F</b>	0%-59%
<b>A-</b>	90-92%	<b>B</b>	83-86%	<b>C</b>	73-76%	<b>D</b>	63-66%		
		<b>B-</b>	80-82%	<b>C-</b>	70-72%	<b>D-</b>	60-62%		

### **General Information:**

**Cell Phones:** Turn them off during class. Refrain from texting during class.

**Participation, Attendance and Punctuality:** Because this course is based upon class discussion, attendance and participation are crucial to the success of the course and the success of individual students in the course. In order to participate you must not only attend class but also arrive on time. If you are absent, it is up to you to find out from classmates what material you have missed and to find out what you need to do for the next class session. Any student who falls into a pattern of absenteeism will find his or her final grade adversely effected; persistent lateness will have a similar effect. Each student is allowed three absences for the semester--no questions asked. For each absence beyond three, I will deduct one half grade from your final grade for Class Participation. A pattern of chronic absences will result in the final, overall grade being lowered. Allowances to the overall number may be made in extreme circumstances (e.g. serious, prolonged illness). These circumstances will need to be documented, and the student must contact me within 4 class meetings of the first absence.

**Conduct:** I expect my classes operate with great respect for a large diversity of ideas and viewpoints. This atmosphere is essential in any academic setting. I expect all students to respect and listen to other viewpoints—I do not expect all students to agree on issues. So, mature, respectful, and thoughtful dialogue is encouraged. Insensitive comments and conduct will not be tolerated, whether aimed at me or at a class member. Please see the Code of Student Conduct: <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>

**Scholastic Dishonesty:** Scholastic dishonesty of any kind on any assignment undermines the quality of education at WIU and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Scholastic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submissions, and plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty of any kind will result in an F in the course and will be reported to CAGAS. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes scholastic dishonesty. I will also be happy to answer any questions you may have. You should also consult the University policy at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, [disability@wiu.edu](mailto:disability@wiu.edu) or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

**Title IX:** University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, have been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: [http://www.wiu.edu/equal\\_opportunity\\_and\\_access/request\\_form/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php). If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/opus/policies/titleIX.php>.

**University Writing Center:** The UWC is available to assist you with general and specific questions on any of the writing assignments for this course. Consultants can add another voice to your writing at any stage in the writing process from brainstorming to polishing the final product. Please call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to take a copy of your

assignment to your session. The main center is located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Malpass Library. Satellite centers can be found in Simpkins, Bayliss, and Tanner. A visit to the UWC should be a supplement to (rather than a replacement for) talking about your paper with me.

**Email:** Email correspondence is a quick and easy way to communicate during this semester. I will use it frequently to communicate with the class, and I encourage you to use it to contact me to set up an appointment, ask questions, make comments, etc. I do consider email to be formal communication so I expect emails to be properly addressed, to maintain a professional tone, and to be grammatically correct. If your question or request is too large to be handily resolved over email, I will ask you to set an appointment to discuss it in an individual conference.

**Office Hours:** Students are encouraged to visit during office hours. These are available to use without setting an appointment. Additionally, if I am in my office, feel free to drop in to see if I am available to meet. If you are not able to meet during office hours, please email me, and we can set an appointment.

**Final Notes:** Students are urged to keep an extra copy of their papers and of any other important work. If you hand something in late or in to my e-mail account, be sure that you confirm with me that I received the material.

All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

### Reading Schedule

(This schedule and list is subject to change according to the needs of the class. I will be adding in scholarly essays as we move along. All changes will be announced in class, and it is up to you to keep informed about any changes.)

8/22 Introductions

8/24 African-American: *Braided Lives*, Moore-Foster 141+, Lorde's "Zami...", Walker's "Everyday use"

8/26 Begin *Americanah* through page 88

8/29 " p 175, Giovanni "Ego Tripping"

8/31 " p 254, Giovanni "Nikki Rosa"

9/2 " p 341, Hughes "Theme for English B"

9/5 No Class

9/7 " p 431, Rushin's "The Bridge Poem"

9/9 " p 505, Walker's "For My People"

9/12 Finish *Americanah*

9/14 Asian-American: Mura 221+, Kingston's "No Name Woman," Yamamoto's "Seventeen Syllables"

9/16 Begin *No-No Boy*

9/19 " and Miriktani's "Breaking Silence"

9/21 "

9/23 " and Okita's "In Response..."

9/26 Mukherjee's "Orbiting"

9/28 **Rough Draft**

9/30 TBA

10/3 Begin *Blu's Hanging* **Paper One**

10/5 "

10/7 "

10/10 "

10/12 **Midterm Exam**

10/14 Fall Break: No Class

10/17 film

10/19 film

10/21 Latina/o-American: Garcigodoy 81+, Anazaldua's "How to Tame..." and Rios' "The Iguna Killer"

10/24 Begin *So Far From God*

10/26 ", Soto's "Oranges"

10/28 "

10/31 ", Hernandez's "Apa"

11/2 Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*

11/4 "

11/7 Native American: Glancy 13+, Milliken's "Run" and Silko's "The Man..." **, Paper Two**

11/9 Begin *Winter in the Blood*

11/11 "

11/14 ", and Tohe's "Cat or Stomp"

11/16 ", and Kenny's "They Tell Me..."

11/18 TBA

11/21-11/25 Break

11/28 Begin *Ceremony*

11/30 ", Burns' "Sure You Can Ask..."

12/2 ",

12/5 ", Tallmountain's "Good Grease"

12/7 film

12/9 film

Final Exam: Monday, December 12th at 3 pm