



ENGL 1301W-001 | 4 CREDITS | FALL 2020
INTRODUCTION TO MULTICULTURAL
LITERATURES OF THE UNITED STATES
T/H 1:00-2:15 Online, Asynchronous
Instructor: Dr. John Pistelli
Website: canvas.umn.edu
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Office Hours: Online by appointment

Teaching Assistants

Description and Goals

This course will provide a historical survey of twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction and poetry written mainly by American authors who do not belong to the dominant or majority races, ethnicities, religions, and/or cultures of the United States. We will investigate questions such as the following: What is the relationship between culture (defined broadly as the set of practices and attitudes that characterize a group of people) and creative writing? How do racial oppression, political activism, religious conflict, historical trauma, and other social facts shape culture—and vice versa? What are the obligations of writers toward the marginalized or oppressed cultures to which they may belong? What are the obligations toward those writers of readers who do not share their culture? Is “culture” a synonym for race and ethnicity or can it encompass other identities—gender, sexuality, class, religion? What is multiculturalism and what is its effect on concepts like literature or the nation? Finally, how has literature itself changed across the many artistic and political movements spanning the period from early twentieth-century modernism to contemporary globalization? As this course is also an introduction to literature more generally, we will pay careful attention to literary form and history; as this is a writing-intensive course, we will focus on responding to imaginative writing in written argument.

Required Books

- Rita Dove, ed., *The Penguin Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (Penguin)
- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* (Penguin)
- Richard E. Kim, *The Martyred* (Penguin)
- Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer* (Vintage)
- Louise Erdrich, *Antelope Woman* (Vintage)
- Valeria Luiselli, *Faces in the Crowd* (Coffee House)

Delivery Method

The lecture will be delivered in a completely online, completely asynchronous format, to accommodate the different schedules and time zones of our large class. I will release a 60-75-minute lecture to Canvas in video format every Tuesday and Thursday around 1:00PM on the readings or topics described below in the course schedule. You can listen to these at your convenience and as you prefer. Your discussion section may use a variety of delivery methods as specified in the section syllabus given to you by your T.A. While the discussion sections may meet synchronously at the scheduled meeting times, there will be make-up written activities for those students who are not able to “attend.”

Instructional Time

For the lecture, you will be responsible for reading the course materials assigned each week and for listening to two 60-75-minute lectures. You should, therefore, plan to spend about four to five hours a week on Section 001: about two hours to listen to lectures and about two hours to read the required materials. (In some weeks, however, you may only need an hour for the readings, since we’ll be considering mostly short poems, and in other weeks, you may need more time to read longer works of fiction; two hours for reading per week, then, is more of an average). The discussion sections will require a further 50 minutes per week of participation, either in the form of synchronous meetings or participation in discussion forums or writing activities on Canvas.

Technology

This course will require that you use a device that can access Canvas. Per the College of Liberal Arts, “It is recommended for students to use a desktop or laptop computer less than six years old with at least 1GB of RAM, and to use the most recent version of Chrome or Firefox with JavaScript enabled. Internet connections should be at least 512kbps.” If you require support for technology issues, please see this website: <https://it.umn.edu/working-learning-campus>

Assessment

All of your course work will be submitted through Canvas and you will receive feedback through Canvas. As stated above, the discussion sections may involve synchronous meetings using Zoom, but there will be substitute activities if you cannot make this work.

Assignments

Grade breakdown.

Participation	30%
Exams	30%
Essays	40%

Participation. In this class, your participation will be measured by your efforts in your discussion section. You will be asked by your T.A. to respond in short writing assignments, discussion forums, or (optional) synchronous meetings to the course materials, and points will be awarded or subtracted based on your work. Please see your section syllabus for further details.

Exams. A midterm and final exam, each worth 15 points, will be given on the Canvas site for the course lecture, Section 001. These exams will treat all course materials from the beginning to the half and from the half to the end of the course. Both exams will ask you to write brief responses to interpretive or factual questions about the texts or brief explanations of passages from the texts, as covered in class. They are not formal writing assignments; they will be graded based on the quality of your responses rather than the quality of your writing. They will also not be proctored or timed in any way through the use of intrusive surveillance technology; I will simply post the questions to Canvas and ask you to submit responses, also through Canvas, within five days. I will provide more detail as the date of the midterm approaches.

Essays. You will write two essays for the course, each worth 20% of your grade. The first will be a 1250-word argumentative essay that will require you to address a text from the first third of the course and devise a thesis about its significance. The second essay will be a 1250-word argumentative essay on a text or texts of your choice from the last two-thirds of the course. Furthermore, as the course focuses on both poetry and fiction, one of the essays must be about a poem or poet and another must be about a novel; whether you want to write about poetry or fiction for the first or second essay is up to you. For the first essay, you will submit a mandatory draft as well as a graded final submission. For the final essay, you will submit a mandatory proposal before turning in the graded final draft. I will provide more detail as the due dates approach. Late submissions will be lowered by a letter grade for every day not submitted. You will submit your essays to your T.A. on the Canvas site for your discussion section. The full written instructions for the essays can be found beginning on page 12 of this document.

Grades

Grading Policy.

- A (90-100): Outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
- B (80-90): Significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
- C (70-80): Meets the course requirements in every respect
- D (60-70): Worthy of credit, even though it fails to meet course requirements fully
- F (0-60): Work was not completed

Note that + and - grades will be assigned within these ranges (e.g., 87% is a B+, 83% is a B, 80% is a B-)

Incompletes. A grade of incomplete (I) is given only in a genuine and documented emergency, and only for work which is due during the last 2 weeks of the course. You must make arrangements for an incomplete before the last day of class.

Disability Accommodations

The University of Minnesota views disability as an important aspect of diversity, and is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you have, or you think you have, a disability in any area such as mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical, please contact the DRC office on your campus (612-626-1333) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with instructors to minimize classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, students should contact the DRC as noted above.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have a disability accommodation letter dated for this semester or this year, please contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have questions or concerns about your accommodations please contact your access consultant/disability specialist.

Additional information is available on the DRC website: diversity.umn.edu/disability or email drc@umn.edu with questions.

Student Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in

disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as: plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an F or N for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Writing Support

Student Writing Support (SWS) offers free writing instruction for all University of Minnesota students—graduate and undergraduate—at all stages of the writing process. In face-to-face and online collaborative consultations, SWS consultants from across the disciplines help students develop productive writing habits and revision strategies. Consulting is available by appointment online and in Nicholson Hall, and on a walk-in basis in Appleby Hall. For more information, call 612-625-1893 or go to writing.umn.edu/sws. In addition, SWS offers a number of web-based resources on topics such as avoiding plagiarism, documenting sources, and planning and completing a writing project.

Students for Whom English is a Second Language (Department Policy)

University policy requires that undergraduate students in the same class be held to the same standards of academic performance and accomplishment. Students for whom English is a second language, however, may have difficulty with the readings, lectures, discussions, and writing assignments in a course. The University offers many resources to assist non-native speakers of English, including courses and consultations through the Minnesota English Language Program, the Center for Writing, the Department of Writing Studies, and International Student and Scholar Services.

Student Conduct Code

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community. As a student at the University you are expected to adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom

conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning." Note also, for the sake of online instruction, "The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities." To review the University's Student Conduct Code, please see:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf

Sexual Misconduct

I want to let you know that, in my role as a University employee, I am required to share information that I learn about possible sexual misconduct with the campus Title IX office that addresses these concerns. This allows a Title IX staff member to reach out to those who have experienced sexual misconduct to provide information about the personal support resources and options for investigation that they can choose to access. You are welcome to talk with me about concerns related to sexual misconduct. You can also or alternately choose to talk with a confidential resource; the University offers victim-advocacy support professionals, health services professionals and counselors that will not share information that they learn about sexual misconduct. (This applies to teaching assistants as well.)

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.

Offensive Material (Department Policy)

In this course, students will be required to read words or view images that they may consider offensive. The ideas expressed in any given text do not necessarily reflect the views of the instructor, the English Department, or the University of Minnesota. Course materials have been selected for their literary, cultural, and/or historical value, in order to achieve specific learning objectives and course goals. These materials are meant to be examined in the context of intellectual inquiry and critical analysis, as appropriate for a

university-level course. If you are easily shocked and/or offended, please contact the instructor to discuss whether this course is suitable for you.

Other Policies

For extensive information about UMN policy regarding the above topics and others—Student Conduct Code; Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences; Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials; Grading and Transcripts; Sexual Harassment; Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action; Disability Accommodations; Mental Health and Stress Management; and Academic Freedom—I strongly encourage that you visit the following link: <https://cla.umn.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/classroom-policies>

ENGL 1301W satisfies the Literature Core requirement

ENGL 1301W introduces students to the cultural, historical, and social legacies of racial oppression in the United States. It considers the ways in which imaginative writings, sounds and images shape, confront and counter prevailing poetics and narratives about the self and the nation. Through essay writing, conversation, and examinations, students do the work of engaging closely and directly with works of literature. ENGL 1301W thus satisfies the Literature Core requirement in three specific ways. First, it focuses on analysis of written works of literature. Students study the meanings of a wide range of biographies, stories, essays, poems, and novels. Second, the course pays particular attention to the formal dimensions of literature. Finally, students examine the cultural, historical, and social contexts of literary works as well as their content.

ENGL 1301W satisfies the Diversity and Social Justice in the US Theme

ENGL 1301W explores issues of power and the American identity throughout the semester. Students focus upon the institution of slavery as the primary example of how social power, prestige and privilege came to be in the hands of one people. More broadly, the course explores the history of institutions and race as they impact each other and as racial identity informs literary genres, forms, styles, and practices. ENGL 1301W raises students' awareness of the importance of diversity to the advancement of African-Americans as well as other diverse constituents of the US.

ENGL 1301W fulfills Student Learning Outcomes

Students in ENGL 1301W learn how creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression become acts of resistance against racialized identities in America. In this course, students learn to identify and counteract these identities, a skill that will serve them throughout their entire lives. They also learn to engage the many diverse philosophies and cultures that together compose the intricate fabric of American culture and society.

ENGL 1301W is a Writing Intensive course.

This course meets the Council on Liberal Education guidelines for a Writing Intensive course. This means that the course:

- integrates writing into course content, through writing assignments that work toward specific course objectives and writing activities that take place throughout the semester
- provides explicit instruction in writing
- requires a cumulative minimum of 2,500 words of formal writing apart from any informal writing activities and assignments
- includes at least one formal assignment that requires students to revise and resubmit drafts after receiving feedback from the course instructor
- requires that at least one-third of each student's final course grade must be tied to the written work done in the course and that a student cannot pass the course and fail the writing component

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Prologue

09/08

- Introduction to the course

09/10

- Introduction to the topic

1. Modernism: Culture

09/15

- Rita Dove, ed., *The Penguin Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Poetry*, Gertrude Stein, "Susie Asado" (26); Angelina Weld Grimké, "Fragment" (38); William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow" (41); Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" (54); Melvin B. Tolson, "Dark Symphony" (106); Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (127)

09/17

- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, chapters 1-6

09/22

- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, chapters 7-17

09/24

- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, chapters 18-25

09/29

- Lecture on academic essay-writing

2. Realism: Ideology

10/01

- Rita Dove, ed., *The Penguin Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Poetry*, Robert Hayden, "Middle Passage" (157); Muriel Rukeyser, "The Poem as Mask" (163); Delmore Schwartz, "The Heavy Bear That Goes with Me" (165); Dudley Randall, "A Different Image" (175); Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool" (185); Anthony Hecht, "'More Light! More Light!'" (215)

10/06

- Richard E. Kim, *The Martyred*, chapters 1-13

10/08

- Richard E. Kim, *The Martyred*, chapters 14-26

10/13

- Richard E. Kim, *The Martyred*, chapters 27-41

3. Postmodernism: Identity

10/15

- Rita Dove, ed., *The Penguin Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Poetry*, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, "Populist Manifesto" (197); Frank O'Hara, "The Day Lady Died" (252); Gerald Stern, "Behaving Like a Jew" (234); Adrienne Rich, from *Twenty-One Love Poems*: XIII (296); Amiri Baraka, "Black Art" (318); Audre Lorde, "Power" (322); June Jordan, "Poem about My Rights" (337)
- FIRST DRAFT OF ESSAY #1 DUE TO YOUR T.A. VIA CANVAS BY 11:59PM

10/20

- Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer*, chapter 1

10/22

- Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer*, chapter 2

10/27

- Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer*, chapters 3-4

10/29

- MIDTERM EXAM DUE TO ME VIA CANVAS BY 11:59PM, NO LECTURE

4. Magical Realism: Memory

11/03

- Rita Dove, ed., *The Penguin Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Poetry*, Derek Walcott, "A Far Cry from Africa" (304); Paula Gunn Allen, "Grandmother" (355); Ai, "The Kid" (435); Yusef Komunyakaa, "Tu Do Street" (440); Joy Harjo, "She Had Some Horses" (472); Garrett Hongo, "The Legend" (475); Judith Ortiz Cofer, "Quinceañera" (485)

11/05

- Louise Erdrich, *Antelope Woman*, Part One
- SECOND DRAFT OF ESSAY #1 DUE TO YOUR T.A. VIA CANVAS BY 11:59PM

11/10

- Louise Erdrich, *Antelope Woman*, Part Two

11/12

- Louise Erdrich, *Antelope Woman*, Parts Three and Four

6. Neomodernism: Translation

11/17

- Rita Dove, ed., *The Penguin Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Poetry*, Naomi Shihab Nye, "Arabic" (499); Alberto Ríos, "Nani" (502); Lorna Dee Cervantes, "'Love of My Flesh, Living Death'" (522); Marilyn Chin, "How I Got That Name" (534); Cathy Song, "The Youngest Daughter" (538); Reetika Vazirani, from *White Elephants* (555)

11/19

- Valeria Luiselli, *Faces in the Crowd*, pp. 1-72

12/01

- Valeria Luiselli, *Faces in the Crowd*, pp. 72-146

Epilogue

12/03

- Conclusion
- ESSAY #2 PROPOSAL DUE TO YOUR T.A. VIA CANVAS BY 11:59PM

12/08

- FINAL EXAM DUE TO ME VIA CANVAS BY 11:59PM, NO LECTURE

12/10

- Study day, no lecture

12/15

- ESSAY #2 DUE TO YOUR T.A. BEFORE 11:59PM VIA CANVAS

ENGL 1301W | ESSAY ASSIGNMENT**Essay #1 draft #1 due to your T.A. via Canvas by 11:59PM on 10/15/20****Essay #1 draft #2 due to your T.A. via Canvas by 11:59PM on 11/05/20****Essay #2 proposal due to your T.A. via Canvas by 11:59PM on 12/03/20****Essay #2 due to your T.A. via Canvas by 11:59PM on 12/15/20***Basic Instructions.*

For the first essay, you will choose a novel or a poem (or a set of poems by one poet) that was assigned in the first third of the course and write an analytical, argumentative essay of 1200-1300 words explaining one discrete aspect of the text's meaning.

For the second essay, you will choose a novel or a poem (or a set of poems by one poet) assigned in the course and write and write an analytical, argumentative essay of 1200–1300 words explaining one discrete aspect of the text's meaning.

If you write about fiction for the first essay, you must write about poetry for the second; if you write about poetry for the first, you must write about fiction for the second. In both cases, your essay will be driven by an argument, or thesis, that communicates your interpretation and that organizes the essay's evidence toward the end of proving your claim.

Grading Criteria.

To earn an A, an essay must have a strong thesis, a clear structure, a persuasive use of evidence, and an effective style. An essay without a strong thesis, or one with a strong thesis but lacking two of the other criteria, will earn a B. An essay that lacks three or more of the criteria will earn a C or below.

Extended Instructions.

Your thesis should be as concrete as possible, and it should go beyond the obvious or summary. “*Quicksand* is about race in America” is an ineffective thesis because too vague; instead you should tell your reader exactly how the novel or poem treats its theme and what the text ultimately communicates about it—e.g., “*Quicksand* shows how cultural ideas about race constrict the development of the individual.” This thesis should be stated near the beginning of your essay; it does not necessarily need to be confined to a single sentence, but it should be worded as concisely and specifically as possible. You may only arrive at a definite idea of your thesis after having written most

or all of the paper, but it is imperative that you then go back and place it at the beginning to offer your reader a map of your argument.

Please note: this essay should not be a summary of the text, nor should it be a recitation of historical or biographical facts about the life and times of the author. It is a literary interpretation—a characterization of the text’s meaning and effect through a careful selection and explication of its elements. A plot summary or a historical or biographical recitation cannot be given a high grade for this assignment. Historical information should only be used to contextualize your interpretation; as for plot, assume your reader already knows it. You may allude once or twice to the author’s biography for context, but there is no need to do so, and your argument should not depend on it.

Your essay following the thesis should be divided into discrete sub-topics organized as individual paragraphs (e.g., paragraph one examines how *Quicksand* portrays American racial ideology, paragraph two shows how this ideology touches Helga’s life, and paragraph three demonstrates that it has constricted her development). You may want to give these paragraphs opening sentences that announce their theme (e.g., “Helga’s encounters with American ideas about race prevent her from realizing her potential or getting what she desires”), but you do not have to do so as long as the organizing principle of the paragraph is clear.

You should make judicious use of quotations; do not quote more of the text than you plan to discuss in detail. Also be sure to introduce the quotation rather than dropping it into the middle of a paragraph, and to follow the quotation with an explanation of its significance for your argument, with particular attention to its literary features (metaphor, tone, rhyme, imagery, etc.). For example, you may quote a few sentences from *Quicksand* in which Helga reacts to a racist remark and note how the tone of the prose describing her response implies her anger and resentment, emotions that prevent her from progressing toward her goals or desires.

Your opening paragraph should provide some context for the ensuing discussion: you might begin with historical or literary information (mentioning modernism, the Harlem Renaissance, or the Great Migration in relation to *Quicksand*, for instance). Your conclusion should not only restate your argument but also suggest an avenue for further exploration; in resting your case, invite others to respond.

Though you will have the opportunity to revise between the first and final drafts of the first essay, this is not an invitation to submit work that is incomplete, not proofread, or otherwise unfinished for your first draft. The first draft must be a complete and polished essay meeting all the requirements for the assignment. The better it is, the less

work you should have to do in revision. The final grade will be an average of the grades for the first and final drafts; it is in your interest to make the first draft as good as it can be.

Please follow MLA style for document format and citations. Provide parenthetical citations to show the source of your quotations; use line numbers rather than page numbers when quoting poetry. There is no need to consult outside sources for this essay, but if you do so please make clear what they are. For literary analyses, there is no need to cite page or line numbers for anything other than direct quotation.

Reminder: titles of lyric poems should be given in quotation marks (e.g., "In a Station of the Metro"), while titles of novels are given in italics (e.g., *Quicksand*).

Please use a standard font, such as 12-point Times New Roman, and double-space the document. There should be no extra spaces between paragraphs. Please provide a heading in the upper left with your name, date, and the assignment, and include a descriptive, arresting title (e.g., "'The Race's Ills': Racial Ideology and the Defeat of the Individual in Nella Larsen's *Quicksand*") centered one line above the essay's first line.

For Essay #1, you will submit a mandatory but ungraded first draft; if you do not submit it, you cannot receive a higher grade on the overall assignment than a B+. For Essay #2, you will submit a mandatory but ungraded proposal, a paragraph and/or outline detailing your proposed thesis and structure; if you do not submit it, you cannot receive a higher grade on the overall assignment than a B+. Essays should be uploaded to Canvas before midnight on the dates indicated. Feedback will also be submitted in writing through Canvas. Please consult your T.A. for further or more specific instructions.