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Office Hours: MWF 9:00-9:50 and by appointment

E316K: Masterworks of Literature–American
MWF 10:00–10:50
JES A121A
Fall 2009

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a broad survey of American literature from its origins to the present. In order to explore the diversity of American experiences as represented in writing, we will read works by African American, Chicana/o (Mexican American), Chinese American, European (English, French, Spanish) American, and Native American authors. We will discuss many aspects (literary, cultural, historical, political) of each piece of writing on the syllabus, but one main interest will be in the way that these authors explore what being "American" means both to them and the community or communities that they represent. I will also provide some historical and cultural materials to help place the readings in context. In addition to familiarizing yourself with these important and compelling pieces of writing, a primary goal will be for you to practice becoming close, critical readers.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Casares, Oscar. *Amigoland*. 2009.

Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*. 1899.

Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter Seventh Edition. Ed. Nina Baym. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007.

Course Packet [**designated CP on the Daily Course Schedule**] available at IT Copy, 512 W MLK Blvd.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS:

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is strongly recommended for the large lecture section, as the material in the lecture section is available only during the actual lecture. Regular attendance in your discussion sessions, on the other hand, is a requirement. Any more than two absences in the discussion sections will result in the lowering of your final grade. Students are responsible for knowing the number of absences they have. The attendance policy is non-negotiable. Also, please do not be late either to the lecture or the discussion section.

CLASS PREPARATION AND BLACKBOARD: I will always provide you with a variety of interpretations of the works on the syllabus, but I would like you to come to class with your own readings in mind. Reading literature is as much about the reader as it is about the literary work. We all have different experiences that will—and should—influence the way that we understand a poem, story, autobiography, essay, etc. There are many more "good" readings of literary works than there are "bad" or "wrong" ones. It is important for you to think about these works both independently of what I say and in conversation with your classmates. Some of the course

documents are available on **Blackboard**, including the syllabus, study questions for each section that will help you prepare for the exams, and other supplementary materials.

READING NOTEBOOK: You will be required to keep a reading notebook during the semester. The notebook is a record of **your** responses to the readings. That is, the notebook is not a place for you to reproduce or otherwise engage in conversation with lectures and class discussions—unless you have already responded to a work on the syllabus and want to add to your response after lecture or discussion section meetings. The notebook is also a place for you to do any in-class writing activities that your TAs assign in the discussion sections, for you to practice writing answers to the study questions, and/or for you to ask your TAs questions about the readings. Your TAs will discuss with you their specific expectations as well as the submission schedule for these assignments. The reading notebooks will be due once a week with the exception of weeks 1, 8, and 14.

EXAMS: You will take **FOUR** exams worth 100 points each over the course of the semester. These exams will consist of an identification/short answer section and short essay questions. The identification/short answer will consist of terms and/or concepts, characters, important places, quoted passages, and themes, for example. The short essay questions will ask you to consider themes that connect several of the works you have read in the historical period on which you are being tested. There will be several bonus questions on each exam; these bonus questions constitute the only possible "extra" credit in the class. Please do not ask about additional "extra" credit. Also, please do not ask to reschedule exam dates, and with the exception of extraordinary circumstances, no make-up exams will be offered (failed alarm clocks, flat tires, or court dates, for example, do not constitute extraordinary; please also see the Academic Dishonesty policy below). The exam material will come from class lectures and directly from the readings. The teachers of your discussion sections will grade your exams, and they have *complete* authority over the grades that you earn on the exams. You must address any questions you have about graded exams to them. Please bring **BLUE BOOKS** in which to record your answers.

COMPLIANCE WITH AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: In accordance with the terms and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, your instructor will cooperate with Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to make reasonable accommodations for students. If you have a disability, please register with SSD as soon as possible. If you already have university authorization for extra time to take tests or for a private place to take them, for example, please be sure to let both your discussion section teacher and me know as soon as possible. If any of you have suspected in the past that you might need extra time or a more private atmosphere in which to take a test, now is the time to go to the **Office of Services for Students With Disabilities**. It is in the Student Services Building in room 4.104. Your discussion section teachers and I will make necessary arrangements for you.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Please see (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdiswhatis.php>) for the university's academic dishonesty policies. In summary, the Dean of Students writes, "In promoting a high standard of academic integrity, the University broadly defines scholastic dishonesty—basically, all conduct that violates this standard, including *any act designed to give an unfair or undeserved academic advantage*, such as cheating; plagiarism; unauthorized collaboration; collusion; falsifying academic records; and misrepresenting facts (e.g., providing

false information to postpone an exam, obtain an extended deadline for an assignment, or even gain an unearned financial benefit)." Students found engaging in these acts will be subject to the University's policies regarding academic violations.

CLASS ETIQUETTE: Computers are not allowed in class unless you have a note from the **Office of Services for Students With Disabilities** that says you need a computer to take notes. If you want to sleep, read the newspaper, talk to a friend, use wi-fi or your Blackberry or a piece of equivalent technology to check your e-mail or Facebook or MySpace page, or do anything else not explicitly related to the class, please do not come to class that day. Any of these activities constitutes non-participation in the course and will influence your grade accordingly. Also, please be sure to turn off your cell phone before class begins.

GRADES:

20% for each of the four exams for a total of 80%

20% for your attendance and reading notebook in the discussion section and your participation in both the lecture and discussion sections

DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE: (minor changes will likely be made during the semester)

Week 1 (August 26 – August 28)

W Introduction

F Section One: Origins to the Early-Nineteenth Century

Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, *The Relation*, 28-36 **and** John Smith, all selections, 43-57

Week 2 (August 31 - September 4)

M William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 57-75

W Mary Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, 117-134

F Benjamin Franklin, "Remarks Concerning the Savages," 226-230 and "Narrative of the Late Massacres, in Lancaster County, of a Number of Indians, Friends of this Province, by Persons Unknown, With Some Observations on the Same" [CP]

Week 3 (September 7 - September 11)

M **NO CLASS: LABOR DAY**

W Samson Occom, 209-210 and "A Short Narrative of My Life"

plus one page William Bradford selection [CP]

J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, "Letters From an American Farmer," 309-324

F Thomas Jefferson, "The Autobiography," 338-346

Thomas Jefferson, "*From* Notes on the State of Virginia," 748-752

David Walker, "*From* David Walker's Appeal in Four Articles," 752-756

Week 4 (September 14 - September 18)

M Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle," 453-466 and revised ending [CP]

W Finish Irving and review for the exam

F **Exam One**

Week 5 (September 21 - September 25)

- M Section Two: The Mid- to the Late Nineteenth Century
William Apess, "An Indian's Looking Glass for the White Man," 482-488 and
The Cherokee Memorials, 580-585
Ralph Waldo Emerson, 488-492 and "Letter," 585-588
- W Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," 532-550
Emily Dickinson, 1197-1200, poem 409 [303], page 1212; poem 788 [709], page 1219
- F Nathaniel Hawthorne, 589-592; "Young Goodman Brown," 605-614 and "The
May-Pole of Merrymount," 615-622

Week 6 (September 28 - October 2)

- M Edgar Allan Poe, 671-674; "The Fall of the House of Usher," 689-701
- W Harriet Jacobs, "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl," 804-825
- F Frederick Douglass, "Narrative of the Life," 920-956

Week 7 (October 5 - October 9)

- M Frederick Douglass, continued; "Narrative of the Life," 956-988
Emily Dickinson, poem 598 [632], page 1216
- W Henry David Thoreau, 825-829; "Resistance to Civil Government," 829-844
Emily Dickinson, poem #620 [435], page 1216
- F Walt Whitman, "Preface to *Leaves of Grass*," 991-1010 and "Crossing Brooklyn
Ferry," 1057-1062

Week 8 (October 12 - October 16)

- M Ambrose Bierce, "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," 1475-1482
Emily Dickinson, poem 340 [280], page 1207
- W Finish Bierce and review for the exam
- F **Exam Two**

Week 9 (October 19 - October 23)

- M Section Three: The Late Nineteenth Century
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, Chapters I-XIV
- W Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, Chapters XV-XXVI
- F Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, XXVII-end

Week 10 (October 26 - October 30)

- M Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wall-paper," 1682-1695
Jack London, "To Build a Fire," 1825-1836
- W Booker T. Washington, from *Up from Slavery*, 1628-1638
W. E. B. Du Bois, from *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1727-1744
- F Washington and Du Bois, continued
Introduction to Gertrude Bonnin and Boarding Schools

Week 11 (November 2 - November 6)

- M Gertrude Bonnin/Zitkala-Sa, "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an Indian Girl," and "An Indian Teacher Among Indians" [CP]
 W Finish Bonnin and review for the exam
 F **Exam Three**

Week 12 (November 9 - November 13)

- M Section Four: The Twentieth Century
 Ernest Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," 2241-2259
 W F. Scott Fitzgerald, 2184-2185; "Babylon Revisited," 2201-2215
 F Jhumpa Lahiri, "Mrs. Sen" and Gish Jen, "Who's Irish?" [CP]

Week 13 (November 16 - November 20)

- M Sherman Alexie, "Dear John Wayne" [CP]
 W Oscar Casares, *Amigoland*, Part I, Chapters 1-4
 F Oscar Casares, *Amigoland*, Part II, Chapters 5-13

Week 14 (November 23 - November 27)

- M Oscar Casares, *Amigoland*, Part III, Chapters 14-22
 W **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING [READ CASARES!]**
 F **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**

Week 15 (November 30 - December 4)

- M finish Oscar Casares, *Amigoland*, Part IV, Chapters 23-41
 W Evaluations and review for exam
 F **Exam Four**

GRADING SYSTEM

Final grades will be determined on the basis of the following rubric. If necessary, decimals .6 and higher will be rounded up.

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 0-59