

San José State University: Department of English and Comparative Literature
English 169: Ethnicity in American Literature
Section 1, Fall Semester, 2020

Course and Contact Information

Course Code:	41992
Instructor:	Allison Johnson
Email:	allison.johnson@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	TR 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM, and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	TR 3:00-4:15
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	Area S, "Self, Society, and Equality in the U.S."

Course Format

Remote lecture, discussion.

Course Description

This course explores the influence of ethnic diversity on American literature by focusing on lines, including but not limited to borderlines, bloodlines, the color line, and timelines. Paying close attention to strategies of representation and resistance, we will examine the polyvocal literary and cultural fabric of the United States.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (3 hours per unit per week) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities. Because this is a 3-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of nine hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs):

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO 1: Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of Ethnicity in American literature.

CLO 2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, and critical approaches to ethnic American literature, gaining an awareness of the range of cultural experiences and productions that make up American ethnic literary and cultural history, focusing on the self-representations of ethnic authors/groups.

CLO 3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.

CLO 4. Develop and carry out New Media research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively as a team.

CLO 5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, strengthening their abilities to

engage ethnic American literary text and to analyze both its form and content as well as its social and historical contexts.

Self, Society, and Equality in the U.S. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

After successfully completing the course, students shall be able to:

SLO 1. Describe how identities (i.e. religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age) are shaped by cultural and societal influences within contexts of equality and inequality.

SLO 2. Describe historical, social, political, and economic processes producing diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S.

SLO 3. Describe social actions which have led to greater equality and social justice in the U.S. (i.e. religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age).

SLO 4. Recognize and appreciate constructive interactions between people from different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups within the U.S.

All course readings, class discussions, and assignments are invested in these outcomes.

Required Texts/Readings

Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood*

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

G. Willow Wilson, *Ms. Marvel: No Normal*

All other readings are available on Canvas (C).

Course Requirements and Assignments

Midterm, 10/8: 20% (CLOs 1, 2, 3, 5) (SLOs 1, 2, 3)

Analytical Paper (5-7 pages), 11/22: 25% (CLOs 1, 2, 3, 5) (SLOs 1, 2, 3)

Creative Project, 12/3: 15% (CLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)

Final Exam, 12/11: 25% (CLOs 1, 2, 3, 5) (SLOs 1, 2, 3)

Participation & Posts: 15% (SLO 4)

See Appendix A: Grading Policy for further information

Required Watching and Posting

I will post all lecture videos to Canvas. Before class, watch the video lecture about the text(s) for that day and then post to the discussion board (you can ask a question about the lecture or

the text(s), make an observation, or respond to another student). Quizzes will cover information from lecture videos and from the readings.

Online Class Expectations: Remote education is a new experience for most of us, and requires flexibility; in order to facilitate an active and productive learning environment, please follow these guidelines: 1. If you have a webcam, please have it turned on. 2. Use the chat to ask and answer questions. 3. Use your microphone to ask and answer questions.

Paper Regulations: Write your papers in double-spaced 12pt. Times New Roman font, and format them according to MLA guidelines. The OWL site produced by Purdue (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>) provides good examples of MLA citations. Late papers will be marked down 1/3 letter grade per day (including weekends).

Participation: Every student will come to class prepared for a critical discussion. Every student will watch all lecture videos and read all of the assigned readings, come to every class meeting, engage with the texts and participate in the discussion, offer interpretations, ask and answer questions, and be respectful to other students. Please email me if you are unable to attend.

Office Hours and Email Policies: I encourage you to meet with me in my office to receive further assistance on assignments and papers, and ask me questions. You can email me if you are unable to come to the office.

Plagiarism Policy:

If you plagiarize, you will receive an automatic 0 grade. Please make sure you cite your sources using proper MLA format! See Appendix B: Academic Honesty.

Week 1:

8/20 – Thursday

Introduction

Unit 1: Bloodlines

Week 2:

8/25 – Tuesday

Elias Johnson, selection from *Legends, Traditions and Laws, of the Iroquois, or Six Nation and History of the Tuscarora Indians*

8/27 – Thursday

Sarah Winnemucca (Thocmetony), from *Life Among the Piutes*

Week 3:

9/1 – Tuesday

Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin), from *American Indian Stories*

9/3 – Thursday

Anzia Yizierska, “America and I”

Week 4:

9/8 – Tuesday

Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood*, chp. 1- chp. 10

9/10 – Thursday

Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood*, finish book

Unit 2: The Color Line

Week 5:

9/15 – Tuesday

Jupiter Hammon, “An Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ, with Penetential Cries,” “An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatley”

Phillis Wheatley, “On Virtue,” “To S.M., a Young African Painter, on Seeing His Works,” “To His Excellency General Washington,” “On the Death of J.C. an Infant,” “Thoughts on the Work of Providence”

9/17 – Thursday

David Walker, from *Appeal*

Lydia Maria Child, from *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*, Chapters 6 and 8

Week 6:

9/22 – Tuesday

Frances E. W. Harper, “Aunt Chloe’s Politics,” “The Slave Mother,” “Learning to Read,” “Ethiopia,” “Bury Me in a Free Land,” “Bible Defense of Slavery,” “Songs for the People,” “The Slave Auction,” “The Deliverance”

9/24 – Thursday

Kate Chopin, “Desirée’s Baby,” “Old Aunt Peggy,” “A Matter of Prejudice,” “Nég Créol”

Week 7:

9/29 – Tuesday

Charles Chesnutt, From *The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories of the Color Line*: “The Wife of His Youth,” “Her Virginia Mammy,” “The Sheriff’s Children”

10/1 – Thursday

Charles Chesnutt, From *The Conjure Woman*: “The Goophered Grapevine,” “Po’ Sandy,” “Sis’ Becky’s Pickaninny”

Week 8:

10/6 – Tuesday

Review Session

10/8 – Thursday
MIDTERM, due by 11:59 p.m.

Week 9:

10/13 – Tuesday
Booker T. Washington, “Atlanta Exposition Address”
W.E.B. Du Bois, from *The Souls of Black Folk*

10/15 – Thursday
Zora Neale Huston, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me”
Alaine Locke, “New Negro”
Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”
Jean Toomer, “Blood-Burning Moon”

Week 10:

10/20 – Tuesday
Langston Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” “Cross,” “Mulatto,” “Negro,” “I, Too,”
“Harlem,” “The Weary Blues,” “Let America Be America Again”

10/22 – Thursday
Gwendolyn B. Bennett, “Heritage,” “Advice,” “To a Dark Girl”
Claude McKay, “America,” “If We Must Die,” “The Lynching,” “Harlem Shadows”
Countee Cullen, “Threnody for a Black Girl,” “Incident,” “From the Dark Tower”

Unit 3: Timelines

Week 11:

10/27 – Tuesday
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

10/29 – Thursday
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

Unit 4: Borderlines

Week 12:

11/3 – Tuesday
Edith Maud Eaton (Sui Sin Far), “Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian,” “In the Land of the Free,” “Mrs. Spring Fragrance”

11/5 – Thursday
Gloria Anzaldúa, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”

Week 13:

11/10 – Tuesday

Josephina Niggli, from *Mexican Village*

11/12 – Thursday

María Cristina Mena, “John of God, the Water-Carrier,” “The Education of Popo”

Week 14:

11/17 – Tuesday

Sandra Cisneros, “Woman Hollering Creek”

11/19 – Thursday

Helena María Viramontes, “The Cariboo Café”

11/22 – Sunday

Paper due by 11:59 p.m.

Unit 5: Crossing Lines

Week 15:

11/24 – Tuesday

G. Willow Wilson, *Ms. Marvel: No Normal*

11/26 – Thursday

No class

Week 16:

12/1 – Tuesday

G. Willow Wilson, *Ms. Marvel: No Normal*

12/3 – Thursday

Review

Creative Project due in class

12/11 – Friday

FINAL EXAM, due 11:59 p.m.

Appendix A: Grading Policy

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: *In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure.*

In written assignments for English 60, this scale is based on the following criteria:

A [90-92=A-, 93-96=A, 97-100=A+] = Excellent: The "A" essay is articulate and well developed with fluid transitions and a clear and persuasive use of evidence, which is drawn from the literary text itself, lecture materials (when appropriate), and research materials. An "A" essay contains a fresh insight that teaches the reader something new about the subject matter.

B [80-82=B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+] Above average: The "B" essay demonstrates a good understanding of its subject, a clear and persuasive use of evidence, a certain level of ease of expression, and solid organization. However, it usually lacks the level of originality and creativity that characterizes the insight found in an "A" essay.

C [70-72=C-, 73-76=C, 77-79=C+] = Average: The "C" essay makes a good attempt at all the assignment's requirements. It has a reasonable understanding of its subject matter but its ideas are frequently simplistic or over-generalized. The writing style is also more bland and repetitive than the style shown by "A" and "B" essays and it often contains flaws in grammar, punctuation, spelling and/or word choice. It may also use textual evidence out of context.

D [60-62=D-, 63-66=D, 67-69=D+] = Below average: The "D" essay is poorly organized and generally unclear. It has inappropriate or inadequate examples, is noticeably superficial or simplistic, and/or contains some serious mechanical and grammatical problems. A "D" essay may also reveal some misunderstanding of the assignment requirements.

F = Failure: An "F" essay has not addressed the requirements of the assignment and is unacceptable work in terms of both form and content.

Appendix B: Academic Honesty

“San José State University defines cheating as the act of obtaining credit, attempting to obtain credit, or assisting others to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means.”

“San José State University defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one’s own without giving appropriate credit, regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements.”

For full definition, see <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf>

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>