

American Literature, Film, & Culture Section 01

ENGL 117A

Fall 2022 3 Unit(s) 08/19/2022 to 12/06/2022 Modified 08/18/2022

Contact Information

Instructor:	Faith Kirk, Ph.D.
Email:	faith.kirk@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Thursdays from 10:00-11:00 am PST and by appointment
Office Hours Link:	https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/84443982055?pwd=ZUIrUEJZUjU2WjV6N1BRSDIaZ1dodz09 Passcode: 127388
Class Time:	Fridays 9:30 am -12:15 pm
Class Location:	Sweeney Hall 413
Prerequisites:	Writing Skills Test (WST), completion of Core General Education, and completion of, or co-registration in, 100W.
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	Area S: "Self, Society, and Equality in the U.S." <i>Note: Courses used to satisfy Areas R, S, and V, must be taken from three separate SJSU departments, or other distinct academic units.</i>

Course Description and Requisites

Using both film and literature, course examines narratives that create and define cultural identities in the United States. A variety of cultural moments in the history of North America as depicted in both film and literature as well as the artistic practices used to shape those representations will be discussed. GE Area: S

Prerequisite(s): Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), completion of Core General Education and upper division standing are prerequisites to all SJSU studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended.

Note(s): All of SJSU Studies courses require completion of the WST and upper division standing.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

Our classroom is a learning environment where everyone's right to explore ideas needs to be respected. There is nothing wrong with disagreement and debate. In fact, saying that you disagree with someone and why you do is crucial for really doing the work of critical thinking.

What *is* wrong is being disrespectful to anyone in our class or actively suppressing a classmate's ability to think, collaborate, and write. We will be practicing how to engage with each other with mutual respect.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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

GE 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;

GE 2. describe historical, social, political, and economic processes producing diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S.;

GE 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).; and

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

Course Materials

Of Mules and Men, Zora Neale Hurston

ISBN: 9780061350177

There There, Tommy Orange

ISBN: 9780525436140

I have provided these ISBN numbers so that you have the opportunity to locate the edition that I am using (for the purposes of matching our pagination and sharing supplementary materials published within the text).

However, if you find other editions of these texts somewhere else for cheaper, feel free to get them!

All other readings will be available to you as PDFs on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

ASSIGNMENT(S)	PERCENTAGE OF FINAL GRADE
Weekly Canvas Assignments & Discussions	30 percent
Film Notes	15 percent
Critical Analysis 1 & 2	30 percent
Visual Analysis Project	15 percent

Final Reflection	10 percent
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Weekly Canvas Tasks

Each week, you will have the opportunity to engage with the texts you are reading and watching before you come to class. These Canvas "tasks" will be either brief, one-two paragraph text written responses and/or discussion posts. To give you an incentive to engage with each text as you move through the course, cumulatively they are worth a substantial portion of your final grade.

Film Notes

Each time you watch in film for class, you will create what is called a "plot segmentation" of the film.

A plot segmentation is a method of taking notes that film scholars use to methodically record the events of the film in the order that they occur. If you choose to, you can include other observations about film form in your plot segmentation. For instance, you might record your observations about visual information from the film, like costumes, staging, lighting, shot composition, editing, or special effects, or audio information, like music, sound effects, volume, and tone.

Critical Analyses

You will be asked to compose two Critical Analyses this semester. Both of these assignments will give you two options: a traditional, critical essay or a multimedia project. These brief analyzes are opportunities to make connections between the concepts we have discussed and the texts we have watched and read in class.

You will receive prompts with specific instructions and requirements and we will discuss the expectations fully during class time.

Visual Analysis Project

For this project, you will have two options.

Option 1: Select a sequence from one of the films that we have watched in class and storyboard an alternate version of that sequence that would create a significantly different effect for viewers. You will need to include a one-page cover sheet with your storyboard describing the original sequence, the choices you made to strategically re-envision that sequence, and why you made those choices. You should cite at least one secondary source in that cover sheet (both in the text and in a works cited entry at the end) that has informed your decisions.

Option 2: Write a personal essay in which you describe your own relationship to the ideas we have covered in our class.

You will receive a detailed prompt for this assignment in class. You will also have class time to workshop your storyboard or your personal essay before you submit it.

Final Reflection

Instead of a traditional final exam, you will have the opportunity to reflect about what you have learned this semester, how you might apply that information in other areas of your academic and work life, and what you would like to learn next.

This reflection will be due to Canvas during our scheduled final exam time. That means that we will not meet in person during our scheduled final exam time. We will discuss the reflection in more detail closer to the due date.

✓ Grading Information

Assessment

My teaching philosophy is that assessment should always be an explicit and transparent process.

This means that:

1. You should always know the expectations for assignments ahead of time.
2. It should be clear to you why you received the numerical grade that you did.
3. You are invited to talk about your grades with me at any time, no questions asked or appointments needed.

With this teaching philosophy in mind, here is the assessment process I have designed for our course:

1. You will see a rubric for each assignment in our course ahead of time so you can plan how to meet the expectations for each task.
2. You will receive a grade and a completed rubric for each task that you submit. For your two Critical Analysis papers and your Visual Analysis Project, you will receive a grade, a completed rubric, and written feedback.
3. I will be holding weekly office hours on this semester on Zoom. Feel free to join me there, whether you have made an appointment or not, to discuss grades privately. You can also ask me questions after class and via email.

Criteria

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 117A, 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 [59 or below]= Failure: An "F" essay has not addressed the requirements of the assignment and is unacceptable work in terms of both form and content.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](#)

<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php> (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Please Note: This work schedule is subject to change. All assignments are due by class time on Fridays at 9:30 am PST unless otherwise noted.

DATE	TASK
WEEK 1	In Class: Learn about the course and meet our learning community
8/19	Canvas Task: "Introduce yourself to our Learning Community" Due by Friday, 8/19, at 11:59 pm
WEEK 2	Canvas Tasks: Task 1: What do you already know? Task 2: Read <i>Gone Primitive</i> by Marianna Torgovnick
8/26	In Class: Collaborative Analysis
WEEK 3	NO CLASS MEETING: Work Asynchronously
9/2	Canvas Tasks: Task 1: Read "Chapter 2: Race" by Dorothy Roberts Task 2: Watch a clip from <i>Birth of a Nation</i> (D.W. Griffiths, 1915)
WEEK 4	Canvas Tasks: Task 1: Watch <i>King Kong</i> (Cooper and Shoedsack, 1933) and Prepare a Plot Segmentation Task 2: Read the Prompt for Critical Analysis 1 Task 3: Review the Evaluation Rubric
9/9	In Class: Analyze the film Review Critical Analysis 1 instructions and assessment

<p>WEEK 5</p> <p>9/16</p>	<p>Canvas Tasks: Watch <i>Black Panther</i> (Coogler, 2018) and Prepare a Plot Segmentation</p> <p>In Class: Analyze the Film</p>
<p>WEEK 6</p> <p>9/23</p>	<p>Canvas Task: Draft your Critical Analysis</p> <p>In Class: View and read ethnography by Franz Boaz and Margaret Mead</p> <p>Submit Critical Analysis 1 by Monday, 9/26, at 11:59 pm PST</p>
<p>WEEK 7</p> <p>9/30</p>	<p>Canvas Tasks: Read selections from <u>Mules and Men</u> (Hurston, 1935)</p> <p>In Class: Discussion and analysis</p>
<p>WEEK 8</p> <p>10/7</p>	<p>Canvas Task: Watch <i>N!ai Story of a !Kung Woman</i> (Marshall, 1980) and Prepare a Plot Segmentation</p> <p>In Class: Analysis and discussion</p>
<p>WEEK 9</p> <p>10/14</p>	<p>Canvas Tasks: Task 1: Examine "Couple in a Cage" (Fusco and Gómez-Peña, 1993)</p> <p>Task 2: Read Prompt for Critical Analysis 2</p> <p>Task 3: Review Evaluation Rubric</p> <p>In Class: Discussion of "Couple in a Cage" and analysis of photographs by Edward S. Curtis</p>
<p>WEEK 10</p> <p>10/21</p>	<p>Canvas Tasks: TBA</p> <p>In Class: Screen videos by The 1619s and <i>Reservation Dogs</i>, Episode 1: F*kin' Rez Dogs (Harjo and Waititi, 2021)</p>

WEEK 11	Canvas Task: Read Tommy Orange's <i>There There</i> Part 1
10/28	In Class: Analysis and discussion Submit Critical Analysis 2 to Canvas by Monday, 11/1, at 11:59 pm PST
WEEK 12	Canvas Task: Task 1: Read Tommy Orange's <i>There There</i> Part 2 Task 2: Read Visual Analysis Project Prompt
11/4	Task 3: Review Evaluation Rubric In Class: Review Visual Analysis Project Instructions and Assessment Analysis and discussion
WEEK 13	NO CLASS MEETING: VETERAN'S DAY
11/11	
WEEK 14	Canvas Task: Which option do you think you will do?
11/18	In Class: Practice exercises
WEEK 15	NO CLASS MEETING: THANKSGIVING BREAK
11/25	
WEEK 16	Canvas Task: Draft your Visual Analysis Project
12/2	In Class: Workshop your project and get feedback Submit Visual Analysis Project to Canvas by Monday, 12/6, at 11:59 pm PST

Instead of a traditional examination, our course features a self-reflection exercise to be submitted to Canvas by the date of our final exam on Thursday, 12/8, by 11:59 pm PST.