

Literature and Culture

English 2316
Spring 2018
Office Hours: M & W 11-12 & 4-5
And by appointment

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REQUIRED TEXTS:

The Distance Between Us, Reyna Grande
A Place to Stand, Jimmy Santiago Baca
Paper Daughter, M. Elaine Mar
Catfish and Mandala, Andrew X. Pham
Black Boy, Richard Wright
Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neale Hurston
Recommended text:

The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Ed. Gibaldi

INTRODUCTION: The United States is a nation of immigrants who play increasingly important roles in society. Despite some progress, there are still misconceptions and prejudice. Studying literature and culture helps us learn more about our neighbors and their cultures. The University of Houston is one of the most diverse schools in the country, and by reading memoirs and autobiographical novels, we can gain a better understanding of those whose heritage might be different than our own.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Introduce a few influential or characteristic works of minority literature:
(Mexican-American, Asian-American, African-American)
2. Enhance our ability to *read* texts closely and analytically.
3. Increase our critical *thinking* skills as we discuss and write about the literature.
4. Develop better communication by enhancing expository *writing* and *research* skills.
5. Improve our understanding of literary *terms*, *theory*, and conventions.
6. Broaden our world-view by studying themes and motifs in minority literature.
7. Learn from the human experience & learn to make ethical choices.
8. Make the study of literature (and ideas) a life-long pursuit.

REQUIREMENTS/GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

2% 700 word letter of introduction
15% quizzes (unannounced)
15% attendance and participation
15% first paper (around 3-5 pages)
15% first test (short-answer essay questions)
19% final exam
19% research paper (7-9 pages plus bibliography)

PROCEDURES:

Although there will be a variety of approaches with some built-in flexibility, our sessions will include, when appropriate, background material, biographical material, historical/cultural contexts, lectures, discussion, question and answer, overview of the literary criticism, film/video, and quizzes. Please bring questions, comments, and quotes from the text to each of our meetings.

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION:

Minimum 700 words, typed. Please tell me something about yourself. There is no prescription for this letter; it may take any form or format. Please include your phone number. I will occasionally send the entire class an e-mail. Be sure that your address is correct and that you check your mail regularly.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION are mandatory. University policy allows me to drop you after four absences. If you are not in class, you are absent. If you have two or fewer absences, your attendance grade is an A. Three absences = B. Four = C. Five = D; After five absences, you may be dropped from the class. Please come to class having read the materials for that day; be prepared to participate in our discussion.

PAPERS must conform to the Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines for writers of research papers. A detailed handout will be provided, and one class will be dedicated to this topic. Late papers are penalized 10 points after the due date. Papers more than one week late will not be accepted.

QUIZZES & TESTS:

Quizzes are given at the very beginning of class, and, if missed, may not be made up. Exams are usually 4-6 essay questions. If you miss a test, for any reason, 10 points will be subtracted from the make-up test grade, in order to insure fairness to others. If you know you will miss a test, we may be able to make arrangements for you to take the test early. Make-up exams will be administered at my convenience.

CLASSROOM COURTESIES / disABILITY ACCOMODATION:

Please make every effort to arrive at class on time and to stay for the duration. Do not surf the web or wear ear-buds during class. If you have a documented disability, we will make every effort to accommodate your needs. Please register with the Center for Students with disABILITIES (CSD) 713-743-5400.

OFFICE HOURS:

I am always happy to talk with you and help you with the class. My office hours are held in 232-A Roy Cullen M & W 11-12 and 4-5. You may also e-mail me anytime: pg@uh.edu
When you miss a class, do not ask me what you missed; get notes from a classmate.

PLAGIARISM:

The University of Houston takes all forms of cheating and plagiarism seriously. UH subscribes to Turnitin.com a comprehensive plagiarism detection program. Be sure you document any sources you have consulted (words or ideas). Any form of cheating can result in your failing the class.