

English 255

Cari Carpenter, ENGL 255, Spring 2006

ENGL 255

Spring 2006

TR 1-2:15

CKH-D 312

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MULTIETHNIC LITERATURE: CAPTIVITY AND BORDER CROSSING

"To survive the Borderlands

you must live sin fronteras

be a crossroads."

-Gloria Anzaldúa, "To live in the Borderlands means you"

This course is intended to enrich your understanding of the literary diversity that exists in the United States. We will focus on Native American and Latino literatures in particular. Due to time limitations, this course cannot function as a comprehensive survey of the literature of either group. We will, however, seek to gain an understanding of these groups' historical depth and contemporary breadth by focusing on two themes that are significant to both: captivity and border crossing. We will also consider how these themes are relevant to our own learning experience in the class itself. How, for example, is a sense of confinement within particular stereotypes or identities articulated or challenged in this literature? What can we learn as we experience these authors'—and our own—crossing into unfamiliar territories? Come prepared to engage in lively, dynamic class discussions that challenge and broaden your perceptions of the past, present, and future United States.

COURSE GOALS

By the end of the semester, I hope you will possess:

- A greater familiarity with and interest in Native American and Latino writers and literatures, with an understanding of the various ways that their cultures inform and are informed by these texts;
- Enhanced close reading, writing, and speaking skills;
- An understanding of distinguishing aspects of identity such as ethnicity, race, gender, and culture

COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Required

Purdy and Ruppert, *Nothing But the Truth: An Anthology of Native American Literature* (NBT)

Alexie, *Indian Killer*

Del Rio, *The Prentice Hall Anthology of Latino Literature* (LL)

Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*

Castillo, *So Far From God* [not available at WVU bookstore]

One notebook (for journal)

Highly Recommended

A writing stylebook like the MLA Handbook or the Brief Holt Handbook

REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and Participation (20% of final grade). In addition to prompt and regular attendance, this includes the following:

- Your participation grade will be based in part on the thoughtfulness of your responses and your overall engagement in our discussions and writing activities. We don't often think of listening as an element of participation, but a productive learning environment is characterized by participants who respect others' words even if they don't agree with them. I welcome debate that is balanced with mutual respect.
- Completion of assigned readings before coming to class. Our discussions and writing assignments require your familiarity and engagement with these readings. If you don't come prepared, you do a disservice to yourself and to the other students. Pop quizzes may be given periodically in order to ensure the completion of reading assignments.

- **Journal.** Over the course of the semester, you will write a series of journal entries on various topics. Your journal will be turned in at three points in the semester. The entries can be informal and handwritten. They will be evaluated on their earnest engagement with the topic and the larger issues of the course.

2. Midterm (15% of final grade). This exam will give you the opportunity to analyze texts we have read in the first half of the semester, sharpening your ability to engage in the literary analysis that is the hallmark of the discipline.

3. Essays (40% of final grade). You will write two analytical essays in this course. The first will be a 3-5 page close reading of a text. The second will be a 5-8 page analysis that presents your own critical argument about two of the texts.

4. Final Project (25% of final grade). This project, which constitutes the final exam, will give you the opportunity to examine certain texts and issues in more detail.

CLASS POLICIES

Punctual attendance is required. Unexcused absences are not acceptable. If you must miss a class, please contact me in advance. Poor attendance will adversely affect your final grade (more than three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for participation). Please make every effort to arrive to class on time; important announcements will often be made in the first few minutes of class. Absences due to serious illness, religious holidays, and personal emergencies (with appropriate documentation) will be excused.

Late work is not acceptable. Any assignment handed in after the class period in which it is due will be penalized for lateness (reduced 1/2 letter grade each day it is late, including the day it is due). If a personal emergency arises and you need an extension, speak to me as soon as possible about your situation. Please plan ahead for computer mishaps: always keep a back-up file of your work, and give yourself plenty of time to print.

I do not discuss grades over e-mail. Nor will I meet with a student to discuss the grade of a particular paper until 24 hours after that paper has been returned.

Plagiarism, a form of theft, is illegal. Plagiarism is defined as the submission of work that contains ideas not fully your own: ideas taken from publications, other students, your professors, the Internet, etc. Remember that you are required to cite a source if you include a direct quotation or if you borrow an idea and put it in your own words. If you have questions about the fine line between being influenced by a text or person and plagiarizing its/his/her ideas, cite the source. For a more detailed description of plagiarism, as well as the correct form for citation of sources, see a writing handbook or ask me. The consequences of a proven case of plagiarism may result in an unforgivable “F” in the course.

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. In accordance with that commitment I maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and nondiscrimination. WVU does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, disability, age, veteran

status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestion as how to promote such a positive and open environment in this class is appreciated and given serious attention.

Any student with a disability who needs an accommodation or other assistance in this course should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible, and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700 or Voice/TDD 293-7740).

SCHEDULE

Each piece should be read by the date on which it is listed. This schedule is subject to change.

NBT=*Nothing But the Truth*

LL=*Prentice Hall Anthology of Latino Literature*

H=see handout

Removals

T Jan. 10 Introduction

R Jan. 12 “Identity and Ethnicity” (H); “Encountering Others” (H); “The Process of Invention” (H); “Inventing Cultural Encounters” (H)

T Jan. 17 Rowlandson, *Narrative of the Captivity...*: see website ; Erdrich (Anishinaabe), “Captivity” (NBT 464); Alexie (Spokane, Coeur d’Alene), “Captivity” (H)

R Jan. 19 Apess (Pequot), “Eulogy on King Philip” (H); Mihesuah (Oklahoma Choctaw), excerpts from *American Indians: Stereotypes and Realities* (1, 11, 12, 19) (H); See website

The Nineteenth Century: Captivity and Freedom Reinvented

T Jan. 24 Johnson (Mohawk), “Ojistoh” (H) and “As It Was in the Beginning” (NBT 282); excerpt from Winnemucca (Northern Paiute), *Life Among the Piutes*: see website Journal 1 Due

R Jan. 26 Excerpt from Zitkala-Ša (Yankton Sioux), *American Indian Stories* (H) and “The Soft-Hearted Sioux” (NBT 408)

T Jan. 31 Mourning Dove (Okanogan), “Fox and Coyote and Whale” (H) and “Coyote and the Buffalo” (H); Sarris, “The Woman Who Loved a Snake” (NBT 141); “Creation of the Whites” (Yuchi) (H) Essay 1 Due (in class)

R Feb. 2 Momaday (Kiowa), “December 29, 1890” (NBT 512); Eastman (Ohiyesa) (Sioux), “The Ghost Dance War” (NBT 54); Harjo (Muskogee), “For Anna Mae Pictou Aquash...” (H); “Demands of the Independent Oglala Nation, 1973” (H); Crow Dog (Lakota), “Two Cut-off Hands” (H)

The Native American “Renaissance”: Travel in Words

T Feb. 7 Silko (Laguna Pueblo), “Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective” (NBT 159); Silko, “Storytelling” (NBT 544); Momaday, “The Man Made of Words” (NBT 82) and excerpt from *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (H)

R Feb. 9 Erdrich, “Indian Boarding Schools: The Runaways” (NBT 465); Alexie, *Indian Killer* (Part 1)

Looking Back, Looking Forward: Revising Captivity

T Feb. 14 Alexie, *Indian Killer* (Part 2)

R Feb. 16 Alexie, *Indian Killer* (Part 3)

Native American Literature Today: Crossings

T Feb. 21 Vizenor (Anishinaabe), “Almost Browne” (H); King (Cherokee), “Borders” (NBT 289); Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux), “Indian Humor” (NBT 39)

R Feb. 23 Hogan (Chickasaw), “The Truth Is” (NBT 492); Allen (Laguna Pueblo, Sioux), “Dear World” (NBT 430); Swann, “Introduction: Only the Beginning” (NBT 172)

T Feb. 28 Alexie, “How to Write the Great American Indian Novel” (NBT 425); Dunn, “The Real Hollywood Indian” (H); Excerpt from *Spiderwoman Theater* (H); See website **Midterm due (in class)**

Nineteenth-Century Borderlands in Latino Literature

R Mar. 2 Anzaldúa, Chapters 1-2 and “To live in the Borderlands means you”; Martí, “Our America”: see website

T Mar. 7 Anzaldúa, Chapter 3; Mena, “The Birth of the God of War” (H) Journal 2 Due

R Mar. 9 “Mexican-American Literature: A Brief Survey” (LL 7); Dee Cervantes, “To We Who Were Saved by the Stars” (LL 97); Soto, “Who Will Know Us?” (LL 93)

SPRING BREAK (Mar. 11-19)

T Mar. 21 Castillo, *So Far From God*, Chapters 1-5

R Mar. 23 Castillo, *So Far From God*, Chapters 6-10

T Mar. 28 Castillo, *So Far From God*, Chapters 11-end

R Mar. 30 “Puerto Rican-American Literature: A Brief Survey” (LL 327); Esteves, “In the Beginning” (LL 436); Pietri, “Puerto Rican Obituary” (LL 455)

T Apr. 4 A. Rodriguez, “The Boy Without a Flag” (LL 420); Laviera, “My Graduation Speech” (LL 441) Essay 2 Due (in class)

R Apr. 6 NO CLASS

T Apr. 11 Esteves, “In the Beginning” (LL 436); Aguëros, “Sonnets for the Four Horsemen...” (LL 452)

Bilingual Blues

R Apr. 13 Cuban-American Literature: “A Brief Survey” (LL 173) Pérez-Firmat, “Bilingual Blues” (LL 253) and “Dedication” (LL 254); Medina, “Cuba” (H)

T Apr. 18 Munoz, “Little Sister Born in this Land” (LL 264); Pau-Llosa, “Foreign Language” (LL 262); Hospital, “Dear Tia” (LL 267); Hernandez Cruz, “Bilingual Education” (LL 439)

R Apr. 20 Anzaldúa, Chapter 5; Mora, “Sonrisas” and “Bilingual Christmas” (LL 87)

Contemporary Native American and Latino Literature: Where From Here?

T Apr. 25 Moraga, “A Long Line of Vendidas” (H); Anzaldúa, Chapter 7; Cisneros, “Loose Woman” (H)

R Apr. 27 Harjo, “I Give You Back” (NBT 477); Hernández-Ávila (Nez Perce), “Presente” (H); Silko, “The Border Patrol State” (H)

Journal 3 Due (all entries from semester)

T May 2 Final Project Due by 5 p.m.