



Romare Bearden, *The Block* (1971)

ENGL 1301W-001 | FALL 2017

**INTRODUCTION TO MULTICULTURAL
LITERATURES OF THE UNITED STATES**

T/H 1:00-2:15 Fraser Hall

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Instructor: Dr. John Pistelli

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Office Hours: M/W 1:30-2:30 Lind Hall 254

Teaching Assistants

Description and Goals

This course will provide a historical survey of twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction and poetry written mainly by American authors who do not belong to the dominant or majority races, ethnicities, religions, and/or cultures of the United States. We will investigate questions such as the following: What is the relationship between culture (defined broadly as the set of practices and attitudes that characterize a group of people) and creative writing? How do racial oppression, political activism, religious conflict, economic exploitation, and other social facts shape works of art—and vice versa? What are the obligations of writers toward the marginalized or oppressed cultures to which they may belong? What are the obligations toward those writers of readers who do not share their culture? Is “culture” a synonym for race and ethnicity or can it encompass other identities—gender, sexuality, class, religion? What is multiculturalism and what is its effect on concepts like literature or the nation? Finally, how has literature itself changed across the many artistic and political movements spanning the period from early twentieth-century modernism to contemporary globalization? As this course is also an introduction to literature more generally, we will pay careful attention to literary form and literary history; as this is a writing-intensive course, we will focus on responding to literature in written argument.

Required Books

- Rita Dove, ed., *The Penguin Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (Penguin)
- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* (Penguin)
- Richard E. Kim, *The Martyred* (Penguin)
- Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer* (Vintage)
- Toni Morrison, *Paradise* (Vintage)
- David Treuer, *The Translation of Dr. Apelles* (Vintage)
- Valeria Luiselli, *Faces in the Crowd* (Coffee House)

EngL 1301W satisfies the Literature Core requirement

EngL 1301W introduces students to the cultural, historical, and social legacies of racial oppression in the United States. It considers the ways in which imaginative writings, sounds and images shape, confront and counter prevailing poetics and narratives about the self and the nation. Through essay writing, conversation, and examinations, students do the work of engaging closely and directly with works of literature. EngL 1301W thus satisfies the Literature Core requirement in three specific ways. First, it focuses on analysis of written works of literature. Students study the meanings of a wide range of biographies, stories, essays, poems, and novels. Second, the course pays particular attention to the formal dimensions of literature. Finally, students examine the cultural, historical, and social contexts of literary works as well as their content.

EngL 1301W satisfies the Diversity and Social Justice in the US Theme

EngL 1301W explores issues of power and the American identity throughout the semester. Students focus upon the institution of slavery as the primary example of how social power, prestige and privilege came to be in the hands of one people. More broadly, the course explores the history of institutions and race as they impact each other and as racial identity informs literary genres, forms, styles, and practices. EngL 1301W raises students' awareness of the importance of diversity to the advancement of African-Americans as well as other diverse constituents of the US.

EngL 1301W fulfills Student Learning Outcomes

Students in EngL 1301W learn how creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression become acts of resistance against racialized identities in America. In this course, students learn to identify and counteract these identities, a skill that will serve them throughout their entire lives. They also learn to engage the many diverse philosophies and cultures that together compose the intricate fabric of American culture and society.

EngL 1301W is a Writing Intensive course.

This course meets the Council on Liberal Education guidelines for a Writing Intensive course. This means that the course:

- integrates writing into course content, through writing assignments that work toward specific course objectives and writing activities that take place throughout the semester
- provides explicit instruction in writing
- requires a cumulative minimum of 2,500 words of formal writing apart from any informal writing activities and assignments
- includes at least one formal assignment that requires students to revise and resubmit drafts after receiving feedback from the course instructor
- requires that at least one-third of each student's final course grade must be tied to the written work done in the course and that a student cannot pass the course and fail the writing component

Assignments

Grade breakdown.

Participation	10%
Exams	40%
Essays	50%

Participation. I do not directly give an attendance grade but roll will be taken both in lecture and in discussion sections. Be advised that there will be in-class exercises, assignments, and activities in this course that you will miss if you are absent. If you cannot be in class for any reason, please ask a classmate rather than the instructor for notes or a summary. If illness or other problems require you to miss more than a normal amount of class (1 or 2 meetings), please let me or your section leader know. If you miss more than 2 meetings (including both lecture and discussion) without a documented reason, your course grade may be affected. If you miss more than 4 meetings, you may be in danger of failing the course. Participation includes speaking up in class at least once a week in discussion section, contributing to in-class activities, and/or attending office hours or otherwise getting in touch with your instructors.

Exams. A midterm and final exam will be held in lecture. These exams will treat all course materials from the beginning to the half and from the half to the end of the course. Both exams will be divided into two parts: a fact-based first section in which you will answer fill-in-the-blank, true/false, or multiple-choice questions, and a second section in which you will have to identify passages from your reading by author, title, and date, and write a brief explanation of their significance. I will provide more detail as the date of the midterm approaches. The exams cannot be made up.

Essays. You will write two essays for the course. The first will be a 1000-word argumentative essay that will require you to address a text from the first third of the course and devise a thesis about its significance. The second essay will be a 1500-word argumentative essay on a text or texts of your choice from the last two-thirds of the course. Furthermore, as the course focuses on both poetry and fiction, one of the essays must be about a poem or poet and another must be about a novel. For the first essay, you will submit a draft that will be graded as well as a graded final submission. For the final essay, you will submit a proposal before turning in the final draft. I will provide more detail as the due dates approach. Late submissions will be lowered by a letter grade for every day not submitted.

Grades

Grading Policy. A (90-100): Outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements B (80-90): Significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements C (70-80): Meets the course requirements in every respect D (60-70): Worthy of credit, even though it fails to meet course requirements fully F (0-60): Work was not completed

Incompletes. A grade of incomplete ("I") is given only in a genuine and documented emergency, and *only* for work which is due during the last weeks of the course. You must make arrangements for an incomplete before the last day of class.

Disability Accommodations

Any student with a documented disability condition who needs to arrange accommodations should contact the instructor and Disability Services (612-626-1333) at the beginning of the semester.

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an “F” or an “N” for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University.

Student Writing Support

Students can get one-to-one-consultations on any course paper or writing project at Student Writing Support. Student Writing Support has several campus locations, including the main location in 15 Nicholson Hall. See <http://writing.umn.edu/> for details about locations, appointments, and online consultations.

Student Conduct

To avoid disruptions, please observe the following policies. Turn phones off and put them away before coming to class. During class, your attention should be directed toward whomever is speaking or to your assigned task. I discourage use of laptops and other devices during class time (unless appropriate) as they tend to isolate the user and distract others; if you have a pressing need to use one, please come and talk to me about it.

Offensive Material

In this course, students will be required to read words or view images that they may consider offensive. The ideas expressed in any given text do not necessarily reflect the views of the instructor, the English Department, or the University of Minnesota. Course materials have been selected for their literary, cultural, and/or historical value, in order to achieve specific learning objectives and course goals. These materials are meant to be examined in the context of intellectual inquiry and critical analysis, as appropriate for a university-level course. If you are easily shocked and/or offended, please contact the instructor to discuss whether this course is suitable for you.

Other Policies

For extensive information about UMN policy regarding the above topics and others—Student Conduct Code; Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Class Room; Scholastic Dishonesty; Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences; Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials; Grading and Transcripts; Sexual Harassment; Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action; Disability Accommodations; Mental Health and Stress Management; and Academic Freedom—I strongly encourage that you visit the following link:

http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/SYLLABUSREQUIREMENTS_APPA.html

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

(*) = reading can be found in *The Penguin Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Poetry*

1. Modernism: Culture and Authenticity

09/05

- Introduction

09/07

- Gertrude Stein, “Susie Asado” (*)
- Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson, “I Sit and Sew” (*)
- Angelina Weld Grimké, “Fragment” (*)
- Ezra Pound, “In a Station of the Metro,” “The River Merchant’s Wife: A Letter” (*)
- Melvin B. Tolson, “Dark Symphony” (*)
- Langston Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” “I Too,” “Dream Boogie,” “Harlem” (*)

09/12

- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, chapters 1-6

09/14

- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, chapters 7-17

09/19

- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, chapters 18-25

2. Realism: Individuals and Ideologies

09/21

- Robert Hayden, “Middle Passage” (*)
- Muriel Rukeyser, “Then I Saw What the Calling Was,” “The Poem as Mask” (*)
- Delmore Schwartz, “The Heavy Bear That Goes with Me” (*)
- Dudley Randall, “A Different Image” (*)
- Gwendolyn Brooks, “The Mother,” “The Lovers of the Poor,” “We Real Cool” (*)
- Anthony Hecht, ““More Light! More Light!”” (*)

09/26

- Richard E. Kim, *The Martyred*, chapters 1-13

09/28

- Richard E. Kim, *The Martyred*, chapters 14-26

10/03

- Richard E. Kim, *The Martyred*, chapters 27-41
- ESSAY #1 DRAFT #1 DUE TO YOUR SECTION LEADER BEFORE 11:59PM VIA MOODLE

3. Postmodernism: Identity and Truth

10/05

- Lawrence Ferlinghetti, "Populist Manifesto" (*)
- Gerald Stern, "Behaving Like a Jew" (*)
- Frank O'Hara, "The Day Lady Died" (*)
- Adrienne Rich, "Planetarium," from *Twenty-One Love Poems*: XIII (*)
- Amiri Baraka, "An Agony. As Now.," "Black Art" (*)
- Audre Lorde, "Power" (*)
- Sonia Sanchez, "poem at thirty" (*)

10/10

- Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer*, chapter 1

10/12

- Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer*, chapter 2

10/17

- Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer*, chapters 3-4
- ESSAY #1 DRAFT #2 DUE TO YOUR SECTION LEADER BEFORE 11:59PM VIA MOODLE

10/19

- MIDTERM EXAM

4. Magical Realism: Gender and Faith

10/24

- Paula Gunn Allen, "Grandmother" (*)
- James Welch, "Christmas Comes to Moccasin Flat" (*)
- Ai, "Cuba, 1962," "The Kid," "Finished" (*)
- Yusef Komunyakaa, "Tu Do Street," "Facing It" (*)
- Joy Harjo, "My House Is the Red Earth" (*)
- Garrett Hongo, "The Legend" (*)
- Judith Ortiz Cofer, "Quinceañera" (*)

10/26

- Toni Morrison, *Paradise*, "Ruby," "Mavis," "Grace"

10/31

- Toni Morrison, *Paradise*, "Seneca"

11/02

- Toni Morrison, *Paradise*, "Divine," "Patricia"

11/07

- Toni Morrison, *Paradise*, "Consolota," "Lone," "Save-Marie"

5. Metamulticulturalism: Interpretation and Love

11/09

- Naomi Shihab Nye, “Arabic” (*)
- Alberto Ríos, “Nani” (*)
- Lorna Dee Cervantes, ““Love of My Flesh, Living Death”” (*)
- Louise Erdrich, “Indian Boarding School: The Runaways” (*)
- Marilyn Chin, “How I Got That Name” (*)
- Cathy Song, “The Youngest Daughter” (*)
- Reetika Vazirani, from *White Elephants* (*)
- Sherman Alexie, “The Powwow at the End of the World” (*)

11/14

- David Treuer, *The Translation of Dr. Apelles*, Translator’s Introduction, Prologue, Book I

11/16

- David Treuer, *The Translation of Dr. Apelles*, Book II

11/21

- David Treuer, *The Translation of Dr. Apelles*, Book III

11/28

- David Treuer, *The Translation of Dr. Apelles*, Book IV

6. Neomodernism: Language and Globalization

11/30

- Valeria Luiselli, *Faces in the Crowd*, pp. 1-72

12/05

- Valeria Luiselli, *Faces in the Crowd*, pp. 72-146
- ESSAY #2 PROPOSAL DUE TO YOUR SECTION LEADER

12/07

- Conclusion
- Course evaluations

12/12

- FINAL EXAM

12/16

- ESSAY #2 DUE TO YOUR SECTION LEADER BEFORE 11:59PM VIA MOODLE