



Romare Bearden, *The Block* (1971)

ENGL 1301W-001 | FALL 2019

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

T/H 1:00-2:15 Rapson Hall 100

Website: canvas.umn.edu

Instructor: Dr. John Pistelli

Email: piste004@umn.edu

Office Hours: T 11:30AM-12:30PM 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, collective trauma, and other social facts shape culture—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 history; as this is a writing-intensive course, we will focus on responding to imaginative writing 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, *Beloved* (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 2 weeks of the course. You must make arrangements for an incomplete before the last day of class.

Disability Accommodations

The University of Minnesota views disability as an important aspect of diversity, and is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you have, or you think you have, a disability in any area such as mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical, please contact the DRC office on your campus (612-626-1333) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with instructors to minimize classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, students should contact the DRC as noted above.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have a disability accommodation letter dated for this semester or this year, please contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have questions or concerns about your accommodations please contact your access consultant/disability specialist.

Additional information is available on the DRC website: diversity.umn.edu/disability or email drc@umn.edu with questions.

Student Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as: 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. Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Writing Support

Student Writing Support (SWS) offers free writing instruction for all University of Minnesota students—graduate and undergraduate—at all stages of the writing process. In face-to-face and online collaborative consultations, SWS consultants from across the disciplines help students develop productive writing habits and revision strategies. Consulting is available by appointment online and in Nicholson Hall, and on a walk-in basis in Appleby Hall. For more information, call 612-625-1893 or go to writing.umn.edu/sws. In addition, SWS offers a number of web-based resources on topics such as avoiding plagiarism, documenting sources, and planning and completing a writing project.

Students for Whom English is a Second Language (Department Policy)

University policy requires that undergraduate students in the same class be held to the same standards of academic performance and accomplishment. Students for whom English is a second language, however, may have difficulty with the readings, lectures, discussions, and writing assignments in a course. The University offers many resources to assist non-native speakers of English, including courses and consultations through the [Minnesota English Language Program](#), the [Center for Writing](#), the [Department of Writing Studies](#), and [International Student and Scholar Services](#).

Student Conduct Code

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community. As a student at the University you are expected to adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities." To review the University's Student Conduct Code, please see:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Instructors determine if personal electronic devices (such as cell phones and laptops) are allowed in the classroom. Students may be directed to turn off personal electronic devices if the devices are not being used for class purposes. Students are not permitted to record any part of a class/lab/other session unless explicitly granted permission by the instructor. If the student does not comply, the student may be asked to leave the classroom. For complete information, please reference the policy on Student Responsibilities: <http://policy.umn.edu/education/studentresp>

Sexual Misconduct

I want to let you know that, in my role as a University employee, I am required to share information that I learn about possible sexual misconduct with the campus Title IX office that addresses these concerns. This allows a Title IX staff member to reach out to those who have experienced sexual misconduct to provide information about the personal support resources and options for investigation that they can choose to access. You are welcome to talk with me about concerns related to sexual misconduct. You can also or alternately choose to talk with a confidential resource; the University offers victim-advocacy support professionals, health services professionals and counselors that will not share information that they learn about sexual misconduct. (This applies to teaching assistants as well.)

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.

Offensive Material (Department Policy)

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; 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:

<https://cla.umn.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/classroom-policies>

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

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

Prologue

09/03

- Introduction to the course

1. Modernism: Culture

09/05

- Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro," "The River Merchant's Wife: A Letter" (*)
- William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow" (*)
- Gertrude Stein, "Susie Asado" (*)
- Angelina Weld Grimké, "Fragment" (*)
- Melvin B. Tolson, "Dark Symphony" (*)
- Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "I Too," "Dream Boogie," "Harlem" (*)

09/10

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

09/12

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

09/17

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

2. Realism: Ideology

09/19

- 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!'" (*)

09/24

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

09/26

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

10/01

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

3. Postmodernism: Identity

10/03

- 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" (*)
- June Jordan, "Poem about My Rights" (*)

10/10

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

10/12

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

10/15

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

10/17

- MIDTERM EXAM

4. Magical Realism: Memory

10/22

- 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" (*)

10/24

- Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, pp. 3-86

10/29

- Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, pp. 87-156

10/31

- Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, pp. 157-235

11/05

- Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, pp. 236-324

5. Metamulticulturalism: Interpretation

11/07

- Naomi Shihab Nye, “Arabic” (*)
- Alberto Ríos, “Nani” (*)
- Louise Erdrich, “Indian Boarding School: The Runaways” (*)
- Marilyn Chin, “How I Got That Name” (*)
- Cathy Song, “The Youngest Daughter” (*)
- Reetika Vazirani, from *White Elephants* (*)

11/12

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

11/14

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

11/19

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

6. Neomodernism: Translation

11/21

- Lorna Dee Cervantes, “Love of My Flesh, Living Death” (*)
- Valeria Luiselli, *Faces in the Crowd*, pp. 1-72

12/03

- Valeria Luiselli, *Faces in the Crowd*, pp. 72-146

Epilogue

12/05

- Conclusion and course evaluations

12/10

- FINAL EXAM

12/13

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

ENGL 1301W | ESSAY ASSIGNMENT**Essay #1 draft #1 due to your T.A. via Canvas by 11:59PM on 10/01/19****Essay #1 draft #2 due to your T.A. via Canvas by 11:59PM on 10/15/19****Essay #2 due to your T.A. via Canvas by 11:59PM on 12/13/19**

Essay #1 instructions: Please choose a novel or a poem (or a set of poems by one poet) that was assigned in the first third of the course and write an analytical, argumentative essay of 1000-1100 words explaining one discrete aspect of the text's meaning.

Essay #2 instructions: Please choose a novel or a poem (or a set of poems by one poet) assigned in the course and write and write an analytical, argumentative essay of 1500-1600 words explaining one discrete aspect of the text's meaning.

If you wrote about fiction for the first essay, you must write about poetry for the second; if you wrote about poetry for the first, you must write about fiction for the second.

In both cases, your essay will be driven by an argument, or thesis, that communicates your interpretation and that organizes the essay's evidence toward the end of proving your claim.

Your thesis should be as concrete as possible, and it should go beyond the obvious or summary. "*Quicksand* is about race in America" is an ineffective thesis because too vague; instead you should tell your reader exactly how the novel or poem treats its theme and what the text ultimately communicates about it—e.g., "*Quicksand* shows how cultural ideas about race constrict the development of the individual." This thesis should be stated near the beginning of your essay; it does not necessarily need to be confined to a single sentence, but it should be worded as concisely and specifically as possible. You may only arrive at a definite idea of your thesis after having written most or all of the paper, but it is imperative that you then go back and place it at the beginning to offer your reader a map of your argument.

Please note: this essay should not be a summary of the text, nor should it be a recitation of historical or biographical facts about the life and times of the author. It is a literary interpretation—a characterization of the text's meaning and effect through a careful selection and explication of its elements. A plot summary or a historical or biographical recitation cannot be given a high grade for this assignment. Historical information should only be used to contextualize your interpretation; as for plot, assume your reader already knows it. You may allude once or twice to the author's biography for context, but there is no need to do so, and your argument should not depend on it.

Your essay following the thesis should be divided into discrete sub-topics organized as individual paragraphs (e.g., paragraph one examines how *Quicksand* portrays American racial ideology, paragraph two shows how this ideology touches Helga's life, and paragraph three demonstrates that it has constricted her development). You may want to give these paragraphs

opening sentences that announce their theme (e.g., “Helga’s encounters with American ideas about race prevent her from realizing her potential or getting what she desires”), but you do not have to do so as long as the organizing principle of the paragraph is clear.

You should make judicious use of quotations; do not quote more of the text than you plan to discuss in detail. Also be sure to introduce the quotation rather than dropping it into the middle of a paragraph, and to follow the quotation with an explanation of its significance for your argument, with particular attention to its literary features (metaphor, tone, rhyme, imagery, etc.). For example, you may quote a few sentences from *Quicksand* in which Helga reacts to a racist remark and note how the tone of the prose describing her response implies her anger and resentment, emotions that prevent her from progressing toward her goals or desires.

Your opening paragraph should provide some context for the ensuing discussion: you might begin with historical or literary information (mentioning modernism, the Harlem Renaissance, or the Great Migration in relation to *Quicksand*, for instance). Your conclusion should not only restate your argument but also suggest an avenue for further exploration; in resting your case, invite others to respond.

Though you will have the opportunity to revise between the first and final drafts of the first essay, this is not an invitation to submit work that is incomplete, not proofread, or otherwise unfinished for your first draft. The first draft must be a complete and polished essay meeting all the requirements for the assignment. The better it is, the less work you should have to do in revision. The final grade will be an average of the grades for the first and final drafts; it is in your interest to make the first draft as good as it can be.

Please follow MLA style for document format and citations. Provide parenthetical citations to show the source of your quotations; use line numbers rather than page numbers when quoting poetry. There is no need to consult outside sources for this essay, but if you do so please make clear what they are. For literary analyses, there is no need to cite page or line numbers for anything other than direct quotation.

Reminder: titles of lyric poems should be given in quotation marks (e.g., “In a Station of the Metro”), while titles of novels are given in italics (e.g., *Quicksand*).

Please use a standard font, such as 12-point Times New Roman, and double-space the document. There should be no extra spaces between paragraphs. Please provide a heading in the upper left with your name, date, and the assignment, and include a descriptive, arresting title (e.g., “‘The Race’s Ills’: Racial Ideology and the Defeat of the Individual in Nella Larsen’s *Quicksand*”) centered one line above the essay’s first line.

Essays should be uploaded to Canvas before midnight on the dates indicated. Please consult your T.A. for further or more specific instructions.