

COURSE SYLLABUS
ENG 338
Studies in Multicultural Literature
3 Credits
Evans 356, T/Th 11:00-12:20
Fall 2007

Prof. Shemak
Office: Evans 411
Office ph: (936)-294-1432
Office Hours: T/Th 10-11 a.m., and by appt.
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Required Texts

Chris Abani, *Graceland*, isbn 0312425287
Julia Alvarez, *Yo!*, isbn 0452279186
Lan Cao, *Monkey Bridge*, isbn 0140263616
Edwidge Danticat, *Krik? Krak!*, isbn 067976657X
Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, isbn 1594481776

OBJECTIVES

The focus of this course is non-European/EuroAmerican multicultural literature. We will be reading novels, short stories, memoirs, and essays that present the experiences people from of a variety of ethnic and cultural communities in the United States and elsewhere. We will read texts about the experiences of Latino/a, African-American, Vietnamese, Haitian, Nigerian, Native American, and Afghan communities. We will also examine the role of colonialism and slavery in constructing racial and ethnic identities.

Other questions we will consider:

- What kinds of perceptions or beliefs do you have about race and ethnicity? Where did they come from?
- How have racial and ethnic communities been defined historically? Who has had the power of defining these identities?
- How do so-called ethnic writers represent their communities?
- What is the role of language in representing these communities?

- What is the relationship between a particular racial or ethnic group and the larger society? Are they the minority or majority—and why is this important?
- How can race and ethnicity be “constructions”? How are these “constructions” challenged in the texts we are reading?

Objectives include:

- Developing critical thinking skills by analyzing literary themes, characterization, plot, etc.
- Developing writing skills through a variety of forms of writing including in-class writing and formal written papers.
- Developing an appreciation for literatures from a variety of diverse cultures.

ASSIGNMENTS and GRADING

ATTENDANCE is required. You will receive 2 unexcused absences. Once they're gone, that's it. SAVE these and use them for when you are ill, must travel, attend a funeral, care for a sick family member, study for an exam in another class, or oversleep. Students who miss more than 2 classes, even for very compelling reasons (and I've heard them all!), will have a very hard time keeping up with the course assignments and at that point, I would suggest that you drop/withdraw from the class. Your grade will be lowered for absences over 2.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: This is not a lecture course. Class Participation is a part of your daily responsibility in the course. Participation does not mean simply showing up to class, but instead includes active, engaged discussion of the day's readings. Other forms of class participation include any in-class or homework exercises (small group or individual) that I assign. In order to be fully engaged in class, you must **TURN OFF ALL CELLPHONES, BEEPERS, HEADPHONES BEFORE CLASS BEGINS**. Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Behavior that **will not be tolerated:**

- Text-messaging
- Answering cellphone calls
- Listening to headphones

- Sleeping
- reading the newspaper
- doing homework for another class
- talking out of turn
- inappropriate remarks to or about me or other students

There are myriad other behaviors other than those listed above that may be considered disruptive. Students who exhibit disruptive behavior will be asked to leave and possibly reported to both the department chair and the dean.

Thus, engaging in said activities during class will have a negative impact on your grade in the course. Additionally, while it is encouraged that you will raise pertinent questions about what we are reading/discussing, your comments should be made in the spirit of fairminded academic discussion. Class begins promptly on the hour. It is disrespectful to me and to your classmates to arrive late. Arriving late on a regular basis will have a negative impact on your grade.

NOTE: Please sign your name when sending an email. Otherwise, I may not respond.

READING: Some weeks our reading will be heavy (up to 150 pages). Other weeks the reading will be minimal (10-30 pages). In order to do well in the course, you must keep up with the readings. We will discuss as much as possible in class, but there will be times when we don't get to cover everything. However, you will still be responsible for all of the readings.

BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION LIST POSTINGS. You are required to post to the discussion list by 5:00 pm every Friday. Your postings should be at least 75 words. You can choose to continue a thread of a discussion we have had in class, to pose a question to the list about something that you don't understand about the readings, answer someone's questions about the readings, or start a new topic related to the readings and issues covered in the course. This discussion list is meant to be your forum—I may interject from time to time, but will not comment regularly. Any inappropriate

comments or discussions (i.e. unrelated to the course) will not be tolerated and will negatively effect your grade.

QUIZZES: From time to time, there will be quizzes on the readings. These will usually be announced, but if I suspect that people have not done the readings, I may give a pop quiz. Quizzes will be figured as part of your class participation grade.

EXAM: There will be one exam that will include identification of passages, short answer, and essay questions.

PAPERS:

3 Short Analysis Papers. 250 words each.. Topics TBA.. All papers must be submitted in both hard copy AND on digital dropbox. If I suspect that a paper has been plagiarized, I will submit it to the turnitin.com database.

1 FINAL CRITICAL ANALYSIS PAPER. 5-6 pages. In this paper, you will be asked to construct a literary analysis of a text or texts. This is a more extensive assignment than the short papers as you will be building an argument around your interpretation of the text(s). All papers must be submitted in both hard copy AND on digital dropbox. If I suspect that a paper has been plagiarized, I will submit it to the turnitin.com database.

I urge you to make use of the Writing Center available on campus for assistance with student writing. Phone: (936) 294-3680. E-mail: wctr@shsu.edu

GRADING:

Weekly Blackboard Discussion List Postings		10%
A 90-100		
Short Paper 1	10%	B 80-
89.9		
Short Paper 2	10%	C 70-
79.9		
Short Paper 3	10%	
Participation	15%	D 60-
69.9		
EXAM	20%	F below 60
Critical Analysis 2	<u>25%</u>	
TOTAL	100%	

COURSE POLICIES

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Any students found cheating on exams, or plagiarizing papers (which would include not using proper citation, appropriating someone else's ideas as your own, or pasting pieces of written texts from other sources into your paper without indicating that the words and ideas are not your own) will FAIL the course.

The statements on academic dishonesty that are listed below are taken from the SHSU Code of Conduct.

<https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>

5.31 "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

(1) Copying from another student's test paper, a laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs. □

(2) Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test. □

(3) Collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work. □

(4) Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered test.

(5) Substituting for another student; permitting any other person; or otherwise assisting any other person to substitute for oneself or for another student in the taking of an examination or test or the preparation of academic work to be submitted for academic credit. □

(6) Bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test. □

(7) Purchasing, or other wise acquiring and submitting as one's own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm. This section does not apply to the typing of the rough and/or final versions of an assignment by a professional typist.

5.32 "Plagiarism" means the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or idea into one's own work offered for credit.

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM: Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

It is the policy of SHSU that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with me so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

Note: All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential.

Note: No accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center. The counseling center is located across from the Lee Drain Building, next to the Farrington Building.
Phone: 936.294.1720

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made in the first fifteen days of the semester. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS: Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: You are responsible for any and all changes to the syllabus.

Tues. 8/21 Introduction

Thurs. 8/22 Kite Runner
p. 1-58

Tues. 8/28 Kite Runner
p. 59-142

Interview with author:

<http://www.newsline.com.pk/newsnov2003/newsbeat4nov.htm>

Resource Guide from UT-Arlington:

<http://www.uta.edu/uac/one-book/author-khaled-hosseini>

Author Interview with Afghanzone:

http://www.afghanzone.com/The_News/Latest_News/Interview_with_Khaled_Hosseini_author_of_%22Kite_Runner%22/

Thurs. 8/30 Kite Runner
p. 142-203

Tues. 9/4 Kite Runner p. 203-272

Thurs. 9/6 Kite Runner, 273-371
DUE: Short Paper 1

Tues. 9/11 Suheir Hammad, "A Road Still Becoming"
(handout)

"First Writing Since" poem at
http://www.teachingforchange.org/News%20Items/first_writing_since.htm

Performance of "First Writing Since" on You Tube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j42aAsS4KhA>

"Mike Check" poem at:
<http://www.theangrypoet.com/archives/voice/hammad/>

Performance of "Mike Check" on You Tube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_q11Nnba3iQ

Thurs. 9/13 Sandra Cisneros, "My Friend Lucy Who Smells Like Corn" (all on e-reserve)

"Eleven"

"Salvador Late or Early"

"Barbie-Q"

"Mericans"

"Tepeyac"

Leslie Marmon Silko, "Lullaby" (e-reserve)

Tues. 9/18 Omi and Winant, "Racial Formation in the U.S." (handout)

Charles Chestnutt, "The Wife of His Youth"
(short-story available online)
Text and author biography online at:
<http://www.online-literature.com/charles-chesnutt/wife-of-his-youth/>

Thurs. 9/20 The Dawn at My Back (e-reserve)
www.dawnatmyback.com

Tues. 9/25 The Dawn at My Back

Thurs. 9/27 Lone Star (film to be viewed in class)
Jose Limon (e-reserve)

Tues. 10/2 Lone Star
DUE: Short Paper 2

Thurs. 10/4 Krik? Krak!

http://shs.westport.k12.ct.us/chia/Caribbean/handouts/krik%20krak/k_k_nightmare.htm

Tues. 10/9 EXAM

Thurs. 10/11 Krik? Krak!

Tues. 10/16 Krik? Krak!

Thurs. 10/18 Graceland
p. 3-58

Readers Guide:
<http://www.picadorusa.com/rqg/files/0312425287.pdf>

Interview with Chris Abani:
http://www.pw.org/maq/dq_abani.htm

Author's website:
<http://www.chrisabani.com/index.htm>

Radio interview with Chris Abani:

<http://www.wnyc.org/shows/lopate/episodes/2004/03/22>

Website includes video gallery of Abani and his art:

http://www.truthdig.com/interview/item/20060418_chris_abani_truthdig_interview/

Tues. 10/23 Graceland
p.59-122

Thurs. 10/25 Graceland
p. 123-219

Tues. 10/30 Graceland
p. 223-272

Thurs. 11/1 Graceland p. 273-321
DUE: Short Paper #3

Tues. 11/6 Yo
p. 3-72

Reader's Guide:

<http://us.penguin.com/static/rguides/us/yo.html>

Author bio:

http://voices.cla.umn.edu/vq/Bios/entries/alvarez_julia.html

Author website:

<http://www.juliaalvarez.com/>

Thurs. 11/8 Yo
p. 73-151

Tues. 11/13 Yo
p. 152-211

Thurs. 11/15 Yo
p. 213-309

Tues. 11/20 Class Canceled

Thurs. 11/22 Thanksgiving Break

Tues. 11/27 Monkey Bridge
p. 1-93

Thurs. 11/29 Monkey Bridge
p. 93-132

National Public Radio story on Vietnamese Refugee Resettlement:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6855407>

Vietnamese American History Website:

http://www.tolerance.org/teach/web/vietnamese/vac_pdfs/vac_timeline_02.pdf

Tues. 12/4 Monkey Bridge
133-191

Thurs. 12/6 Monkey Bridge
p. 192-260
Last Day of Class

FINAL PAPER DUE by the date of the Final Exam