

Abilene Christian University
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership throughout the World

ENGLISH 470—01 MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE SPRING 2012
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Dr. Steven T. Moore
Department of English

Class Room	Hardin Administration Building, Room #331
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Favorite Quotes

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going” (John 14:1-4).

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).

“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life” (Henry David Thoreau).

Departmental Mission Statement

Sovereign God calls us to be a community of learners—humbled, renewed, and unified before Him. As we are being transformed, we reflect His light, shaping all inquiry into a pursuit of God and His Truth. Let us encourage one another in this journey.

My Life Mission Statement

My entire being is not complete without a life mission statement: I will live as a living instrument for the Lord, constantly striving to show Christ to others, constantly inspiring amazing minds through teaching, and constantly savoring every adventure of life.

Required Texts

- Banyai, Istvan. The Other Side. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2005. 9780811846080.
- Chbosky, Stephen. The Perks of Being a Wallflower. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999. 9780671027346.
- Claremont, Chris. X-Men: God Loves, Man Kills. New York: Marvel Enterprises, 2011. 9780785157267.
- Cisneros, Sandra. House on Mango Street. New York: Knopf Doubleday, 1984. 9780679734772.
- Cisneros, Sandra. Woman Hollering Creek. New York: Vintage Books, 1991. 0679738568.
- Cunningham, Michael. The Hours. New York: Picador, 1998. 0312243022.
- Dubus III, Andre. House of Sand and Fog. New York: Norton, W.W. & Company, 2011. 9780393338119.
- Glancy, Diane. Claiming Breath. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. 9780803270664.
- Lee, Li-Young. The City in Which I Love You. New York: BOA Editions, 1990. 0918526833.
- Morrison, Toni. The Bluest Eye. New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2007. 9780307278449.
- Stockett, Kathryn. The Help. New York: Penguin Group, 2011. 9780425232200.
- Roose, Kevin. The Unlikely Disciple: A Sinner's Semester at America's Holiest University. Boston: Grand Central Publishing, 2010. 9780446178433.

Class Format

Students will passionately and assertively share critical insights and scholarly interpretations about the readings during class discussions. Each student will deliver a persuasive presentation in front of the class, and peers will be encouraged to raise fascinating questions and observations for the presenter to address. The classroom should be an exciting environment where students and the teacher will learn and grow together. Students will also be required to attend special class sessions off campus.

Course Description from Catalog:

An introduction to and a study of literature by various cultures in the United States. Includes both general backgrounds and specific authors and works. May be repeated as content varies. Prerequisite: Completion of sophomore English requirements.

Goals and Objectives

1. Students will examine a diverse survey of multicultural authors and perspectives; some of those perspectives will rise from various ethnic cultures and backgrounds (African-American, Hispanic American, Asian American, and Native American).

2. Students will examine some of the literary, historical, political, sociological, psychological, and economical influences upon some of these diverse cultures.
3. Students will encounter various perspectives, ideologies, and philosophies surrounding this area of study.
4. Students will explore some of the scholarly interpretations, concepts, theories, and ideals involved with the study of multicultural literature.
5. Students will discover some distinct patterns of thought in the study of multicultural literature.
6. Students will learn how to see themselves as professional researchers, literary scholars, and ingenious authors with countless unique thoughts and ideas.
7. Students will continue to learn and develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.
8. Students will respond to the subject material through creative and insightful writing assignments, presentations, and research papers.

Course Details

1. In this upper-level English course, I expect the highest level of commitment and dedication from all students. Your participation in our class discussions and your scholarly work should exhibit first-rate thinking.
2. Active participation is required in this class. Each student must have active participation. Allow your mind to truly soar in this class—answer questions, ask questions, talk about your discoveries, and share your insights about the literature. Your participation is a crucial component to the learning process; we learn and grow when all members are contributing around the table of life. Throughout this entire semester, you must consistently speak out and share your scholarly insights/questions about the readings with the entire class. Do not wait for me to call on you to speak out during the discussions. It is nearly impossible for you to receive an “A” in this class if you hold back during our discussions/group activities.
3. Also, you need to become extremely active and productive during in-class activities. Do not become the distraction or problem during group activities or during special in-class activities. Keep in mind that I will be determining (judging) what grade you will be receiving for your *Participation and Class Readiness* grade, so everything matters and counts. Talk with me if you have any questions regarding this important matter.
4. Each student is expected to read all assigned readings before class. Expect a reading quiz each time that we meet for class (surprise quizzes will factor into your final participation and class readiness grade).
5. If you are guilty of plagiarism or cheating on any assignment in this course—homework assignment, literary essay, or presentation—then you will automatically receive a zero on the work, and you will also face possible failure in the course for your actions. A case of academic dishonesty also requires the professor to report your action to the Chair of the English Department as well as the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. These administrators may then ask the Dean of Student Life to proceed with additional disciplinary

action—up to and including dismissal from the University, depending upon the extent of the offense.

6. Each student is expected to complete all work on time. **Late work will not be accepted in this class.** If I do not receive an assignment on time, then you will receive an automatic zero on it.
7. Attendance in this course is extremely important and essential. Students are highly discouraged from missing a class period. After your fourth unexcused absence and for every absence beyond four, I will deduct 10% from your final course grade. A student incurring nine absences, regardless of the reason, will receive a WF in the course (according to the English Department Attendance Policy). An exception is a university-sponsored event or an emergency approved by the professor of this course. Also, two tardies will constitute an absence.
8. If a student is absent from class, then he or she will not receive credit for the in-class activity, in-class assignment, quiz or homework scheduled for that day.
9. If a student is absent with a legitimate excuse (such as a personal crisis, death in the family, serious illness, or a university-sponsored event), then the student needs to contact the professor of this course immediately. The student might be required to bring a doctor's note for the day missed in class. If the professor approves the excuse, then the student will be allowed to complete missing work due for that particular day.
10. Professors are expected to conduct role call each class period. If the student is late to class, then the student should notify the professor at the end of class. The absence will not be changed to a tardy unless the student meets with the professor at the conclusion of class.
11. It is your responsibility to contact a reliable student in this class concerning lecture details and assignments when you are absent.
12. Disrespectful behavior (allowing your cell phone to ring in class, walking into class late, sleeping in class, e-mailing or playing games on your laptop, talking while the professor is lecturing, exhibiting rude behavior to a student or the professor, talking while a student is expressing a thought, rudely talking to the professor concerning a grade on an assignment, putting your head down on the desk during class, etc.) will not be tolerated in this course. If you are disrespectful in class, then you will be dismissed with a failing grade for that day. You will then be required to set up an appointment with the professor of this course before you can attend class again.
13. Pets are not allowed in the classroom.
14. Do not become a distraction with food brought into this classroom.
15. If you are constantly disrespectful in this class (review general definition up above), then I will deduct 20% off your final course grade.
16. I have an open door policy. If you are struggling in this course, please visit with me. If you are facing a difficult problem or a crisis in the family, which is preventing you from performing effectively in the course, then please meet with me immediately. We will pray together and we will try to reach a solution that will help your performance in the class. And even if you do not have a problem and you want to touch basis with me, feel free to come by my office. I love for students to visit me. This is one reason why I love teaching and this is why I am

- here at ACU. I want to do whatever I can to help you achieve success in this course.
17. Recording devices are not allowed at all in this course.
 18. If you have a problem with my evaluation of your work (essay, project, assignment, quiz, etc.), meet with me right away.
 19. **Your course grade is ultimately your responsibility; keep track of your scores and grades throughout the semester.** If you do not understand the instructions of an assignment, then it is your responsibility to contact me weeks BEFORE it is due. If you have a problem with a graded assignment, raise your concern to me immediately. Once the class has officially ended (when we depart on the very last day together), changing your final grade is not a possibility.
 20. **Finally, please let me know if you believe that a reading assignment or film in this course is going to trouble you spiritually or emotionally.**
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Grading Scale and Standards for Formal Work

A = 100—92%, B = 91—83%, C = 82—74%, D = 73—65%, F = 64—0%

Letter grades on essays have the following numerical equivalents:

A+ = 99	B+ = 90	C+ = 81	D+ = 72	F+ = 63
A = 96	B = 87	C = 78	D = 69	F = 60
A- = 93	B- = 84	C- = 75	D- = 66	F- = 57

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| A Paper | <p>Excellent, Outstanding, Fluent, Thought-Provoking, Original</p> <p>This paper is a superior and carefully organized response to the assigned topic, each paragraph having a controlling idea and excellent supporting detail, the style fluent and the content thought-provoking. There are few if any mechanical errors. The presentation shows thought and original insights on the part of the writer, independent of the teacher and/or text.</p> |
| B Paper | <p>Good, Above Average, Clear, Well-Organized</p> <p>This paper is a good response to the assigned topic. Each paragraph has a controlling idea adequately supported by detail. The sentences are clear and show some variety. Mechanical errors are not distracting to the reader. The writer has mastered the material presented by the text and/or the teacher.</p> |
| C Paper | <p>Average, Adequate, Competent, Fair, Unoriginal</p> <p>This paper is an adequate, routine response to the assigned topic. A central idea is stated, perhaps too generally, but it is more or less maintained and supported in token fashion. The style is moderately clear, and the mechanics are reasonably competent. Errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and organization do not seriously interfere with a reader's understanding of the paper.</p> |

D Paper **Below Average, Inadequate, Ineffective, Unclear, Under-developed**
 This paper is an inadequate response to the assigned topic because of significant mechanical errors that make communication ineffective, weakness of word choice, or insufficient support/understanding of the topic. It may contain a stated controlling idea, but the relation of details to that idea is unclear.

F Paper **Failure, Blocked Communication, Plagiarism-Cheating, Major Errors, Illiteracy, Directions Not Followed, Badly Under-developed**
 This paper is an altogether unacceptable response to the assigned topic, whether by failure of the writing, the thought, or both. The voice of the writer fails to appear because another writer's language has been misappropriated or because gross errors have blocked communication. A controlling idea does not exist or, if it does, it is incoherent or underdeveloped. Errors in diction may suggest illiteracy.

Breakdown of Final Grade

Research Paper	30%
Novel Responses, Reading Quizzes, Special Assignments	20%
Breakfast Club – Group Presentation	20%
Individual Presentation	20%
Participation and Class Readiness	10%

Assignments

Individual Presentation

Each student will deliver a presentation examining an assigned novel in this course by him/herself. Here are the specific details concerning this assignment: Produce a two-page **scholarly response** over the assigned novel. In this response, you are invited to reveal a profound insight through a literary device at work within the text, or uncover a fascinating interpretation about the text, or apply a school of thought to the text, or capture a bizarre or controversial perspective about the text. While making your case to us, you will need to provide direct quotes from your assigned novel in order to support your thinking. Please make copies of your response or handout for the entire class. You are welcomed to use PowerPoint. **Late presentations will not be accepted; if you show up 5 minutes late to class, your grade will drop a whole letter grade. If you are absent, you will receive an automatic zero.**

Allow the assigned novel to inspire you to produce an **original work of art** (poem, song, sketch, photograph, artifact, etc.). Your two-page scholarly response and your work of art must be extremely noteworthy and extremely polished on the day of your scheduled presentation. Keep in mind that late work will not be accepted in this class. Furthermore, you will serve as a critic/scholar as we examine your assigned novel for the entire week; you must actively engage the class with more of your questions, insights, and observations about your book as we meet to discuss it.

Group Presentation (Breakfast Club)

Each student will be assigned to work with a group at the beginning of the semester. Take note of the following requirements for your group project:

1. Work as a group in mapping out thought-provoking insights and observations about your assigned text. On the day of the presentation, select a member or two to energetically share the results. Produce a handout of those results (or feel free to include them in the printed program; see note down below).
2. Allow your group's assigned novel to inspire you all to create an original screenplay; perform it live for us or show us a short film featuring some of the actors from your group. Please do not run over seven minutes in length.
3. Your group is also responsible for providing a full course meal on the day of your group's presentation.
4. Finally, provide a professional handout or program showcasing your group's activities.
5. Spread the work out as a group; assign each individual a task that would richly allow that person's talents or gifts to shine. Please report any problem to me right away.

Novel Responses

After completing a book each week, you need to prepare a "novel response." Select the most significant passage from the entire novel; explain why the passage is the most significant to you. Then offer a meaningful question for the class to address. The response must be neatly typed and single-spaced. If you are scheduled to deliver a presentation over the book, then you are exempt from doing this assignment.

Research Paper

Each student will write a research paper on a topic relevant to this course. It must be in MLA format, "Times New Roman" for the font style, a 12-point font size, double-spaced, and 10-12 pages in length. Quote from secondary scholarly sources and a novel or more from our reading list in order to support your case. Spend quality time proofreading your work.

Course Schedule

The following schedule is subject to change by the professor of this course. It is the responsibility of each student to record changes to the course schedule. The **bold print** of a novel title means that it needs be read by that particular date. Whenever a novel is due, you are also required to complete a “novel response” (see course details for more instructions). Once again, late work will not be accepted in this class.

January 16	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 18	Introduction to the Course
January 20	Introduction to the Course, Assignments, and Expectations Read: “In My Country” by Jackie Kay and “Negotiating the Classroom: Learning and Teaching Multicultural Literature” by Arlette Ingram Willis and Marlen Diane Palmer (Handouts).
January 23	Stephen Chbosky – The Perks of Being a Wallflower
January 25	Stephen Chbosky – The Perks of Being a Wallflower
January 27	Read “A Boy’s Hell” by Frank Peretti Special Assignment Due: Describe/explore a scene from your childhood in the form of a letter; think of the structure and style from Chbosky’s book.
January 30	Sandra Cisneros – The House on Mango Street
February 1	Sandra Cisneros – The House on Mango Street
February 3	Rivera’s “And the Earth Did Not Devour Him” (Handout)
February 6	Kathryn Stockett – The Help
February 8	Kathryn Stockett – The Help
February 10	Kathryn Stockett – The Help
February 13	Toni Morrison – The Bluest Eye (Breakfast Club #1)
February 15	Toni Morrison – The Bluest Eye
February 17	Wright’s “Almost a Man” and Petry’s “Like a Winding Sheet” (Handout)
February 20	Diane Glancy – Claiming Breath
February 22	Erdrich’s “The Red Convertible” (Handout)
February 24	
February 27	Michael Cunningham – The Hours
February 29	Michael Cunningham – The Hours
March 2	Michael Cunningham – The Hours
March 5	Cinematic Exploration
March 7	Cinematic Exploration

March 9	Cinematic Exploration
March 12	Spring Break
March 14	Spring Break
March 16	Spring Break
March 19	Andre Dubus III – House of Sand and Fog (Breakfast Club #2)
March 21	Andre Dubus III – House of Sand and Fog
March 23	Andre Dubus III – House of Sand and Fog
March 26	Cinematic Exploration
March 28	Cinematic Exploration
March 30	Cinematic Exploration
April 2	Li-Young Lee – The City in Which I Love You
April 4	Bulosan's "Be American" (Handout)
April 6	Good Friday – No Classes
April 9	Chris Claremont – X Men: God Loves, Man Kills
April 11	Chris Claremont – X Men: God Loves, Man Kills
April 13	Chris Claremont – X Men: God Loves, Man Kills
April 16	Special Assignment Due: Draw out a few scenes of your very own comic strip OR become a photographer and take a couple of photographs that richly tell a story; in addition to your work of art, bring a typed description of your work.
April 18	Istvan Banyai – The Other Side
April 20	Istvan Banyai – The Other Side
April 23	Kevin Roose – The Unlikely Disciple
April 25	Kevin Roose – The Unlikely Disciple
April 27	Kevin Roose – The Unlikely Disciple
April 30	Research Paper Due
May 2	Class Poetry Event Special Assignment Due: In order to prepare for this event, you will need to produce an original poem. Think about some of the issues and themes of this course before writing it. Your poem must be neatly typed and please do not forget to include a title. On this day, formal attire is required. You will read your poem out loud in class, so practice reading/performing it before this special event.
May 4	Secret Brother and Secret Sister Day
May 7	Final Exam: 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM