English 6310: Underrepresented Groups and Genres

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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Tuesdays: 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m., 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.
Thursdays: 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Course Description
In this course we will study underrepresented groups and genres in the American literary canon by individuals who have not had the same exposure as privileged groups because of their cultural backgrounds, gender, sexual orientation, social class, etc. It is important to give such individuals a voice in our literary canon and, as critics argue, decolonize our college courses. Furthermore, we will gain a better understanding of why certain groups have not had equal representation in American history and culture and develop ideas on how the educators and the academy in general may begin to give these groups an equal share of exposure to create a classroom environment that is inclusive.

Course Objectives
Students will evaluate the course at the end of the semester. The two major objectives I emphasize from the course evaluations are:
1. “Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation for literature.”
2. “Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points-of-view.”

Texts
The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
The Mistress of Spices: A Novel by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni
Bless Me, Ultima by Rudolfo Anaya
The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts by Maxine Hong Kingston
Middlesex: A Novel by Jeffrey Eugenides
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie
The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

Semester Grade
Critical Approach to Text 10%
Abstract and Annotated Bib. 10%
Thesis and Outline 10%
Seminar Paper 50%
Paper Presentation 10%
Class Participation/Attendance 10%
Open Door Policy
Students are welcomed and encouraged to visit me whenever they wish to readings, assignments, or any other subject as it relates to this class. If students cannot come during my office hours, they may schedule an appointment at another time. The easiest and best way to contact me outside of my office hours is to e-mail me (gerrano@angelo.edu). I read my e-mail on a daily basis during weekdays and will reply promptly.

Participation and Attendance
Since seminars thrive on class discussion, regular attendance, and more importantly participation, is mandatory. Participation is crucial to what students and their peers learn throughout the semester, so students must have read all the materials assigned for the week. I will also be assigning critical works throughout the semester to prepare students for class discussion and will post these on Blackboard. Students must also be prepared to answer questions from the instructor and their peers during every class meeting. Excessive absences (more than two) will affect students’ grades; I will drop students’ grades by one letter grade after two absences for every class they miss.

Critical Approach to Text
Students will complete a 3-5 page paper that explores a critical approach to the themes and genres we will be studying throughout the semester. Students will evaluate a critical approach, such as critical race theory, queer theory, feminism, disability studies, etc., and apply this approach to our study of themes and genres for the week. Students will sign up to present their findings throughout the semester, depending on when we cover the topic students choose.

Research for Seminar Paper
Ideally, a seminar paper takes an entire semester to work on, so students need to begin work on the paper as soon as the class begins. After spring break, students will complete work that will aid them in the research and writing of the paper.
- Tentative Thesis – a clear, concise argument is necessary for the tentative thesis. The tentative thesis statement will be one sentence in length, and it will convey the overall argument for the seminar paper.
- Annotated Bibliography – A list of fourteen sources with a complete bibliographical citation for a critical work followed by two sentences explaining the overall argument of the critical work.
- Abstract – a 500 word paragraph explaining the overall argument of the seminar paper. The abstract must have a clear thesis statement.
- Outline – a four-page outline of the paper that presents the major topics that will be discussed in the seminar paper. The outline must be organized and well developed.

Seminar Paper
A critical analysis of at least one primary source we cover this semester with at least seven secondary sources that support this analysis that will be 12-15 pages in length. Students may either take a pedagogical approach to a text or a critical approach. If students choose a pedagogical approach, they will focus on how to teach a particular text and present their pedagogical approach during the last two weeks of the semester. If students choose to focus on a critical approach, they would present their paper as a potential conference paper during the last two weeks of the semester.

Paper Presentation
A presentation of the Seminar Paper will allow students to practice for a future lesson or a conference presentation. The presentations will be 15-20 minutes in length. Students will present their papers to the class during the last two class meetings of the semester.
**Departmental Policy on Academic Honesty**

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are *Academic* responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is *Honesty* contained in both print and web versions of the Student Handbook: [http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/documents/pdf/Student_Handbook.pdf](http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/documents/pdf/Student_Handbook.pdf) Failure to comply with the honor code will result in disciplinary action and a failing grade in this course.

**I will assign a grade of “F” for the following violations:**

I. Plagiarism “the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another’s work or idea into one’s own work offered for credit” (Regents’ *Rules and Regulations*, Chapter VI, Section 5.32)

II. Cheating - this includes copying material from another member of the class, having someone in or outside of class complete an assignment or exam for you.

**Students with Special Needs**

Persons with special needs, which may warrant academic accommodations, must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center; request such accommodations prior to any accommodations being implemented.

**Inclusion Statement**

We will be addressing controversial topics related to underprivileged groups throughout the semester. I support a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honor all identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). Please let me if there is a particular name or pronouns by which you identify. Also, please let me know if anything I or your peers may say in class makes you feel excluded or marginalized. You may come see me in my office, leave me a note, and your concerns will remain anonymous.

**Confidential Resources Available to Students:**

Office of Title IX Compliance: 325-486-6357  
University Health Clinic: 325-942-2171  
University Counseling Center: 325-942-2173  
ASU Crisis Helpline: 325-486-6345
Schedule of Readings and Assignments
(Tentative and Subject to Change)

January 15
Course Introduction and Syllabus
Chippewa Songs
African-American Spirituals

January 22
Frederick Douglass:  The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

January 29
Booker T. Washington: Atlanta Compromise Speech
Charles Chesnutt:  "The Sheriff's Children"
Kate Chopin:  “Desiree's Baby”

February 5
Maxine Hong Kingston: The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts

February 12
Jacob Riis:  Excerpt from How the Other Half Lives
Emma Lazarus:  "The New Colossus"
Gary Soto:  "Mexicans Begin Jogging"
Naomi:  "Jerusalem"

February 19
Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni: The Mistress of Spices

February 26
W. E. B Du Bois: "A Negro Art Renaissance"
Jessie Redmon Fauset: “Oriflamme”
Zora Neale Hurston: “The Eatonville Anthology”
Langston Hughes: Selections

March 5
Rudolfo Anaya: Bless Me, Ultima

March 19
Anne Sexton: Selections
Sylvia Plath: Selections
Neil Hilborn: "OCD"
Student Suggestions
Abstract and Annotated Bibliography due on Blackboard
March 26
Sherman Alexie: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

April 2
Jeffrey Eugenides: *Middlesex: A Novel*

April 9
Jeffrey Eugenides: *Middlesex: A Novel*
*Tentative Thesis and Outline Due on Blackboard*

April 16
Angie Thomas: *The Hate U Give*

April 23
Dan Parent: Selections from *Archie’s Pal Kevin Keller*
Student Suggestions
*Seminar Papers Due*

April 30
*Seminar Paper Presentations*

May 7
*Seminar Paper Presentations*