

**ENGL 3560-M01****Ethnic Literature of the United States****Anne Dewey****Fall 2016****3 credits****Class meetings: Monday and Wednesday, 14:30-15:45****Office: San Ignacio Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Office 316****Office Hours: Monday 9:00-10:45 and 13:00-14:15****Wednesday 13:00-14:15****Friday 9:00-10:45****Contact: (tel.) 91 554 5858, ext. 226; adewey@slu.edu****COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS**

What does ethnicity mean as an element of individual and collective identity? How have the definition and meaning of ethnicity and specific ethnicities changed in the U.S. during the past century? What is the relationship of literature by authors from different ethnic groups to “U.S. literature” as a whole? Studying how writers from diverse backgrounds struggle to expression and gain recognition for their cultural identities in the changing social conditions of the United States over the last century will give students a new perspective on U.S. identity, the American Dream and the diversity that produces U.S. culture. We will explore these questions through readings that include novels and a memoir by writers of a variety of ethnicities.

SLU Madrid’s international student body and the changing landscape of ethnicity in 20<sup>th</sup>-century U.S. literature provide a rich context in which to discuss broader questions about ethnicity such as: How does one become ethnic? Why do ethnicities emerge, disappear, and change over time? What is the relationship between ethnicity and race? between different ethnicities in a nation? Does the “melting pot” exist? Why are some writers considered “ethnic” and others not?

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students should:

- Become familiar with the varied literary and linguistic forms used in fictional narratives and memoir to express ethnic identity and the evolution of these forms throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century literature in the United States
- Develop understanding of the changing constructions of ethnicity and specific ethnic identities in the United States during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as of some historical, political, social, and cultural forces shaping the formation of ethnicity
- Interpret how a specific work of literature constructs ethnicity through familiarity with U.S. literary conventions and traditions and comparison to other works read in the course
- Develop critical awareness of their own conception of ethnicity and understand how it relates to theories we study and to those of their classmates
- Become familiar with basic research resources on ethnicity in literary criticism and be able to incorporate these into informed arguments about ethnicity in a work of literature, both orally and in writing

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Zitkala-Sa. *American Indian Stories*. 1921 (written 1900-1915).

Anzia Yeziarska. *Bread Givers*. 1925.

Zora Neale Hurston. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. 1937.

Louis Chu. *Eat a Bowl of Tea*. 1961.

Joyce Carol Oates. *Expensive People*. 1968.

Richard Rodriguez. *Hunger for Memory*. 1981.

Colson Whitehead. *The Intuitionist*. 1999.

Jhumpa Lahiri. *The Lowland*. 2013.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance Policy:** Unexcused absences and lateness will lower a student's grade. *More than 3 unexcused absences or persistent lateness will result in a lower grade. More than 10 unexcused absences results in automatic failure of the class.* We will discuss what constitutes an "excused" absence during the first day in class.

**Class assignments:** Students should read the assigned texts carefully and critically before class. Please come with questions, observations, and ideas to share. All papers are to be typed or printed on a word processor. Thoughtful listening and engagement of ideas discussed in class is essential to our learning community.

**Students with Disabilities:** In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to: <http://www.slu.edu/madrid/learning-resources>.

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations **must** contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also **must** notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course. Please contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu) or +915 54 58 58, ext. 230 for an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services. For more information about academic accommodations, see "Student Resources" on the SLU-Madrid webpage. *Note:* Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

**Writing Aids:** The English Writing Assistance Center (EWAC) (and the Spanish Assistance Center) provides students with help in writing. They will review TYPED draft material to help you improve any aspect of a paper you wish to work on. You can sign up for an appointment online on the English Department webpage or drop in and wait your turn. Be sure to take a copy of the paper assignment to your tutorial if you

have one. The English Department webpage posts the hours of EWAC and a series of links to *online writing resources*, including research resources and style and documentation guides.

**Late Paper Policy:** The assignment schedule states when papers are due. Late papers will drop one half letter grade (for example, from a B+ to a B) per class late. Always contact me before an assignment is due if you anticipate a problem. All written assignments must be complete in order for you to pass the course.

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policy:** Because cheating, falsification, and plagiarism are serious academic offenses, because you cheat yourself of the education and self-development you deserve, and because my experience has taught me that offenders who are not punished often repeat, I am merciless in pursuing plagiarism.

Sanctions for violations of academic integrity include an F (grade of 0) on the assignment for a first occurrence and an F for the course in the case of further occurrences, with the possibility of further disciplinary action taken by the University. We will discuss plagiarism and review Saint Louis University's policies on academic integrity further during our first class meeting and in the class about writing about literature. *Always* cite your sources, and do not hesitate to ask me if you are in doubt about how to cite your sources properly.

#### **Summary of SLU Madrid's Academic Honesty Policy**

*Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors.* The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at:

[http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic\\_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL%20%206-26-15.pdf](http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL%20%206-26-15.pdf).

Additionally, SLU-Madrid has posted its academic integrity policy online: <http://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics>. As a member of the University community, you are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions and appeals.

The professor will review these matters during the first weeks of the term. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program or the Academic Dean of the Madrid Campus.

**English Department Plagiarism Statement:** In the instance of a suspicion of plagiarism or other form of academic dishonesty it should be remembered that the instructor has the right to require the student to prove (by quiz, interview, or other means) that they are the author of submitted work. Inability to do so will result in a report to the committee for academic dishonesty.

**Title IX anti-discrimination:** Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to

report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 ([mmaruri@slu.edu](mailto:mmaruri@slu.edu); 915-54-5858, ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid's Counseling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall ([counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu); 915-54-5858, ext. 230) or Sinews Multiplettherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid ([www.sinews.es](http://www.sinews.es); 917-00-1979). To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address:<http://www.slu.edu/Documents/Madrid/campus-life/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf>.

**Assessment and Submission of Work:** In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to accreditation requirements, SLU-Madrid regularly assesses its teaching, services and programs for evidence of student learning. For this purpose, SLU-Madrid keeps representative examples of student work from all courses and programs on file, including assignments, papers, exams, portfolios and results from student surveys, focus groups and reflective exercises. Copies of your work for this course may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes. If you prefer SLU-Madrid not to retain your work for this purpose, you must communicate this decision in writing to your professor.

## EVALUATION

You will be evaluated based on your progress toward achieving the course objectives in both oral and written expression. While all of the items listed in the evaluation below provide the occasion for you to achieve the course outcomes, specific assignments focus more on some outcomes than on others: Class participation and work on the group projects help you to deepen critical understanding of your own idea of ethnicity. Exams focus on your familiarity with the content of the literature and theories we discuss, as well as your ability to compare, contrast, and synthesize themes and critical issues the specific works studied. Papers provide the opportunity to apply and integrate these theories to analyze how specific works of literature construct ethnicity.

I am especially interested in your ability to think creatively and responsibly, developing your own questions and paths of inquiry in research and constructing careful arguments that critique, synthesize, and build on the knowledge you are acquiring. Your work should show understanding and critical consciousness of the ideas discussed in the readings and in class and should develop from dialogue with classmates, benefitting from their diverse personal experiences of ethnicity.

Individual components of coursework are assigned a letter grade; the final grade is a weighted average of those grades. Those percentage weights are calculated as follows:

Class participation (including presentations)	10%
Personal reflection on ethnicity (3-4 pp.)	10%

First interpretive paper (4-5 pp.)	15%
Second interpretive paper (4-5 pp.)	15%
Partial exam	20%
Research paper (9-11 pp.)	30%

### CRITERIA FOR AN EXCELLENT LITERATURE PAPER

1. **Strong, clear, precise, original thesis** (at this introductory level, original means going beyond related ideas discussed in class)
2. **Perceptive argumentation from textual evidence** demonstrating ability to understand literary language, applying the *close reading skills* with *awareness of the literary forms, strategies, and devices* discussed in class
3. **Skillful organization and integration of evidence** into a well-organized argument whose sections or steps are clearly related to the paper's thesis
4. **Clear, varied, vivid style.**
5. **Correct use of mechanics**—punctuation, spelling, MLA citation format
6. Where relevant, **skillful integration of historical and biographical material or secondary criticism** in support of one's argument
7. Points 1-3 are crucial to passing this class. My grading is holistic; great strength in one area of the paper can compensate for weakness in another, just as great weakness in one area prevents papers from receiving an A. Within this spectrum:
8. *A* papers must achieve Points 1-5 with great competence, and where relevant, Point 6. Sloppiness in Points 4-5 prevents papers from earning an A.
9. *B* papers are usually missing one of Points 1-3 (and Point 6 where relevant) or more than 1 but excel in the other areas (e.g., a paper with a strong, interesting thesis and good evidence that struggles with organization). Severe problems with Points 4-5 may prevent a paper from earning a B.
10. *C* papers usually lack two of Points 1-3 (and Point 6 where relevant) or achieve all 3 at a mediocre level.
11. *D* papers lack or are very weak in Points 1-3 (and Point 6 where relevant), struggle with Points 4-5, and lack flashes of insight or excellence to compensate.
12. *F* papers are devoid of ideas, partly or completely copied, or still unwritten.
13. Points 4-5 play a significant role in borderline grades.

**Class presentations:** In pairs (with the exception of the group presentation), prepare one of each kind of presentation below. You need not keep the same partner for both presentations. I will provide a list of suggested topics for the presentations, but you may also pursue your own topics.

- *Group presentation on ethnicity:* Drawing on the theoretical readings, compare and contrast the elements shaping ethnicity in Zitkala-Sa and Yeziarska, as well as your own experiences. Develop several insights about why ethnicity is constructed in similar and/or different ways in each case. For discussion, formulate at least one question about one of the books we have read so far AND one general question about ethnicity. 8-10 minutes per group.
- *Passage presentation:* close reading of a passage, interpreting its literary art to the maximum and significance of the work we are reading. 5 minutes.

- *Context presentation*: Use research into relevant information from the author's biography, a literary movement, or a historical event to illuminate the text. Your presentation should be 8-10 minutes long and must reference at least three full-length critical articles from the course bibliography or of your own finding.

## SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

### Week 1

Friday, September 2 Introduction

### Week 2

Monday, September 5 Handout on theories of ethnicity  
Zitkala-Sa. *American Indian Stories*, "impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an Indian Girl," "An Indian Teacher Among Indians," (pp. 1-43)

Wednesday, September 7 Zitkala-Sa, *American Indian Stories*, "The Great Spirit" "The Soft-Hearted Sioux," "The Trial Path," "A Warrior's Daughter," "A Dream of Her Grandfather," "The Widespread Enigma of Blue-Star Woman," "America's Indian Problem" (pp. 44-end)

### Week 3

Monday, September 12 Yeziarska, *Bread Givers*, Chapters 1-6

Wednesday, September 14 Yeziarska, *Bread Givers*, Chapters 7-12  
**Last day to drop a class without a grade of W and/or add a class**  
**Last day to choose audit (AU) or Pass/No Pass (P/NP) options**

### Week 4

Monday, September 19 **Presentations of group reflections on ethnicity (5-7 minutes per group)**  
Yeziarska, *Bread Givers*, Chs. 13-end

Wednesday, September 21 Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Chs. 1-6  
**Personal reflection on ethnicity (3-4 pp.)**

### Week 5

Monday, September 26 Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Chs. 7-8

Wednesday, September 28 Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Chs. 9-15

### Week 6

Monday, October 3 Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Chs. 16-end

Wednesday, October 5	Chu, <i>Eat a Bowl of Tea</i> , first ¼ of book
<b>Week 7</b>	
Monday, October 10	Chu, <i>Eat a Bowl of Tea</i> , second ¼ of book
Wednesday, October 12	Holiday—no class
<b>Week 8</b>	
Monday, October 17	Chu, <i>Eat a Bowl of Tea</i> , third ¼ of book
Wednesday, October 19	Chu, <i>Eat a Bowl of Tea</i> , last ¼ of book
<b>Week 9</b>	
Monday, October 24	Oates, <i>Expensive People</i> , pp. 1-55 <b>First interpretive paper due (4-5 pp.)</b>
Wednesday, October 26	Oates, <i>Expensive People</i> , pp. 56-110
<b>Friday, October 28</b>	<b>Last day to drop a class and receive grade of W</b>
<b>Week 10</b>	
Monday, October 31	Oates, <i>Expensive People</i> , pp. 111-165
Wednesday, November 2	Oates, <i>Expensive People</i> , pp. 111-165
<b>Week 11</b>	
Monday, November 7	Rodriguez, <i>Hunger of Memory</i> , Prologue, Chs. 1-2
Wednesday, November 9	Holiday—no class
<b>Week 12</b>	
Monday, November 14	<b>Second interpretive paper due (4-5 pp.)</b> Rodriguez, <i>Hunger of Memory</i> , Chs. 3-4
Wednesday, November 16	Rodriguez, <i>Hunger of Memory</i> , Chs. 5-6
<b>Week 13</b>	
Monday, November 21	<b>Partial exam</b>
Wednesday, November 23	Whitehead, <i>The Intuitionist</i> , pp. 1-80
<b>Week 14</b>	
Monday, November 28	Whitehead, <i>The Intuitionist</i> , pp. 81-160 <b>Prospectus for final paper, 2-3 pp. plus bibliography</b>
Wednesday, November 30	Whitehead, <i>The Intuitionist</i> , pp. 161-end

**Week 15**

Monday, December 5

**Rough draft of final paper due, 9-11 pp.**  
Lahiri, *The Lowland*, pp. 1-85

Wednesday, December 7

Lahiri, *The Lowland*, pp. 86-170

**Week 16**

Monday, December 12

Lahiri, *The Lowland*, pp. 171-230

Wednesday, December 14

Lahiri, *The Lowland*, pp. 231-end

**Week 17**

**Wednesday, December 21, 15:30-18:30**

**Final paper due, 9-11 pp.**  
**Bring a question to discuss**