COURSE OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Objectives
This course explores changing relationship between identity and the body by studying literary constructions of race and gender in several genres of post-1945 literature in the U.S. We will develop an understanding of this relationship by comparing and contrasting where authors locate identity (e.g., in the body, history or family circumstances, place, language, ...), analyzing the ideological opportunities/constraints that different genres afford for construction of identity, and discussing the usefulness of some theories of race and gender in analyzing the literary works. Particular attention will be given to the interrelation between race and gender in identity construction.

The course covers a period of intense historical change, including Jim Crow segregation and Cold War domesticity; the Civil Rights Movement; Women’s Liberation and the emergence of feminisms of women of color; the Gay Rights Movement; the backlash against feminism and conservative turn to “color-blind” policies in the 1980s; the emergence, fragmentation, and diversification of racial and ethnic literatures with multiculturalism and identity politics; and the emergence of Queer Studies. Although the course focuses on literatures classified as white, African American, and Asian American, we will discuss the problems involved in these classifications and the relationship of these literatures to those of other “raced” and ethnicized groups recognized in American culture.

Outcomes
- Familiarity with a representative range of recent ethnic literature
- Ability to analyze orally and in writing the construction of race and gender identity in works of contemporary literature with knowledge of the breadth and diversity of literary writing on these subjects and some critical lenses through which these works have been studied
- Familiarity with some ideological critiques of genre and the ways writers have used and transformed genres to express race and gender
- Familiarity with some recent theories of race and gender and some of the historical and intellectual movements shaping them
- Development of a deeper understanding of one’s own conceptions of race and gender in the context of contemporary cultural perceptions of them through reflection on and writing about various literary and theoretical texts
- Ability to formulate an independent project on race and gender in recent literature based on broad knowledge of the field

REQUIRED TEXTS

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance:** Five “unexcused” absences signals that the student has chosen to withdraw from (or fail) the course. (Please let me know if you are going to miss class).

**Academic Integrity:** Please inform yourselves of SLU’s Academic Standards (pp. 20-23 in Graduate Education catalogue, especially those regarding Academic Integrity/Ethical Behavior, pp. 20-23. (link to Graduate Education in on the SLU Madrid MA in English webpage). The *MLA Handbook* also has a good section on plagiarism and ways to avoid unconscious plagiarism in your research.

**Students with Disabilities:** Any student who qualifies for special accommodations, due to presence of a disability, and feels it necessary to utilize them in order to meet the requirements of this course-as outlined in the syllabus, should contact Counseling/Disability Services. Within the context of Spanish law, Disability Services is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for persons with disabilities. The objectives are to enable persons with disabilities in the University to function adequately, both personally and professionally. For inquiries or further assistance about Disability Services, contact Dr. Eduardo Fernandez-Cruz, whose office is located in Manresa Hall (91-554-5858, extension 230). Students may also stop by the Counseling/Disabilities Services office in the Manresa building. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

**EVALUATION**

Your goal as graduate students is to develop the skills of literary criticism, research, writing, and oral presentation needed to become good scholars and teachers. Because much of what you do is “work in progress,” I grade holistically with an eye to rewarding development and improvement. I therefore do not give a percentage breakdown for individual assignments. Your final paper will be worth at least 30% of your final grade and class participation about 20%.

While all of the course assignments provide the opportunity for students to work toward achieving all of the course learning outcomes, some tasks focus more specifically on certain aspects: class discussion on gaining critical awareness of your ideas about race and gender through dialogue with classmates and developing oral expression, the shorter papers for synthesizing readings into your own critical approach to race and gender through development of key elements of scholarly writing (close reading, summary and critique, interpretive argument informed by secondary research). The annotated bibliography and final project focus on developing an original argument about an issue in the field informed by knowledge of existing scholarship.
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (to be supplemented by more explicit descriptions later)

Short reflections to be presented for class discussion (2-3 pp. long, one each):
- Close reading
- Summary and critique of criticism—either one book or three articles

Critical papers:
- Paper on race, 4 pp.
- Paper on gender, 4 pp.

Research Proposal
Annotated Bibliography on research area, minimum 20 sources beyond course reading
Final Paper, 12-16 pp.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Note: unless otherwise specified, the secondary readings are on the class website.

Week 1
Friday, September 2
Introduction

Week 2
Wednesday, September 7
Ellison, Invisible Man, Chapters 1-14
Cornell West, from Race Matters (1993); “On Black-Jewish Relations,” “Black Sexuality: the Taboo Subject”

Week 3
Wednesday, September 14
Ellison, Invisible Man, Chapters 15-end
Frantz Fanon, selections from Black Skin, White Masks (1967): “The Woman of Color and the white Man,” “The Man of Color and the White Woman”
Houston Baker, from Betrayal: How Black Intellectuals Have Abandoned the ideals of the Civil Rights Era (2008): “Man without Connection: John McWhorter”

Last day to DROP a class and not receive a grade of “W” and/or to add a class

Week 4
Wednesday, September 21
DeLillo, White Noise
Week 5
Wednesday, September 28  Rodriguez, *Hunger of Memory*
Rodriguez, “Late Victorians” from *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father* (1992)
**Paper on race due, 4 pp.**

Thursday, September 29  Last day to choose audit and Pass/No Pass options

Week 6
Elaine Tyler May, from *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War* (1988)
**Research project proposal due**

Week 7
Wednesday, October 12  Holiday—no class

Week 8

Week 9
Wednesday, October 26  O’Hara, *Lunch Poems*
Judith Butler, from *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’* (1993): “Critically Queer”
**Paper on gender due, 4 pp.**

Week 10
Monday, October 31  Last day to drop a class and receive grade of W
Wednesday, November 2  Mirikitani, *Awake in the River* (prose and poetry)

**Annotated Bibliographies due and 5-minute presentation of findings. You must post the final bibliography on class website by November 10.**

**Week 11**
- **Monday, November 7**
  - Registration for Spring Semester begins

- **Wednesday, November 9**
  - Holiday—no class

- **Thursday, November 10**
  - Deadline for posting revised bibliography on class website

**Week 12**
- **Wednesday, November 16**
  - Lorde, *Our Dead Behind Us* and/or *Zami, Sister Outsider* or *The Cancer Journals* (poems for discussion: “Sisters in Arms,” “To the Poet Who Happens to Be Black and Who Happens to Be a Woman,” “Outlines,” “Diaspora,” “Home,” “Learning to Write,” “Holographs,” “Generation III”)

**Week 13**
- **Wednesday, November 23**
  - Amiri Baraka, *The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader* poems (1-16, 210-224, 240-272, 302-310, 480-492) and/or 2-3 plays or music criticism and selection from autobiography (poems for discussion: “Hymn for Lanie Poo,” “BLACK DADA NIHILISMUS,” “Black Art,” “IT’S NATION TIME,” “AM/TRAK”)

**Week 14**
- **Wednesday, November 30**
  - Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop, *Ceci n’est pas Keith Ceci n’est pas Rosmarie* and selections from works written individually by Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop
  - Full or partial rough draft of final paper due, 14-18 pp.

**Week 15**
- **Wednesday, December 7**
  - Yau, *Borrowed Love Poems* or prose (The *Passionate Spectator: Essays on Art and Poetry*)
Week 16
Wednesday, December 14, 12:00-15:00 a.m.   Final paper due

CRITICAL PRESENTATION SUGGESTIONS (feel free to pursue your own interests)

**Ellison**

**DeLillo**
Nelson, Deborah. *Pursing Privacy in Cold War America*. (on reserve)

**Rodriguez**
Ethnic memoir, testimonio:

Gender criticism:

Phillipa Kafka, (Out)classed women: contemporary Chicana writers on inequitable gendered power relations (in library)

Brooks
On women:

On race (and gender):

On genre:

Plath
Manuscript issues in Ariel: use “restored edition” edited by Frieda Hughes (on website) and critical articles of your choosing from Proxy Server
Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique
Alicia Ostriker, Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women’s Poetry in America (on reserve)
Edward Brunner, Cold War Poetry (on reserve)
Imagery of whiteness in Plath: chapter from Renée Curry, Women Writing White (on website)
Criticism on the Bee poems (see Proxy Server, esp. articles by Susan Gubar, Jessica Luck, John Gordon)
Essays on Plath and the Holocaust by Susan Gubar and Al Strangeways, Matthew Boswell
Plath and the body:

**O'Hara**
Michael Davidson, *Guys Like Us: Citing Masculinity in Cold War Poetics*
Lytle Shaw, *Frank O'Hara: The Poetics of Coterie* (introduction and first chapter) (Google Books)
Andrew Mossin, *Male Subjectivity and Poetic Form in “New American” Poetry* (on reserve)
Andrew Epstein, *Beautiful Enemies* (chapters on O'Hara, friendship and collaboration and any others of interest) (on reserve)

**Miriikitani**
Caroline Rody, *The Interethnic Imagination* (on reserve)
Kim Whitehead, *The Feminist Poetry Movement* (on reserve)
There is very little criticism on Mirikitani available. Look online for short articles and interviews, and try Googlebooks for the few essays listed in the MLA Bibliography.
Topics of interest on Japanese and Asian American culture from George Leonard’s *The Asian Pacific American Heritage: A Companion to the Arts* (on reserve)
Amy Ling, *Yellow Light: The Flowering of Asian American Arts* (on reserve)
Anne Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race* (on reserve)
Philippa Kafka, *Undoing the Missionary Position: Gender Asymmetry in Asian American Women’s Writing* (on reserve)

**Lorde**
Aldon Nielson, *Black Chant: Languages of African American Postmodernism* (on reserve)
Joanne Gabin, ed. *The Furious Flowering of African American Poetry* (on reserve)
Kim Whitehead, *The Feminist Poetry Movement* (on reserve)
On the body:
Avril Horner and Angela Keane, eds. *Body Matters: Feminism, Textuality, Corporeality* (Googlebooks, chapter on Lorde, Sara Ahmed, “Embodying Strangers”)

Lorde and identity politics:


On lesbian writing:


Lorde’s life writing and or writing on (esp. articles by Elizabeth Alexander, Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez, Lori Walk, Thatcher Carter, Robina Josephine Khalid, Monica B. Pearl)


**Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop**

Andrew Epstein, *Beautiful Enemies* (introductory and concluding chapters on friendship and collaboration) (on reserve)

Lynn Keller, *Thinking Poetry: Reading in Contemporary Women’s Exploratory Poetics* (on reserve)

Laura Hinton and Cynthia Hogue, eds. *We Who Love to Be Astonished: Experimental Women’s Writing and Performance Poetics* (on reserve)

Linda Kinnahan, *Lyric Interventions: Feminism, Experimental Poetry, and Contemporary Discourse* (on reserve)


**John Yau**

Topics of interest on Chinese and Asian American culture from George Leonard’s *The Asian Pacific American Heritage: A Companion to the Arts* (on reserve)

Talisman Special Issue—any of articles, especially by Priscilla Wald (website)


Introduction and essay on Yau by Xiaojing Zhou in *Form and Transformation in Asian American Literature* (Google Books)