

ENG 204 / MLA 204

NON-WESTERN WORLD LITERATURE

Spring Semester 2009
MWF from 12:15- 1:20, Room MC

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Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 1:30- 2:30; Fri 10:00 – 11:00; or by appointment

DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introduction to non-western world literature with a focus on the literature produced by Native American, Latin American and African writers. A basic premise of this course is that literature is a window onto the culture that produced it, and therefore an ideal entry point for the study of culture. We will examine a variety of literary genre including novels, short stories, poetry and essays from a number of different cultures and time periods with an emphasis on first person narratives. The texts have been selected to illustrate the dynamic and transformative nature of human cultures which are continually evolving, and to highlight distinctive features as well as characteristics shared by these three broadly defined cultural groups as illustrated in their literature. Our goal is to introduce students to some of the major forces that have influenced literary production outside of the so-called western world (i.e. religion, economics, imperialism, education, oral and literary traditions, family values and gender roles), while raising the student's consciousness about the cultural biases he or she may bring to texts dealing with a world view very different from his or her own.

REQUIRED TEXTS: (Available at CSU Bookstore, or at local bookstores)

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe (Nigeria)

So Long a Letter by Mariama Bâ (Senegal)

Lakota Woman by Mary Crow Dog (Lakota Tribe)

The Lone Ranger and Tonto by Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur D'Alene)

I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala by Rigoberta Menchú (Guatemala)

Storyteller by Leslie Marmon Silko (Hopi)

"Non-Western Reader, volumes 1 and 2" (volume 1 will be available for purchase from instructor on first day of classes, price to be established by CSU Duplicating Department.)

GRADE BREAK-DOWN:

- 25% *Attendance, Class Participation, and Oral Report:* Regular class attendance required; more than three absences will result in lowering of course grade. Read the assigned texts before coming to class and be prepared to discuss them. Common classroom courtesy also applies here: This includes not eating in class, arriving on time, not leaving before end of class (students who leave before the instructor ends the class for the day will not be counted as being in attendance), turning off cell phones/beepers, and basically contributing to a classroom atmosphere of mutual respect, which is conducive to inquiry and learning. The oral reports are scheduled for the last week of instruction; students will present their own take on one of the class readings previously discussed (7-10 minutes max.; no power-points or other media); a sign-up list will be handed around second week of classes.
- 10% *Reading Quizzes:* Short unannounced quizzes on the reading assignments. **Quizzes may not be made up**, but one quiz grade will be dropped.
- 20% *Final exam:* A comprehensive two-hour essay exam at the assigned time.
- 35% *Three three-page papers on assigned topics.* Papers are required to be word processed, double-spaced with normal margins and 12 pitch fonts. They can not be sent as e-mail attachments or e-mail messages to be downloaded by instructor, but have to be handed in on time and in hard copy. For quotations, bibliographies and other formatting issues, students should refer to the guidelines established by the Modern Language Association (see the *MLA Style Manual* for specifics; available in the CSU Library Reference section). **Since concern about plagiarism has been rising, CSU now has a service that checks papers electronically for misuse of outside sources. In addition to handing in papers to instructor, all students in this course have to submit their papers to Turnitin.com, where any plagiarism is detected. Instructions on how to submit your papers are attached to this syllabus. Instructor will discuss this process in class.**
- 10% Two two-page film reports, relating to two of the three cultural areas treated in class. Students will choose films from the list distributed in class and write a brief film report. After presenting a general review, your task is to relate the film to the other materials studied in class. More specific instructions will be given in class. See class syllabus for film report due dates.

NOTE: Late assignments will only be accepted under exceptional circumstances

UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

- Breadth of Knowledge: Arts/Humanities; (non-U.S.)
- Skills areas: Writing and Critical Thinking

Statement of General Education Requirements:

Non-Western World Literature meets **the Arts and Humanities** General Education requirement (w/ focus on non-U.S. society) according to following criteria:

- This 200-level course is taught by faculty from Modern Languages, a traditional humanities discipline.
- This course provides students with background knowledge and analytical skills that will allow them to demonstrate understanding of how human beings interpret, translate, and represent diverse experiences of certain non-western cultures through language, literature, the historical record, social systems (philosophical, economic, and political), and a range of images, sounds, and performances.
- The primary focus of this course is on Africa (Nigeria and Senegal), Latin America (Aztec, Maya, and Caribbean), and indigenous Native Americans. The content is presented from the perspective(s) of the societies being studied, and not simply European and/or American perceptions of those societies.

“Non-western World Literature” promotes skill areas related to **writing and critical thinking**.

To meet the criteria for **writing**:

- A student’s grade in this class is based on an evaluation of assignments and examinations directly related to assessing material associated with the course’s goals.
- Students produce three short papers, two film reports, and write a final essay exam. This combination of writing assignments and essay exams will exceed the 2,000 word minima for the writing criteria and count for more than 50% of the overall grade.
- Writing is assigned throughout the semester and includes instruction in both writing-to-learn and writing-to-communicate.

To meet the criteria for **critical thinking**:

- This course requires students to attain skills beyond lower-level knowledge. Students must demonstrate higher-order thinking in the form of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of problems and issues related to literature representing different aspects of non-western societies.
- This will be demonstrated through the completion of writing assignments and one essay exam. At least 15% of the student’s grade in the course is based on an evaluation of critical thinking.

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Course Syllabus

Wednesday, January 21:

Introduction to the course, Readers available for purchase
Brief presentation by representative of Writing Center; discussion of Turnitin.com
And procedure for submitting papers to this service.

Friday, January 23:

Reading Assignment: all materials in Part II of Reader

Monday, January 26:

Reader Part III: Map/Introductions
“Mali” and “Legend of Sundiata”
Epic of Sundiata (Son-Jara), excerpt (Reader)

Wednesday, January 28:

“Keita” Reader: Introduction to film from Newsreel (R)
Film: “Keita” ½

Friday, January 30:

Keita, completed and discussed

Monday, February 2:

Intro to Achebe, materials in R
Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe (chapters 1-12)

Wednesday, February 4:

Things Fall Apart (chapters 13-25)

Friday, February 6:

Introduction to “Negritude”; History of Senegal (R)
Selected poems from *Négritude* (R)

Monday, February 9:

“The Promised Land” and “Tribal Scars,” by Ousmane Sembene (R)

Wednesday, February 11:

“Facts about Islam” (R)
So Long a Letter, by Mariama Bâ (pp. 1-45)

Friday, February 13:

So Long a Letter (pp. 45-89)
African Film Reports Due Today

Monday, February 16:

President's day – No Classes

Wednesday, February 18:

Paper #1 Due Today. Topics will be announced previous week

Video: "Rise and Fall of the Aztecs"
Native America and Europe in the New World" (Reader)

Friday, February 20:

"Songs of Ancient Mexico" / Florentine Codex (R)
"A Scattering of Jades," Prayers and Songs of the Gods

Monday, February 23:

Notes on Popol Vuh
Excerpts from "Popol Vuh" (Reader)

Wednesday, February 25:

Video: "Popol Vuh"
Final discussion of Popol Vuh (if time)

Friday, February 27:

Intro to Latin American Lit (R)
Caribbean Literature I: Daniel Moyano "500 Years Ago"

Monday, March 2:

Caribbean Literature II: Jamaica Kincaid "(Excerpts from) A Small Place" (R)

Wednesday, March 4

Caribbean Lit. III "The Gift" by Rosario Ferré (R)
Biographical notes on Ferré in Reader

Friday, March 6:

"What is Testimonial"
Menchu Biography / Controversy about the book (R)
I, Rigoberta Menchu, Introduction, pp. 1-27

Monday, March 9:

Menchu (chapters 5-15)

Wednesday, March 11:

I, Rigoberta Menchú (chapters 16-27)

Friday, March 13:

Menchu, completed (chapters 28-34)

Monday-Friday, March 16 to 20 Spring break – No Classes

Monday, March 23:

“When Mountains Tremble” ½

Answer Questions about film to be found in Reader

Wednesday, March 25:

“When Mountains tremble,” completed

Friday, March 27:

Discussion of Peace Accords and Present Situation in Guatemala

Latin American Film Reports Due

Monday, March 30:

Introduction to Native American Literature, Reader Volume 2 Part III

Read: Timeline; Excerpts from *Geronimo*

Paper #2 Due Today. Topics to be announced

Wednesday, April 1:

Video “Earth and the American Dream”

Friday, April 3:

Selections from *Storyteller*:

“Long Time Ago” pp. 130 -137 in *Storyteller* by Leslie Marmon Silko

“Storyteller’s Escape” p. 247

“Skeleton Fixer” p. 242

Monday, April 6:

“Storytelling” p. 94

“Coyote Stories” pp. 229 and 236

“Indian Song” p. 35

“Cottonwood” I and II p.63

Wednesday, April 8:

Selections from *Storyteller*:

“Two Sisters” p. 100

“Estoy-Eh-Muut” p. 140

“Go-Wa-Pen-Zi Song” p. 158

Friday, April 10:

Narratives from *Storyteller*:

“Storyteller” p. 17
“Lullaby” p. 43

Monday, April 13:

“Yellow Woman” p. 54
“The Man Who Sent Rain” p. 182
“A Geronimo Story” p. 212

Wednesday, April 15:

Excerpts from Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, in Reader
Biographical Notes on the book and the Kiowa Tribe in Reader

Friday, April 17:

Native American Autobiography as Testimonial Literature
Introduction to *Lakota Woman* by Mary Crow Dog (chapters 1, 2, 3)

Monday, April 20:

Lakota Woman (chapters 6, 9, 10, 11)

Wednesday, April 22:

Lakota Woman, completed and discussed
Course Evaluations

Friday, April 24:

“An Indian without a Reservation” Notes on Sherman Alexie
Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, by Alexie
(Selection tba)

Monday, April 27:

Alexie, Discussion cont.
Native American Film Reports Due Today

Wednesday, April 29:

Students’ oral reports
Paper # 3 Due Today! Topics to be announced

Friday, May 1:

Oral Reports, Cont.

Monday, May 4:

Oral reports, cont.

Wednesday, May 6:

Oral reports completed; Review Questions for Final Exam

Friday, May 8:

Review Questions Discussed, Group Work on Preparation
For Final Exam

FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 11, 1-3 p.m.