

HRS 161: Multicultural America (Fall 2008)

Instructor: Poxon

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Office hours: Wednesdays 10:00-11:00; Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:15-1:45 (and by appointment)

Course description: Topically structured, interdisciplinary introduction to the cultural experiences of historically under-represented groups. Historical and contemporary events, values, and beliefs in American culture are examined through various artistic expressions, such as music, painting, and literature. 3 units; fulfills state graduation requirement for Race and Ethnicity; fulfills 3 units of GE C3.

In this course we will be examining what it means to be an American given the ways that we have historically been shaped by our various cultural backgrounds and individual experiences. Our method will be extremely interdisciplinary – i.e., we will work with materials from all of the arts (literature, fine art, architecture, music, and others), philosophy, and religion – to help us arrive at an understanding of what it means to live in a society largely defined by its dynamic multiplicity of cultures. Our concerns will include the ways that both American identity and “otherness” have been constructed and experienced across a wide range of issues, including especially race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, successful students will be able to:

- identify, explain, and analyze the ideological perspectives revealed by course materials.
- compare and contrast basic values and behaviors of various cultures of the United States.
- demonstrate visual literacy.
- apply the techniques of formal analysis to various works of literary and visual arts within interdisciplinary contexts.
- appreciate the diversity of American culture.
- recognize and value the contributions to the richness of the American experience, both past and present, by various individuals and groups.

Instructor’s Expectations: I respect you as students, and in return I expect you to respect me and each other. This means, among other things, refraining from the following while in class: arriving late, leaving early, eating, sleeping, reading outside materials, having private conversations, leaving and re-entering the classroom (except in the case of an emergency), and using cell phones for any purpose, including texting. In addition, and more importantly, I expect an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for other students’ opinions, and an objective and empathetic response to the material we study together. Observing these guidelines will help ensure a better learning experience for all. **PLEASE NOTE:** If you have any special needs (learning disability, etc.), please provide me with documentation as soon as possible, so I can make every reasonable effort to accommodate you.

Attendance policy: After the first two weeks of class, I will not keep a record of your attendance. However, your success in this class depends on your being here, so be on time and be prepared. Students who miss more than two class sessions during the first two weeks of class will be dropped to make room for those who want to add.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is becoming a major problem on this campus, and I will not tolerate it. You are all responsible for familiarizing yourselves with the CSUS policies regarding academic honesty, as well as with guidelines for recognizing and avoiding plagiarism. A helpful source in this regard is found at: <http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353>; please consult this and familiarize yourself with the material presented here. I will return all plagiarized (unoriginal) work ungraded, and you may not be allowed to resubmit

the plagiarized assignment; cases of deliberate plagiarism will be reported to the chair of the Department of Humanities and Religious Studies for appropriate action. **PLEASE, if you have any questions about what counts as plagiarism, ask me BEFORE you take a chance!**

Course texts:

Zinn, *People's History of the United States*

Zinn and Arnove, *Voices of a People's History of the United States*

Lewis, *American Art and Architecture*

Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*

Course-pack (available at University Copy, 446 Howe Avenue, near Fair Oaks Blvd.)

Course requirements: All students should be prepared to do the following to do well in this class:

1. Provide a current email address (Saclink or other account), which you check regularly.
2. Participate in class discussions. This means that you must attend class and keep up with the assigned readings. There is no "participation" component to your final grade, but your willingness to make a meaningful contribution to class discussion will count in your favor if your grade is on the dividing line, say, between a B+ and an A-.
3. Take regular quizzes (most Wednesdays) on assigned readings. These will be graded credit/no credit, and there will be no opportunity to make them up.
4. Write two papers (approximately 4-5 pages each) on assigned topics. If you have to miss class on the day a paper is due, you should email your paper to me to get it in on time, and then bring a hard copy to the next class. **NOTE:** I will not print out emailed papers; you *must* turn in a hard copy to receive a grade.
5. Take two in-class essay exams, which will be drawn from all assigned readings, as well as all material presented in class (including any videos, slides, music, etc., so be sure to take notes on these materials). The second exam, although *not* comprehensive, will be given during the final exam period. ***There will be no opportunity for make-up exams except in the case of real and demonstrable emergency.***

Grading: The required work will be weighted as follows in calculating your final grade:

Quizzes: 20% (combined)

2 papers: 20% each for a total of 40%

2 exams: 20% each, for a total of 40%

Your final letter grade will be determined according to a standard distribution (i.e., 90 – 100% = A, 80–89% = B, etc.). *You may ask about your status in the class at any time.*

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

NOTE: All readings should be completed by the first class meeting of the week for which they are assigned. Please bring relevant books to class with you. Page numbers, where given, refer to editions ordered through the campus bookstore; please see me if you **MUST** use a different edition. *PH* = *People's History*; *VPH* = *Voices of a People's History*; *AAA* = *American Art and Architecture*; *CP* = Course pack.

Week 1

8/31-9/2

Introduction

CP, Week 1 Readings

Weeks 2 and 3

9/9-9/16

Columbus and the Puritans

PH, Ch. 1; *VPH*, Ch. 1 (pp. 29-45); *AAA*, Ch. 1; CP, Weeks 2 and 3 Readings

NO CLASS MONDAY 9/7: LABOR DAY

- Week 4**
9/21-9/23
Early Slavery
PH, Chs. 2 and 3; *VPH*, Ch. 2 (pp. 58-61) and Ch. 3 (pp. 64-8 and 76-7); *AAA*, Ch. 2
- Week 5**
9/28-9/30
The Revolution
PH, Chs. 4 and 5; *VPH*, Ch. 4 (pp.87-91) and Ch. 5 (pp. 96-104); *AAA*, Ch. 3
- Week 6**
10/5-10/7
Women: The “Intimately Oppressed”
PH, Ch. 6; *VPH*, Ch. 6 (pp. 124-30); Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*; CP, Week 5 Readings
FIRST PAPER TOPIC ASSIGNED WEDNESDAY
- Week 7**
10/12-10/14
The Indian Removal
PH, Ch. 7; *VPH*, Ch. 7 (pp. 134-40); *AAA*, Ch. 4 (pp. 74-100)
FIRST PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY
- Week 8**
10/19-10/21
Review and MIDTERM
- Weeks 9 and 10**
10/26-11/4
Slavery and the Civil War
PH, Chs. 9 and 10; *AAA*, Ch. 4 (pp. 101-19) and Ch. 5; Douglass, *Narrative*
- Week 11**
11/9-11/11
Class War in the Early Twentieth Century
PH, Ch. 13; *VPH*, Ch. 13 (pp. 258-60 and 270-2); CP, Week 11 Reading
- Weeks 12 and 13**
11/16-11/25
From the Jazz Age to the Civil Rights Movement
PH, Chs. 15 and 17; *VPH*, Ch. 15 (pp. 312-14 and pp. 327-30) and Ch. 17 (pp. 400-02); *AAA*, Ch. 7
SECOND PAPER TOPIC ASSIGNED MONDAY 11/23
- Week 14**
11/30-12/2
World War II
PH, Ch. 16; *VPH*, Ch. 16 (pp. 359-66); *AAA*, Ch. 8; CP, Week 13 Readings
SECOND PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY
- Week 15**
12/7-12/9
Toward the Present Era
PH, Chs. 18 and 19; *VPH*, Ch. 18 (pp. 429-31) and Ch. 19 (pp. 457-61); *AAA*, Ch. 10; CP, Week 15 Readings

FINAL EXAM: W 12/16 3:00-5:00