

HRS 161: Multicultural America (Fall 2008)

Instructor: Poxon

Email: jlpoxon@saclink.csus.edu or jlpoxon@netscape.net

Office: MND 2012 Phone: 278-5040

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:Takaki, *A Different Mirror*Douglass, *Narrative*Chopin, *The Awakening*

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 (SaLink or other account).
2. Participate in class discussions. This means that you must attend class and keep up with the assigned readings.
3. Keep up with regular homework assignments, consisting of: (a) a short outline of each reading assignment from *A Different Mirror*; (b) a printout of each assigned art work, along with a short reflection on its importance; and (c) notes or a short reflection on each reading from the course-pack. Homework will be due on the first class session of the week for which it is assigned (usually Monday), and will not be accepted later than one week following its due date. These assignments will be credit-no credit, with points assigned for each acceptable submission.
4. Write two papers (approximately 3-4 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 exams, each of which will consist of a combination of objective and essay questions. Exams will draw 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:

Participation: 10%

Homework: 20% (combined for all assignments)

2 papers: 15% each for a total of 30%

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.

Week 1 9/3-9/5	Introduction
Week 2 9/12	<i>Read</i> study aids on cultures, worldviews, myths, and all study aids on art (course-pack). 9/8- <i>View</i> Norman Rockwell slides (in class).
Week 3 9/15-9/19	<i>Read</i> Takaki, Ch. 1; Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” (course-pack). <i>View</i> Thomas Smith, <i>Self-Portrait</i> (online)
Week 4 9/22-9/26	<i>Read</i> Takaki, Ch. 2 and 3; Rowlandson, “Narrative” (course-pack). <i>View</i> image of Caliban (online at www.meyerbeer.com/caliban.jpg).
Week 5	<i>Read</i> Takaki, Ch. 4; Cherokee creation myth (course-pack). <i>View</i> George Catlin,

- Tuch-ee*
9/29-10/3 (online).
- Week 6**
prohibiting
10/6-10/10
Read Takaki, Ch. 5; “Act for the better ordering and governing...” and “Act the teaching...” (course-pack). *View* Eastman Johnson, *Negro Life in the South / Old Kentucky Home*
FIRST PAPER TOPIC ASSIGNED FRIDAY 10/10
- Week 7**
10/13-10/17
Read Douglass, *Narrative*. *View* Henry O. Tanner, *The Banjo Lesson* (online).
FIRST PAPER DUE FRIDAY 10/17
- Week 8**
10/20-10/24
Read Takaki, Ch. 6; Lazarus, “The New Colossus” (course-pack). *View* Bartholdi, *Liberty Enlightening the World* (online)
MIDTERM FRIDAY 10/24
- Week 9**
Women” 10/27-10/31
View Mary
Read Chopin, *The Awakening*; “Study Guide: Changing Images of American and Lorber, “The Social Construction of Gender” (course-pack).
Cassatt, any portrait of mother and child (online)
- Week 10**
11/3-11/7
Read Takaki, Ch. 8 and 10; selection from Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine* (course-pack). *View* Henry Sugimoto, any image of internment camp life (online at <http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/jarda/browse/personal-experiences.html>)
- Week 11**
11/10-11/14
Read Takaki, Ch. 9; Alexie, “This Is What It Means...” (course-pack). *View* Edward Curtis portraits of Native Americans, Great Plains tribes (online at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ienhtml/curthome.html>).
- Week 12**
11/17-11/21
Read Takaki, Ch. 12; Cisneros, “Mericans” (course-pack). *View* Chicano Park murals (online at <http://www.chicanoparksandiego.com>).
- Week 13**
11/24-11/26
Read Takaki, Ch. 13; Hughes, “Let America Be America Again” (course-pack). *View* Palmer Hayden, *Midsummer Night in Harlem* (online at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/arts/hayden.html> and elsewhere)
SECOND PAPER TOPIC ASSIGNED WEDNESDAY 11/26
NO CLASS FRIDAY 11/28 (THANKSGIVING)
- Week 14**
12/1-12/5
Read Hubbard, “The Social Construction of Sexuality”; Katz, “The Invention of Heterosexuality”; and Feinberg, selection from *Transgender Warriors* (course-pack).
SECOND PAPER DUE FRIDAY 12/5
- Week 15**
12/8-12/12
Read Takaki, Ch. 14.

FINAL EXAM: W 12/17 10:15-12:15