

LIBA 216: Reflections on the American Dream(s)

Fall 2008

Dr. Buckman

Office: Mendocino 2020

Office Hours: TR 10-11am,

T 4-4:30, R 4:30-5pm

additional times by appointment

Office Phone: 278-5335

Humanities office (MND 2011): 278-6444

e-mail: abuckman@csus.edu

I am not on campus MWF

Required Texts:

Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea that Shaped a Nation*

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Americo Paredes, *George Washington Gomez*

Andrew Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks: Chasing the American Dream in Postwar Consumer Culture.*

In addition, there will be handouts given and audiovisuals presented in class for which you will be responsible.

Samlink account for WebCT (additional class materials will be available on WebCT)

Course Description and Expectations:

This is a graduate level humanities course in which we will reflect upon the various permutations of the American Dream. As a humanities course based in American Studies, we will be approaching our subject from a variety of perspectives, including literature, film, history, and other disciplinary perspectives. A commitment to completing the readings, thinking about them, and actively participating in the course is necessary and expected.

LEARNING GOALS:

Upon completion of LIBA 216, successful students will be able to:

- Identify, explain, and analyze American ideologies as presented in course materials
- Demonstrate visual literacy
- Develop skills in interdisciplinary analysis
- Apply the techniques of formal analysis to various works of literary and visual arts
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the diversity of American culture
- Communicate effectively in both oral and written formats

CLASS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Respect for one's classmates and professor is expected in the course. Behavior should reflect this, including arriving on time and turning off cell phones. I expect that students having questions about their grades or the class will communicate with me, either in person or through phone or e-mail.

Coursework: Your grade will consist of participation, a presentation of a reading, a midterm, a final, and one research paper.

Academic Integrity: Please turn in work that is solely your own. Appropriate credit must be given to the work of other authors used; this includes the proper use of paraphrasing and quoting as well as citation within and at the end of the paper. If you are unsure about what this means, please come and speak with me. Plagiarism has serious consequences, including the possibility of failure of the assignment, failure of the course, and/or expulsion from the college.

Formatting of Essays: Essays should be typed, double-spaced, and have 1" margins. The font and its size should be normal, generally Times New Roman 12. Please staple your essays. Don't bother with plastic or cardboard covers. At the top of the first page, single-spaced, include a descriptive title for your paper in addition to tagging information (your name/the date/essay #). Any papers turned in to the HRS office should have my name on it as well.

Participation: This class depends upon the full engagement of students with the material and the class itself. I expect students to participate in discussions on a regular and informed basis.

Guidelines for Presentations: Summarize the article, stating the thesis and the main arguments behind it. Also state the pros and cons of the article – i.e. its strengths and weaknesses. Is it well researched? Are arguments supported? Are the arguments weak or strong? Why? What do you think is the most important aspect of the article? How does it relate to the course and other readings? Length of presentation: approx. 15 minutes.

Grading:		Final	25%	Presentation	5%
Midterm	25%	Essay	30%	Participation	15%

Schedule of Readings (may change at discretion of instructor) (We will also be examining select paintings in each class)

9/2 Discussion of course, WebCT

9/9 Dreams of Conquest and Independence:

A Short History: Intro: A Dream Country, Ch 1 Dream of the Good Life (1) : The Puritans. John Winthrop; final section of “A Model of Christian Charity” (city upon a hill):

<http://www.kosmicki.com/234/cityhill.htm>

William Bradford “Of Plymouth Plantation,” Chapter IX:

<http://spider.georgetowncollege.edu/english/coke/bradford.htm>

9/16 *A Short History:* Ch 2 Dream Charter: Declaration of Independence:

Declaration of Independence:

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html

De Crevecoeur: selection: “What is an American?” From: *Letters from An American Farmer*, 1782 <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/CREV/letter03.html>

Olaudah Equiano: Chapter 2 of his account: <http://www.wsu.edu:8000/~dee/Equiano.html>

Berthoff, Rowland. “Peasants and Artisans, Puritans and Republicans: Personal Liberty and Communal Equality in American History.” *The Journal of American History*. 69.3 (Dec. 1982): 579-598.

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=00218723%28198212%2969%3A3%3C579%3APAAPAR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-9>

selections from Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Jonathan Edwards (see course content on WebCT)

9/23 Dreams of Upward Mobility

A Short History: Ch 3 Dream of Good Life (2): Upward Mobility

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self Reliance,"

<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/emerson/essays/selfreliance.html>

Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown" <http://classclit.about.com/library/bl-etexts/nhawthorne/bl-nhaw-goodman.htm>

selections from Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (Read through Chapter III)

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DREISER/toc.html>

Walt Whitman, "I Hear America Singing" <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15752>

Carl Sandburg: "Chicago," "I am the People, the Mob": <http://poetry.eserver.org/chicago-poems.txt>

9/30 Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

10/7 Americo Paredes, *George Washington Gomez*

10/14 *It's A Wonderful Life*. **Midterm due**

10/21 essay on "It's a Wonderful Life," discussion of film

10/28 Hurley, Andrew. *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks: Chasing the American Dream in Postwar Consumer Culture*

11/4 Dreams of Equality

A Short History: Ch 4 King Of America: Dream Of Equality

Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I A Woman?" <http://www.womenwriters.net/domesticgoddess/truth.htm>

WEB DuBois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," from *The Souls of Black Folk*.

<http://www.bartleby.com/114/1.html>

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail,"

http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

Langston Hughes, "Let America Be America Again," "I, Too, Sing America," "Harlem (A Dream Deferred)," <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15615>

Torres, Eddie. "American Dream." Native American Student Writers: A Special Section.

Callaloo 17.1 (Winter, 1994): 191-192. [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0161-](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0161-2492%28199424%2917%3A1%3C191%3AAD%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B)

[2492%28199424%2917%3A1%3C191%3AAD%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0161-2492%28199424%2917%3A1%3C191%3AAD%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B)

11/11 No Class: Veteran's Day

11/18 Dreams of Equality, cont.

Zangrando, Joanna Schneider and Robert L.Black Zangrando. "Protest: A Rejection of the American Dream." *Journal of Black Studies* 1.2 (Dec 1970): 141-159.

[http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-9347%28197012%291%3A2%3C141%3ABPAROT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8)

[9347%28197012%291%3A2%3C141%3ABPAROT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-9347%28197012%291%3A2%3C141%3ABPAROT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8)

Vasilopoulos, Christopher. "Prevailing Upon the American Dream: Thurgood Marshall and Brown v. Board of Education." *Journal of Negro Education*

S2 : Brown v. Board of Education at 40: A Commemorative Issue Dedicated to the Late

Thurgood Marshall 63.3 (Summer 1994): 289-296. [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2984%28199422%2963%3A3%3C289%3APUTADT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W)

[2984%28199422%2963%3A3%3C289%3APUTADT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2984%28199422%2963%3A3%3C289%3APUTADT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W)

Ong, Aihwa. "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States." *Current Anthropology* 37.5 (Dec., 1996):

737-762. [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0011-](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0011-3204%28199612%2937%3A5%3C737%3ACCASIN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8)

[3204%28199612%2937%3A5%3C737%3ACCASIN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0011-3204%28199612%2937%3A5%3C737%3ACCASIN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8)

Bharati Mukherjee, "American Dreamer,"

<http://www.motherjones.com/commentary/columns/1997/01/mukherjee.html>

11/25 Dreams of Possession

A Short History: Ch5 Detached House: Dream of Home Ownership

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Sandeen, Eric J. "The Design of Public Housing in the New Deal: Oskar Stonorov and the Carl Mackley Houses." *American Quarterly* 37.5 (Winter, 1985): 645-667.

[http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0678%28198524%2937%3A5%3C645%3ATDOPHI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8)

[0678%28198524%2937%3A5%3C645%3ATDOPHI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8;](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0678%28198524%2937%3A5%3C645%3ATDOPHI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8)

12/2 Dreams of Paradise

A Short History: Ch6, Dream Of the Good Life (3): The Coast; *A Short History*: Ch7,

Conclusion: Extending The Dream

12/9 TBA

Final: Take home exam