HRS 161: Multicultural America  
(GE categories: Area C3/race and ethnicity)  
Fall 2010

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This course is an upper-level, interdisciplinary exploration of the arts and the ways we define ourselves, both as individuals and within various socio-cultural groups, as human beings. There is a strong connection between art and society, between aesthetic values and social action, between culture and context. Works of art are powerful channels of communication about American identities: our concern with who we are and how we feel about ourselves and the nation. Our efforts at self-definition have often been shaped by the multi-cultural nature of American history and experience. The ways in which various art forms reveal American self-consciousness, introspection, and attempts at self-definition within this multicultural framework are the central concerns of this class.

LEARNING GOALS/upon completion of this class, successful students will be able to:
identify, explain and analyze American ideologies as presented in course materials;  
compare and contrast the basic values and behaviors of a number of cultures in the U S;  
demonstrate visual literacy;  
apply the techniques of formal analysis to works of literary and visual art;  
demonstrate a deepened appreciation of the diversity of American culture;  
recognize and value the contributions of various individuals and groups, past and present, to the richness of the American experience;  
communicate effectively in both oral and written formats

TEXTS:
- Baldwin. The American Revelation. (AR)
- Donath. HRS 161 Packet (R) Available from University Copy & Print: 446 Howe Ave (Behind Tokyo Fro’s on Fair Oaks Blvd) 929.6147
- Douglass. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
- Okubo. Citizen 13660
- An American novel or autobiography for the paper assignment (see the reading list, attached)

***Please purchase THREE 886-E scantrons from the Hornet Bookstore for the tests***
EVALUATION:
PAPER: 100 points  
500-450: A  
3 TESTS: 100 points each  
499--445: B  
PARTICIPATION: 100 points  
444-390: C  
389-335: D  

Participation points are calculated on a daily basis and depend on positive contributions to class meetings and preparation of written participation assignments.

No "extra credit" is offered in this course

CLASS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

 ATTENDANCE: Particularly given the abbreviated nature of this course, I believe attendance is crucial to your success. However, I do not take role and class attendance does not figure directly into your grade.

 LATE WORK: Papers (and any “homework” assignments) are due during the first five minutes of class. After that, a paper is considered late and there is a 5 point penalty per day, including weekends (---even if the paper comes in later on the day it was due.)

 Tests are scheduled as indicated on the class calendar. Make-ups are not permitted unless a verifiable emergency interferes. Make-ups are given at the convenience of the test-giver and are always essay examinations.

PROFESSORIAL QUIRK: No one will be admitted to the class after the door is “closed” (five minutes into the class hour).

CELL PHONES: Unless you are a physician or emergency medical technician please turn your cell phone “off” or to “silent” mode during our class meetings. Disruptions of this sort are not strategic for students who want to succeed in this course.
CALENDAR

**TOPIC I: Tools and Terms—the territory before us (American culture(s)**

**WEEK 1/August 30 and September 1:** Introductory meeting and some definitions
Read: “Identities and Social Locations: Who am I? Who are my people” (R)

**WEEK 2/September 6 (NO CLASS: Labor Day holiday) and September 8:** The issue of hegemony
Read: Mann: “Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education” (R)
Gatto: “The Seven Lesson School Teacher” (R)

**WEEK 3/September 13 and 15:** The issue of identity
Read: “E Pluribus Unum” (AR)
DuBois: “Excerpt from The Souls of Black Folks” (R)

**TOPIC II: Myths and American Culture**

**WEEK 4/September 20 and 22:** The hegemony’s historical roots
Read: “City on a Hill” (AR)
Winthrop: “Model of Christian Charity” (R)

**WEEK 5/September 27 and 29:** Creating a national culture
Read: “Common Sense” (AR)
Paine: “Common Sense” and “The American Crisis” (R)

**TEST 1: September 29**

**WEEK 6/October 4 and 6:** Hegemonic mottos
Read: “Self-Reliance” (AR)
Emerson: “Self –Reliance” (R)

**WEEK 7/October 11 and 13:** Migration and the Myth of the West
Read: “Manifest Destiny” (AR)
Worster: “Freedom and Want: the Western Paradox”

**WEEK 8/October 18 and 20:** Media Mythologies
Read: Mantiosis: “Media Magic: Making Class Invisible” (R)
Mander: “Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television” (R)
Gitlin: “Under the Sign of Mickey Mouse” (R)
Katz: “Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity” (R)

**TOPIC III: WHO BELONGS: ETHNICITY + IMMIGRATION**

**WEEK 9/October 25 and 27:** Not the hegemony
Read: Trask: “Notes from a Native Daughter” (R)
Gunn: “Where I Come From Is Like This” (R)

**WEEK 10/November 1 and 3 (NO CLASS: Donath at WASC)**

**TEST 2: November 1**
WEEK 11/November 8 and 10: Immigration
Read: Takaki: “A Different Mirror”

WEEK 12/November 15 and 17: Ethnicity and Identity
Read: Chang: Streets of Gold: The Model Minority” (R)
Rich: “Split at the Root” (R)

**Paper Due** November 17

TOPIC IV: RACE AND COLOR
WEEK 13/November 22 and 24: slavery
Read: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
Dunbar: “We Wear the Mask”

WEEK 14/November 29 and December 1: stereotypes
Read: DeMott: “Put on a Happy Face” (R)
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

TOPIC V: Being America and American
WEEK 15/December 6 and 8: Multicultural America
Read: Hughes: “Let America Be America Again” (R)
Baldwin: “The Discovery of What it Means to be an American (R)

**TEST 3: December 8**
HRS 161/Multicultural America
Supplemental Reading List

Students must choose one autobiography or one work of literature as an additional required text for the course. **Begin reading as soon as possible.** Your paper and at least one question on Test 2 will draw on your reading. You may choose a book that is not on these lists---just check with me first. **The book you read must be written by a person UNLIKE you in some way.**

**WORKS OF FICTION**
AHMED. A Border Passage
ALEXIE. The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven
ANAYA. Bless Me Ultima
ANDERSON. Winesburg, Ohio
BAMBARA. The Salt Eaters
BARBER. Jihad vs. McWorld (NF)
CISNEROS. The House on Mango Street
DUBOIS. The Souls of Black Folks (NF)
ELLISON. Invisible Man
FEINBERG. Stone Butch Blues
LARSEN. Quicksand OR Passing
LEE. Yellow or China Boy
MALAMUD. The Tenant OR The Natural
MOMADAY. House Made of Dawn
MOORE. Stupid White Men (NF)
MORRISON. The Bluest Eye
OKADA. NoNo Boy
OZeki. My Year of Meats
PURDY. Being America (NF)
ROTH. Portnoy’s Complaint
TAN. The Joy Luck Club
VIRAMONTES. Under the Feet of Jesus
WALKER. The Color Purple
WRIGHT. Native Son
YEZIERKSA. The Bread Givers

**AUTOBIOGRAPHIES/MEMOIRS**
ACOSTA. The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo
ADAMS. The Education of Henry Adams
ANGELOU. A Song Flung Up to Heaven OR Now I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
ARMSTRONG. It’s Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life
BULOSAN. America is in the Heart
BURCIAGA. Drink Cultura: Chicanismo
HALEY. The Autobiography of Malcolm X
IACOCCA. Iacocca: An Autobiography
JACOBS. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
JOHNSON. Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man
KINGSTON. The Woman Warrior
MEANS. Where White Men Fear to Tread: The Autobiography of Russell Means
OBAMA. Dreams From My Father
PERRY. Population 485
POWELL. My American Journey
REAGAN. An American Life: The Autobiography
RODRIGUEZ. Hunger of Memory OR Arguments with My Father
SHAKUR. Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member
SOTO. A Summer Life
WASHINGTON. Up From Slavery
WYETH. Andrew Wyeth: An Autobiography
HRS 161/Multicultural America
Paper Assignment: worth 100 points

I> ASSIGNMENT: Using your choice of a novel or work of literature from the HRS 161 reading list and AT LEAST ONE class “text,” write an essay that answers the following question:
What characteristic or behavior is the most important component of being an American?

II> DOING THE TASK: You should do this by examining how/which a specific conception/image of American experience and identity is a part of your chosen “texts.”
In order to successfully answer the question, you need to think about how your “texts:”
 Reveal who belongs and who doesn’t belong in America (and why)
 Suggest when and how one becomes American
 Show how the search for an American identity has changed (or not changed) over time
 Reflect on how an issue, like immigration, war, class, ethnicity, gender, race, etc, has affected national and individual identity.
 Demonstrate how works of art are rooted in place and time --and how cultural context shapes the works and our understandings of them (index and agent)

One way to accomplish the task may be to compare OR contrast your texts as indexes and agents while keeping a focus on some cultural experience like race, ethnicity, immigration, gender, cultural mythology, OR a cultural element or value (like success, beauty, wealth, etc) and how it “plays” out in the works you choose. REMEMBER the ultimate question you’re trying to answer-----From your educated perspective, what (if anything) is most “American” about Americans?

III> HOUSEKEEPING:
 Write a 4-6 page paper (double spaced.)
 Give your paper this title: “_________________in American Culture.” Fill in the _____________with the value, behavior, quality or concept which will be the focus of your essay.
 Include at least 2 quotations in your paper—one from your literary work and one from a reading assigned for class. Be sure to cite them correctly (in the text or footnotes)
 Underline or highlight your essay’s topic sentence.
 Please just staple your paper together---no spines or folders.
 Put your name on the last page of the paper.

IV> EVALUATION: A “B” paper (or better) will:
 have a title
 have a single, understandable underlined topic sentence
 analyze the two works’ depiction of a value, behavior, experience or idea
 use, integrate and connect course terms, concepts, lecture materials
 include quotations from a course reading and the literature of the student’s choice
 avoid stupid (high school) errors in writing---use complete sentences, correct punctuation and spelling, write in paragraphs, and present an essay with a clear beginning, middle and end.

**DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS MEETING ON NOVEMBER 17**