

HRS 161, Multicultural America
M, 6:00 - 8:50 PM
Room 612, Gateway Center

Spring, 2007
Professor Cassinelli

HRS 161: Topically structured, interdisciplinary introduction to the cultural experiences of underrepresented groups. Historical and contemporary events, as well as values and beliefs in American culture are examined through various artistic expressions, such as music, painting and literature. 3 units.

HRS 161: Fulfills GE AREA C3 and the race and ethnicity requirements.

Required Reading Materials:

The Conquest of America, Tzvetan Todorov, trans., Richard Howard

The Saga of Chief Joseph

Pocho, Jose Antonio Villareal

Are Women Human? Penetrating, Sensible and Witty Essays on the Role of Women in Society, Dorothy Sayers

Almanac of the Dead, Leslie Marmon Silko

Bloods, An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans, Wallace Terry)

China Boy, Gus Lee

Handouts from the Instructor as appropriate.

Much of what we take for granted in our very much smaller but complex world today derives from the ideas and concepts of previous ages. Included in this are our beliefs about the other, whether black, brown, yellow, red, female, male, etc. While the sciences and the resulting technology, especially today, undoubtedly shape the surface of our lives, the humanities (the study of human beings) probes into the deeper questions of existence: Who and what are we? What is the "Purpose of Life?" What is the reality of our existence? Each past era and culture has found answers of one sort or another. Some of these "great" ideas were only briefly valid; others seem as valid today as when they were first conceived and continue to influence our thoughts, values and judgments.

To function intelligently in our complex society, we need to find our own answers, but we should not have to re-invent the wheel to do this. In examining the ideas and concepts of the past, we develop measuring rods by which we evaluate our own concepts and begin to see or imagine where they might lead us. Is this important? Socrates would have answered, "The unexamined life is not worth living."

Over our time together we will examine the arts (painting, sculpting, composing, singing, acting, designing, etc.) and the ideas (philosophy, history, social studies, political science, etc.) behind their creation as the American experience has manifested itself throughout the existence of this particular social construct we know as "America." While we will draw on the totality of the "American" cultural milieu, i.e., Native American, African American, Asian American, Anglo-American, Latino-American, etc., as a means of understanding and coming to terms with the various aspects of the issues with which we have been faced, i.e., racism, issues of equity, class and gender, etc., particularly as these inform, influence and reflect our values, the principal focus will be on "historically under-represented groups" and their impact, small and large, on how we have come to consider ourselves "Americans."

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 various cultures in the United States;
- § 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 both orally and in written format.

Grades will be based on the following criteria:

- **Participation:** Being in class is the first requirement; paying attention, actively engaging in any discussions, whether in a group or the class, answering questions asked by the instructor or others, asking your own questions, offering your insights, concerns and experiences, are all part of this criterion. It will be **one-fourth of the your grade**. BE INVOLVED! **Note:** Miss any two (2) class sessions and you will be considered a drop - which **you** then must ensure is recorded properly with those who monitor such details. Appear on the final grade form after being dropped and you will receive a less than stellar mark. **P.S.** Being habitually late for class is not only rude and tacky, but also shall result in deductions from your participation grade. Excused absences from class, while enabling you to continue attending, shall have a NEGATIVE impact upon your participation grade.
- **Papers:** On time and in the following form - Typewritten, one inch (1") margins on every edge, double-spaced, pages numbered at the bottom right corner, bibliography on a separate page (Only necessary if you have used additional textual material to support your research/argument; otherwise, I will know the text you are referencing; always put page numbers in parens after quoted material.), a title page (see Sample), no fancy fonts (I prefer Helvetica or Arial for their cleanliness of line) in a size neither larger than 12 nor smaller than 11. These papers will be **one-half of your grade**. Rewrites are always a possibility; but they will be due the next class period after being returned to you. Late papers will not be accepted, no exceptions; have someone deliver it for you; that is why NO LATER THAN dates are shown. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated**.
- **Mid-Term/Final Examinations:** Will be comprehensive, will be inclusive of text and lecture material, and may consist of multiple choice questions, vocabulary/object identification and/or one or two essay questions. These will constitute **one-fourth of your grade**. Blue books are required for essay question responses (bring two).

You are encouraged to contact me via telephone: **(916) 486-3566**; and/or e-mail: **rjcas@infostations.com**, **cassinr@arc.losrios.edu**, or leave a message at **(916) 278-6444**. And with prior arrangement, a one-on-one conference outside my normal office hour (Monday, 4:00 PM, Gateway Center Classroom) can be held at a mutually agreed location.

Turn off ALL electronic devices while in the classroom. Laptop and cell phone use for photographing, recording or text messaging is not allowed without permission of the instructor.

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008, 278-6955. Discuss this with me as soon as possible.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>
29 Jan 07	Introductions; Discussion of syllabus and course goals; grading standards; paper guidelines, etc. Discussion of "1491" Handout; Context: Answering the question: Where would you have preferred to live in 1491? Why?	"1491" to be read in class;
05 Feb 07	Our perspectives of the "other." Our perspectives of the "other." Silko is to be read concurrently with other required readings. There are six parts, comprising 18 total "Books" in Silko's work; you should be reading more than a book per week. This novel figures prominently in your final exam.	<i>Conquest of America</i> Chs. 1, 3, 4 are required reading. <i>Almanac of the Dead</i> by Leslie Silko
Essay due: 12 February 07, a handout will be provided.		
12 Feb 07	The "Native" experience	<i>Saga of Chief Joseph</i> , ALL .
19 Feb 07	The "Native" experience continued	<i>Chief Joseph</i>
19 Feb 07	Group presentations	
26 Feb 07	Are Women Human?	<i>Are Women Human?</i> , ALL
Essay due: 5 March 07, a handout will be provided.		
05 Mar 07	Women are Human	Handouts
12 Mar 07	The Latino-American and <i>la Malinche</i>	<i>Pocho</i> , ALL
Mid-term Examination: 19 March 07, Two (2) blue books required.		
19 Mar 07	Mid-Term Examination	
24 Mar - 01 Apr 07	SPRING BREAK	
02 Apr 07	<i>la Malinche</i> and <i>Machismo</i>	<i>Pocho</i> and Handouts
09 Apr 07	What is it to be Asian-American and meet everybody's expectations?	<i>China Boy</i> Chs. 1 - 15

16 Apr 07	Asian-Americans never fail or do they?	<i>China Boy</i> Chs. 16 - Epilogue
23 Apr 07	Group Presentations	
Essay due, 23 April 07, a handout will be provided.		
30 Apr 07	The African-American Diaspora:	<i>Bloods</i> , ALL Handouts
07 May 07	The African-American, post- <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> and post-'Nam	<i>Bloods</i>
14 May 07	Paper/Final Exam Due, Topic will be provided	