HRS 161: Multicultural America (Section 4)
Fall 2015
Tuesdays 5:30-8:20pm
GE Area C2

Dr. Allison Solso
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Classroom: Alpine Hall 138
Office: 2022 Mendocino Hall
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 10-11:40am and by appointment

Course Description: Topically structured, interdisciplinary introduction to the cultural experiences of historically under-represented 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.

Specific Focus of this Section: In this section, we will focus on the cultural and religious lives of historically underrepresented groups in the US: Native Americans, specifically the Lakota nation, African Americans, and Latina/os, specifically Mexican-Americans. These groups will be studied both independently and comparatively. While American history and religion will be our primary foci, we will also engage in the study of art, literature, film and music.

Course Objectives:
1). To understand and be able to utilize the critical terminology of American studies and religious studies
2). To understand how minority cultures have been influential on American social, cultural and historical development
3). To recognize and juxtapose varying conceptions of humanity among American minority groups
4). To demonstrate knowledge of the historical development of American minority cultures
5). To recognize the contributions to the richness of the American experience, both past and present, made by under represented groups
6). To contribute your “expertise” from your background to our understanding of Multicultural America

Required Texts:
*Black Elk Speaks* by John Neihardt, with annotations by Raymond DeMallie (premier edition, SUNY Press)
*Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin (Dial Press)
*Performing Piety* by Elaine Pena (University of California Press)
*A New Religious America* by Diana Eck (Harper San Francisco)
*Supplemental online readings will be posted on SacCT

Assignments:
*Quizzes:* Quizzes on the reading material for that week will be given at the beginning of class on the dates indicated on the schedule. These are designed to test your preparedness for class and your level of engagement with the readings. Note that you have six quizzes, but only five will be added to your course total—your lowest score will be dropped. (5 at 20 points each, 100 total)

*Reading Assignments:* You will be responsible for submitting three short reading response papers throughout the semester, as indicated on the schedule. These are designed to get you thinking about and relating to the text. You will choose an interesting, provocative or otherwise intriguing passage from the reading. You will then write about your interpretation and understanding of the passage in light of the larger context of the text or of class material or of both. Once you have thoroughly engaged the text, you will reflect on it, using your own cultural background, personal experience or unique observations. These should be between 2-3 paragraphs (400-500 words). (3 at 33 points each, 100 total)

*Midterm Exam:* The midterm exam will test your knowledge of course material and will focus more heavily on lecture content. Questions will be composed of true/false, multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank. A short essay at the end will likely involve a compare/contrast of minority groups studied thus far. (100 points)

*Final Research Paper:* Using Diana Eck’s study of how multicultural America is changing, you will choose a group we did NOT study in depth from the list she provides: American Muslims, American Hindus or American Buddhists and engage in a 1500 word research paper on the history of one minority group in American history. An exhaustive answer to such a question is impossible in 1500 words. Rather, you will analyze a brief period in American history (up to 10 years) and explain how the group you’ve chosen shaped American media, politics, demographics, pop culture, or any other facet of American society you find interesting. This prompt is broad and you may be creative in your response, as long as you are actively demonstrating the role of your chosen culture in the development of American culture AND you cite Eck’s work, along with at least two other sources. You will be provided a detailed prompt and list of possible topics well in advance. PLEASE NOTE: A DRAFT OF YOUR PAPER WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR PEER REVIEW AND INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK PRIOR TO YOUR FINAL DRAFT.

Grading Schema:
- Quizzes (5 at 20 points each, 100 total)
- Reading Assignments (3 at 33 points each, 100 total)
- Midterm Exam (100 points)
- Final Paper (100 points)
- Attendance and Participation (50 points)

Total: 450 possible points

**Grading Scale:**

- A= 100%-93%
- A-= 92%-90%
- B+= 89%-87%
- B= 86%-83%
- B-= 82%-80%
- C+= 79%-77%
- C= 76%-73%
- C-= 72%-70%
- D= 69%-60%
- F= 59% and below

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all sessions of the class, prepared to discuss the reading assignment for the day. It is necessary, both for your own education and as a courtesy to the other members of the class, to attend class regularly and punctually. An attendance sheet will be distributed for your signature at each class meeting. It is your responsibility to sign this sheet. Once I learn your names, I will record attendance at the beginning of class. Numerous absences and/or chronic tardiness will adversely affect your participation grade.

**Statement on Late Work:** As a rule, late work will NOT be accepted. If under some circumstance it is accepted, it will be penalized one FULL letter grade per day without exception. Exemptions may be made for medical/personal emergencies. Whenever possible, please let me know in advance if you may need to turn in an assignment late.

**Classroom Behavior and Expectations:** Helping one another create and maintain an environment of respect and collegiality is always expected of you. In this class, we will engage some topics that are controversial and arouse strong opinions. I encourage you to feel comfortable voicing your thoughts, but please do so with care. Your tolerance and patience, especially given our diversity, is much appreciated.

Before you enter the classroom, please turn off all electronic devices, and refrain from using them during class. Laptop computers and tablets are NOT to be used in class except with the explicit consent of the instructor. I have a zero tolerance for technology abuse, so if they are tempting for you, just leave them at home. Know thyself.

**Academic Integrity:** If you cheat, engage in unauthorized collaboration, plagiarize your own or someone else’s writing, or otherwise engage in academic misconduct, you will
fail the assignment in question and possibly the course. Please don’t cheat. You are very likely to get caught with all the safeguards in place in the digital age. It’s not worth it. Seriously, just don’t do it. Please. Oh, and its a huge headache for me too. For further info on academic misconduct of all sorts, please consult Sac State’s policy at: http://www.csus.edu/umanual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm

**Intro: Critical Terminology**  
Week 1: September 1  
   In-Class: Critical terminology  
   Reading: *Pulpit and Podium* (O’Connor) and *Snakes Alive* (Orsi) -- SacCT

**Indigenous American Culture**  
Week 2: September 8  
   In-Class: Narrating Native American History: Problems and Opportunities, **QUIZ #1**  
   Reading: *Black Elk Speaks* (BES) Ch.1-6  
Week 3: September 15  
   In-Class: Mythology and Worldview  
   Reading: *BES* Ch. 7-13  
Week 4: September 22  
   In-Class: Material Culture and Music **QUIZ #2**  
   Reading: *BES* Ch. 14-21  
Week 5: September 29  
   In-Class: FILM: *Smoke Signals*; Social Anxiety and Reservation Life, **READING ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE**  
   Reading: *BES* Ch.15-End

**Unit 2: African-American Culture**  
Week 6: October 6  
   In-Class: Slave Religion and Culture, **QUIZ #3**  
   Reading: *Go Tell It*, 1-56 (all of part I)  
Week 7: October 13  
   In-Class: The Great Migration and Urbanization  
   Reading: *GTIOTM*, 59-150 (Part II: Florence and Gabriel)  
Week 8: October 20  
   In-Class: Dr. King v. Malcolm X: Approaches to Civil Rights, **QUIZ #4**  
   Reading: GTIOTM, 151- end, **READING ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE**  
Week 9: October 27  
   In-Class: **Midterm Exam**  
   Reading: Review reading notes

**Unit 3: Latina/o Culture**  
Week 10: November 3  
   In-Class: Spanish Conquest and Mesoamerican Mythology, **QUIZ #5**  
   Reading: *Performing Piety*, 1-51, “Mesoamerican Myth” on SacCT
Week 11: November 10
   In-Class: Catholicism and Beyond: The Changing Face of Latina/o Religion
   Reading: *Performing Piety*, 52-112

Week 12: November 17
   In-Class: Living Transnational Lives, *QUIZ #6*
   Reading: *Performing Piety*, 115-152, **READING ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE**

Week 13: November 24
   In-Class: Dias de Los Muertos: Material Culture and Rebellion
   Reading: “Skulls to the Living, Bread to the Dead” (Brandeis) SacCT

**Unit 4: American Civil Religion**

Week 14: December 1
   In-Class: **PEER REVIEW/INSTRUCTOR REVIEW OF FINAL PAPER**;
   American Civil Religion
   Reading: *A New Religious America* (1-77 and a later chapter of your choosing)

Week 15: December 8
   In-Class: “New” Immigrants and the Changing Shape of American Demographics

*Final Paper due the day of our final exam to my campus email by 5pm.*