HRS 161: Multicultural America (Sections 1 & 90)
Fall 2015
MWF 9:00-9:50
GE Area C2

Dr. Allison Solso
Allison.solso@csus.edu
Classroom: Del Norte Hall 1004
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 Structure: This course is designed to provide a hybrid experience, including both face-to-face and online activities. Contact time will be divided in the following way:

- Approximately 65% face-to-face (Monday and Wednesday classroom meetings)
Face-to-face sessions will be held on the Sacramento State campus in Mendocino 1005
- Approximately 35% online (Friday SacCT assignments) Online resources will be on SacCT and other Web sites. Activities will consist of readings, videos, discussion threads, writing assignments and tests.

SacCT Access: Course will be delivered partially online through a course management system named SacCT. To access this course on SacCT you will need access to the Internet and a supported Web browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari). To ensure that you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins please run the Check Browser from your SacCT course. Refer to the SacCT Browser Tune-up page for instructions.

Technical Assistance: If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with SacCT you can:
- Visit the SacCT Student Resources Page Review SacCT Student Tutorials
- Visit the SacCT Student FAQ’s Web page Submit a SacCT Problem Form
- Note: This syllabus, along with course assignments and due dates, are subject to change. It is YOUR responsibility to check SacCT for corrections or updates to
the syllabus. Any changes will be noted by course announcements and through SacCT email.

**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. (5 at 20 points each, 100 total)

*Reading Responses:* 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)

*Online Discussion Board:* On Thursday nights, I will create a new discussion thread on our SacCT page. Your job will be to respond to the questions and/or prompts I post
there. These will be larger, thematic questions regarding course material. These are intended as discussions that demonstrate your engagement with course material and your perspective on the issues raised. You should also demonstrate in your responses that you read your peers’ earlier responses and have something new to add to enrich our discussion. These will be graded and therefore, please respond in formal writing (complete sentences with citations when appropriate). Please note that you will be asked to participate in 6 discussion boards over the course of the semester, but only 5 will be counted in your final grade. Your lowest scoring response will be dropped. (5 at 20 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)
- Online discussion assignments (5 at 20 points each, 100 total)
- Midterm Exam (100 points)
- Final Paper (100 points)
- Attendance and Participation (50 points)

Total: 550 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
August 31: Syllabus Review and Introduction
September 2: Critical terminology
  Reading: *Pulpit and Podium* (O’Connor) and *Snakes Alive* (Orsi)--SacCT

Indigenous American Culture
September 7: Narrating Native American History: Problems and Opportunities
  Reading: *Black Elk Speaks* (BES) Ch.1-3
September 9: Tracing Indigenous History
  Reading: BES 3-6
September 11: Quiz #1 online

September 14: Creation Mythology and Worldview
  Reading: BES: Ch. 7-10
September 16: Material Culture of Indigenous Peoples
  Reading: BES: Ch. 11-14
September 18: Online discussion board #1
  Reading: BES: Ch. 15-18

September 21: Film: *Smoke Signals*
  Reading: Finish BES
September 23: Film: *Smoke Signals*
  Reading: “Vine Deloria” on SacCT
September 25: Quiz #2 online

September 28: Reservation Life
  Reading: “Silko” on SacCT
September 30: Social Anxieties
  Reading: “Silko II” on SacCT
October 2: Reading Response #1 due online

African-American Culture
October 5: Slave Religion and Culture
  Reading: Go Tell It (begin p.1-56)
October 7: Emancipation and Jim Crow
  Reading: GTIOTM: Finish Part 1 (through pg. 56)
October 9: Online discussion board #3

October 12: The Great Migration
  Reading: GTIOTM: Part 2: Florence
October 14: Urbanization and the Storefront
October 16: *Quiz #3 online*

October 19: Civil Rights Movement  
Reading: GTIOTM: p.156-end
October 21: Approaches: King vs. Malcolm X  
Reading: GTIOTM finish
October 23: *Reading Response #2 due online*

October 26: Midterm Exam Review Session  
October 28: *Midterm Exam*
October 30: *Online discussion board #4*

**Latina/o Culture**  
November 2: The Spanish Conquest  
Reading: “Mesoamerican myth” on SacCT
November 4: Mesoamerican mythology  
Reading: Performing Piety, 1-51
November 6: *Online discussion board #5*

November 9: Catholicism and Beyond  
Reading: Performing Piety, 52-80
November 11: The Changing Face of Latina/o religion  
Reading: Performing Piety, 80-112
November 13: *Quiz #4 online*

November 16: Living Transnational Lives  
Reading: Performing Piety, 115-152
November 18: The Border as Image and Place  
Reading: Finish Performing Piety
November 20: *Reading Response #3 due online*

November 23: Material Culture and Rebellion  
Reading: “Brandeis 1” on SacCT
November 25: Dias de los Muertos  
Reading: “Brandeis 2” on SacCT
November 27: NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

**American Civil Religion**  
November 30: *PEER REVIEW/ INSTRUCTOR REVIEW OF FINAL PAPER*
December 2: American Civil Religion  
Reading: *A New Religious America* (1-77)
December 4: *Online discussion board #6*

December 7: New” Immigrants and the Changing Shape of American Demographics
Reading: A New Religious America (later chapter of your choosing)
December 9: Democracy and Plurality
December 11: Quiz #5 online

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