

Multiethnic Literatures of the United States

*Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary seeks to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ
by equipping students to serve the church and fulfill the Great Commission.*

PROFESSOR INFORMATION

Name: Matthew Mullins
Office: Patterson 310
Office Hours: T, W 3:30pm-5pm (& by appt.)
Email: mmullins@sebts.edu
Phone: 761-2292

CLASS INFORMATION

ENG 3750
Section A
Spring 2015
R 12:30 - 3:20
Appleby 101

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Who owns race? What is ethnicity? Are these terms interchangeable? How do such identity markers help/hinder our ability to communicate? What do they have to do with literature? These are just some of the conceptual questions we will develop this semester in our exploration of the role of literature in shaping both dominant and marginalized narratives about race and ethnicity in the United States. Reading a broad range of texts across time periods and genres, we will attempt to identify, contextualize, and interrogate the expectations we bring to literary texts based on our assumptions about race and ethnicity. We will engage the interdisciplinary fields of Critical Race Theory, whiteness studies, and ethnic studies to consider how these theoretical frameworks might add dimensions to our reading of literature and to examine how literature might redirect, revise, or reinforce these theoretical approaches. A strong understanding of race and ethnicity is imperative to believers in the age of globalization when diverse groups find themselves in ever-increasing proximity. As Christians we believe that all people are created in the image of God, that we all bear this image. And yet, there are vast cultural, economic, educational, and other differences between groups that often fall along lines of race and ethnicity. Since we know that we are all image bearers, regardless of race, ethnicity, and nation, what accounts for these differences? How should Christians approach these differences? More specifically, what implications do these differences have for the spread of the gospel and fulfillment of the Great Commission?

REQUIRED & RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. *The Namesake*.

Lee, Chang-rae. *Native Speaker*.

Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark*.

Silko, Leslie. *Ceremony*.

Wright, Richard. *Native Son*.

Reliable Printing Access: We will read a number of primary/secondary texts posted as PDFs online.

COLLEGE CORE COMPETENCIES

Spiritual Formation; Biblical Exposition; Theological Integration; Ministry Preparation; Critical Thinking and Communication

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who complete this course will be able to:

1. Identify their own assumptions about how race and ethnicity are defined;
2. Recognize ways in which literature reinforces/resists these assumptions;
3. Articulate their views on how race has been imagined at different historical moments;
4. Contribute to an ongoing scholarly conversation through research writing.

How To Be A Human In This Class

Attendance: "Regular class attendance is expected and students are responsible for completing all assignments. The individual instructor is responsible for his/her attendance policy. Instructors are at liberty to assign a failing grade to any student who is absent from 15% or more of the scheduled class meetings regardless of assignment and/or examination grades" ("Academic Policies for All Students"). I expect you to attend every class meeting. You will be allowed **1 absence** without penalty. If you have **2 absences**, one half letter grade (B+ becomes B) will be subtracted from your overall grade. If you miss **more than 2 class meetings** you will **FAIL**, no questions asked. Also, since this is a 3 hour class, leaving/arriving at the break translates to $\frac{1}{2}$ an absence.

In-Class Existing: Our class will begin at 12:30pm Eastern Standard Time. Please be on time.

PLEASE: No laptops (Exceptions will be days when I ask you to read longer PDFs. Feel free to bring PDFs to class on electronic reading devices such as laptops, tablets, etc.). No cell phones in class. Turn them off; put them away. No calls, no text messaging, no alarms. Respect one another. Lively discussion is one of the goals of this course, but remember to treat one another with respect. Do not interrupt speakers, and do not insult your peers. Disagreements are great, but discussion will be polite. I do not tolerate any language that is sexist, racist, or homophobic. Everyone is entitled to her or his own view, but we will not interact with each other using discriminatory language. While this may sound overly politically correct, how would Jesus speak of and to EVERYONE he came to love and save?

Work & Preparation: Come to class prepared! Do the work that needs to be done outside class, and come to class ready to discuss, question, listen, and participate in general. All assignments are due at the *start of class* on their respective due dates. If you know you're going to miss class, please send your work through a fellow student if at all possible! While I typically accept late work with a penalty of **1 letter grade off per day late**, I will reserve the right to refuse to accept any late work if I think it necessary. **Failing to complete any single assignment for the course could result in a failing grade for the entire course!** Most assignments will be turned in electronically as Microsoft Word documents to: mullins.paper.submissions@gmail.com

Academic Integrity: "In preparing their papers and other assignments, students must not copy the work of others. Any direct quotations must be documented. Summaries and paraphrased materials must also be noted with reference in the text or notes to the original sources. Students should document their sources and maintain the highest standards of academic integrity in all of their work. Plagiarism, cheating on tests, and other forms of academic fraud will not be tolerated. Students who engage in such activity will receive a failing grade on any fraudulent work and may receive a failing grade for the course. All instances of such behavior will be recorded on an offending student's record with the Registrar and deans. In addition, the Dean of Students reserves the right to take disciplinary action against those guilty of such behavior." ("Academic Policies for All Students").

Class Cancellation Policy: Students will be notified of class cancellation via email at least 24 hours prior to class time, if at all possible, in the event of a cancellation. In addition, a sign will be posted outside the classroom should cancellation be necessary.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must notify the professor prior to the second meeting of class.

Writing Center: The Writing Center at Southeastern offers one-on-one consultations, provides personalized feedback on essay drafts, and helps with any stage, skill, or strategy in the writing process. The Writing Center is located in the library, where you can walk in or make an appointment. Most importantly, the Writing Center is **NOT A REMEDIAL RESOURCE**, but an invaluable support for those who want to use writing to generate, organize, and communicate ideas. **GO!**

Course Content Disclaimer: In this class we will read, view, discuss, and otherwise encounter all kinds of texts that contain language, images, scenes, and ideas that we may sometimes find objectionable. The purpose of such moments in our class is not to shock or excite, but to serve as legitimate means of cultural encounter, and to raise questions about the relationship between Christ and culture.

Expectations for Upper-Level English Elective Work

Reading and Note-Taking for Primary Sources: I expect you to do every last bit of reading assigned, and each week's reading needs to be totally done by the time class starts. Read all primary sources, and read them slowly, methodically, repeatedly. Always be on the lookout for connections between readings/authors, and **WRITE THEM DOWN!** Mark in your texts, and keep track of salient phrases, words, and ideas that seem to recur. Look up unfamiliar words and phrases. **YOU MUST BUY HARD COPIES OF THE PRIMARY TEXTS.**

Reading and Note-Taking for Secondary Sources: Read secondary source materials *as thoroughly as necessary* to reformulate the author's central claim in your own words, and to recall the most important evidence that the author uses to support that claim. Take active notes. In other words, don't simply repeat the author's words/ideas. Instead, create your own note-taking system. Often, creating a categorical system is helpful here. Come up with a single system that you can use with all your sources. For example, a protocol that includes author, date, central claim, primary evidence, possible shortcomings, etc.

Preparing for Class Discussion: Review your reading notes. Think back to some of the overarching questions around which we have structured our course. Be prepared to offer detailed readings of at least one text, and be ready to support your interpretations with specific passages/evidence from the text. This is not a freshman or sophomore-level course, and I will not treat it as such. In other words, this is not a try-to-figure-out-what-the-teacher-thinks-and-then-regurgitate-that course.

Expectations for Written Assignments: Your writing assignments should reflect the level of the course at hand, and thus I expect writing assignments for this class to exhibit the skills and abilities of a developing English major or upper-level student. What this means for you practically is that your work at the idea level should engage concepts with complex and nuanced thinking, and that your work at the word level is indicative of someone who is becoming a professional thinker. Thus, your written work should be proofread for typos, misspellings, errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, and other word-level problems. Sloppy, incoherent writing will be severely penalized, and may even prompt me to require a rewrite. If you need help in any of these areas, it's ok, that's what school is for! Go to the Writing Center, come work with me during office hours, sit down with a friend. Just don't use the grading process to get word-level feedback that should be addressed prior to the paper ever making its way to me.

Assessment and Assignments

Class Participation	15%	A+=Face-melting great	B-=Average
Short Papers	20%	A=Exceptional	C+=Low average
Discussant Duties	25%	A-=Very good	C=Below average
Prospectus/Annotated Bib.	15%	B+=Good	C-=We need to talk
Research Essay	25%	B=High average	D-range=Serious

Class Participation: This course is not a survey course. Each week the well-prepared student in our class has 1) completed all the reading; 2) taken notes on the reading; 3) written down pertinent ideas/questions to facilitate class discussion. I may talk a lot some days, you may talk a lot others; the bottom line is that most of what we do should arise from your questions, concerns, observations. A=Weekly contribution to class discussion, one absence or less. B=Consistent contribution to class discussion, one absence or less. C=Occasional contribution to class discussion, two absences or less. D=Rare contribution to class discussion, two absences or less.

Short Papers: Each student will sign up on the first day of class to write a three-to-five-page paper on three different weeks. The essays will engage readings assigned on their respective weeks, and should be thesis driven. The thesis should be supported by quotations from and analyses of the week's reading. These papers will be submitted to our course website two days before class. All members of the class are responsible for logging on and reading these short papers.

Discussant Duties: Each of you will serve as an official discussant on 3 separate occasions. Ideally, you will not sign up to be a discussant on the same weeks you're writing a short paper. I expect everyone to participate each week, but discussants are especially responsible for:

1. Starting class discussion with a question regarding one of the short papers for that week;
2. Preparing specific questions/comments for specific classmates who have written short papers for that week;
3. Coming to class with specific passages you would like to discuss;
4. Making connections between readings past and present;
5. Reviving class discussion when it dies down;

When discussion flags or the class seems to be running out of steam, I will turn to discussants as the ones responsible for getting us going again. You will sign up during the first week for the days you would like to serve as a discussant.

Prospectus/Annotated Bibliography: In preparation for the research essay, you will compose a 1-page, single-space prospectus that lays out what you plan to argue, how your argument fits into the larger discussion on your topic, and the structure of the essay. You will attach an annotated bibliography of 8-10 *secondary sources*. I expect you to consult the Writing Center's guide to compiling and composing an annotated bibliography, and I will assess your annotations based on those criteria. **Brief note on sources** All secondary sources for your annotated bibliography and paper(s) should be scholarly materials, not journalism, encyclopedias or other general reference books, or miscellaneous sites on the internet.

Research Essay: 3,000 words. This conventional research- and argument-driven essay should be focused in some way on concerns, ideas, and texts relevant to our course in terms of content and period. This essay should involve a significant amount of scholarly research into a specific question/problem that will serve as the foundation for an argument that you will state and develop in your writing. The introduction should follow Joseph Williams's "Global Coherence" model outlined in "Lesson 9" of his book *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace* 4th edition, the body should be

organized according to the "Argument Boxes" outline of reasons and evidence posted on our Moodle site, and the conclusion should point to some larger implications of your argument and analysis without merely repeating the introduction. We will spend a good amount of time in class discussing the conventions of academic discourse in the specific context of literary studies. The primary goal is to become a member of the scholarly community by joining an ongoing conversation about how to understand a specific text, and how that understanding affects our understanding of broader questions, problems, and concepts.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

All readings are due on the days listed.

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| Week 1:
(January 22) | Introduction to Course—Meet & Greet
200 Years of the U.S. Census |
| Week 2:
(January 29) | Paul Lauter, "Introduction" from <i>The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic Lit.</i>
Benjamin Franklin, "Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind"
Thomas Jefferson, selections from <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i>
Johnson and Graham's Lessee v. William McIntosh
Neil Gotanda, "A Critique of 'Our Constitution Is Color-Blind'" |
| Week 3:
(February 5) | Richard Wright, <i>Native Son</i>
Richard Wright, "Blueprint for Negro Writing" |
| Week 4:
(February 12) | Richard Wright, <i>Native Son</i>
Lawrence Hogue, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" |
| Week 5:
(February 19) | George Yancey, "Two Views of Racism"
Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, Chapters 1-2
Mark Dery and Samuel Delaney, "Black to the Future"
[Bring <i>Native Son</i> to class] |
| Week 6:
(February 26) | Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, Chapter 3
W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" |
| Week 7:
(March 5) | Spring Break |
| Week 8:
(March 12) | Toni Morrison, <i>Playing in the Dark</i>
Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, Chapters 4-5
Ernest Hemingway, "The Battler"
William Faulkner, "A Rose For Emily" |
| Week 9:
(March 19) | Leslie Marmon Silko, <i>Ceremony</i>
Werner Sollors, "Foreword: Theories of American Ethnicity" |
| Week 10:
(March 26) | Leslie Marmon Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> |
| Week 11:
(April 2) | Easter Break |

- Week 12:
(April 9) U.S. Census and Racial/Ethnic Categories
Ramon A. Gutierrez, "Ethnic Studies: Its Evolution in American Colleges and Universities"
Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, Chapter 6
- Week 13:
(April 16) Chang-rae Lee, *Native Speaker*
Yung-Hsing Wu, "Native Sons and Native Speakers"
- Week 14:
(April 23) Chang-rae Lee, *Native Speaker*
- Week 15:
(April 30) Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*
Tamara Bhalla, "Being (and Feeling) Gogol"
- Week 16:
(May 7) Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*
- Week 17:
(May 11-13) Research Essay Due

HELPFUL LIBRARY RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED

- Bell, Bernard. *The Afro American Novel and Its Tradition*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1987.
- Bercovitch, Sacvan. *Reconstructing American Literary History*. Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1986.
- Brooks, Joanna. *American Lazarus*. New York: Oxford U P, 2003.
- Davidson, Cathy N. *The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the United States*. New York: Oxford U P, 1995.
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford U P, 1988.
- Hogue, Lawrence. *Postmodern American Literature and Its Other*. Champaign, IL: U of Illinois P, 2009.
- Kaplan, Amy. *The Social Construction of American Realism*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992.
- Soja, Edward. *Postmodern Geographies*. London: Verso: 1990.
- Sollors, Werner. *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*. New York: Oxford U P, 1986.
- Sundquist, Eric J. *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1998.