

**English 2700
Fall 20202**

Professor Howard Horwitz

Office hours: MW: 9:40-11:00; or by appt. (Our offices no longer have phones.)

All office hours may occur by Zoom.

Diversity in American Literature

MW 8:05-9:25; BEH S 111

3619 LNCO, h.horwitz@utah.edu

This course fulfills the Diversity and Humanities area general education requirement, and can fulfill both requirements (I have been told; double check).

The course is designed for non-English majors.

I AM INCLUDING here the course description and syllabus to a previous edition of this course. THE ACTUAL SYLLABUS WILL BE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. I WILL ADAPT THE SYLLABUS TO INCOPORATE ELEMENTS FROM THE CURRENT HEALTH AND ECONOMIC CRISIS. The pandemic crisis affects different demographics unequally. Even before shelter in place orders, the pandemic quickly produced a precipitous drop in demand. Discretionary spending has plummeted and even essential spending has slumped. Workers in small businesses have lost their jobs or been “furloughed” in droves. At this date, 8 May 2020, 33 million workers have filed unemployment insurance claims in the past 6 weeks. Small businesses have received less federal support than large businesses. Banks and lenders have not been asked to sacrifice. Workers in “essential” businesses are at greater risk of infection than workers who, like me, can conduct our work at home. Workers at greater risk also tend have less access to affordable health care. Structural factors in society and the economy have meant that certain minority populations (African-American, Hispanic, Native-American) suffer higher infection and mortality rates than other demographic groups.

Generally, I select readings for this course that help us understand some assumptions about population diversity in the U.S. How do these assumptions affect the social and administrative structures in which people in this nation imagine their lives, opportunities, and futures? How do these assumptions influence the way people experience themselves and others? During the summer, I will select journalism and profiles to help us consider the way assumptions about population diversity and administrative structures have distributed, or skewed, the impact of the Covid-19 crisis. I will not find much fiction treating the current crisis, but I will be able to discover profiles that indicate the way some individuals experience the crisis. Right now, I anticipate retaining the film *Real Women Have Curves* and much of the course materials published in recent years. I will not order Nella Larsen’s fine 1929 novel *Passing*. I might decide to order Ana Castillo’s powerful novel *The Guardians*. Right now no books are on order at the university bookstore. Events will change rapidly and I will adjust the syllabus so that we can consider key concepts in the course in the context of the ongoing crisis. The administrative details in the old course description, regarding requirements for the course and grading factors, will still apply.

OLD COURSE DESCRIPTION AND SYLLABUS

This course will examine literary texts, some film and other video, and some non-fiction materials, in order to examine the idea of “diversity” in American writing and culture. Apparently some students do not appreciate this required course title, because it feels like the

imposition of a cultural agenda. Conversely, some students appreciate exposure to a variety of perhaps unfamiliar materials. I hope the course can help us consider the relation between population diversity and diversity of cultural practices. (The term “population diversity” refers to far flung national or geographical origins of persons or their ancestors—my ancestors hailed from central and southern Europe, arriving in the 1880s.) Bear in mind that the notion of diversity in the U.S. includes class and caste diversity as well as the more familiar gender, racial, ethnic, and religious diversity. We will read texts by and about figures from a variety of backgrounds and from several periods of American culture. The materials we will study, along with the general rubric “diversity,” imply a broad question. If one investigates the relation of diverse backgrounds to American culture, mustn’t we ask, does a continuous and coherent American culture exist? What seem to be, or what do people assume to be, the attributes of American culture, of what it means to be an American? Can we think of American culture as a coherent phenomenon?

We will discuss one film, *Real Women Have Curves* (2002), which involves the conditions of labor as well as questions of gender and ethnic identification. The film will be available for streaming through the Marriott library. I have ordered two novels for the course. All other written materials will be short fiction or essays or excerpts from longer works, and will be available as PDF files on the Canvas page for the course, in the Course Notes page. (We will discuss the organization of the course Canvas page during the first class meeting.) Especially in a 2000-level course, where we discuss some basic skills of interpretation and essay writing. I think shorter works help us focus on critical skills. In a general education course, we are learning how to process writing, video, and other materials that involve the cultural phenomena treated in this sort of course.

Required texts, available in the University bookstore:

Ana Castillo, *The Guardians* (Random House, 9780812975710)

Nella Larsen, *Passing* (Penguin, 978014243727)

Writing assignments: regular, brief exercises (75-100 words) on most texts we study (15% of the final grade); one 2-page, **optional**, ungraded, diagnostic essay, to begin a conversation about writing with individual students; two 3-4 page essays, one 4-5 page essay. I will distribute questions for the first two graded essays; students will develop their own questions for the final essay; we will have discussions about ways to form the question for the third essay. **No exams.** The first graded essay is worth 25% of the final grade; the second and third formal essays are each worth 30% percent of the final grade. Students can revise the first two graded essays, and the grade on the revision replaces the grade on the first version. The brief exercises enable me to gauge whether students are keeping up with assignments and understanding the material as we proceed. The exercises not only substitute for exams. The exercises help students gain practice articulating ideas about the course materials. The stakes are low for any single exercise, and so you can try out ideas. As I comment on the exercises, I can often identify the germ of an argument for the formal essays. Submitting the exercises regularly can only help a student’s grade; if you don’t submit exercises, your grade by definition will suffer.

Attendance is required. I employ a bonus system to evaluate class participation, rewarding students who participate regularly and thoughtfully. I do not take attendance, but if I notice

regular absences from particular students, I begin to count absences which can accumulate a penalty.

We will discuss matters of composition for 5-10 minutes of nearly every class meeting. Most of the topics we discuss are treated in the file **Matters of Composition** that you can find on the course Canvas site, in the Writing Assignments page. I try to help students learn to organize essays around a concrete thesis, with every stage of the essay developing this core argument. I try to help students learn to organize sentences around concrete, active verbs.

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center offers one-on-one assistance with writing. Tutors can help you understand your writing assignments, work through the writing process, and/or polish your drafts for all the courses in which you are enrolled. Sessions are free of charge, and you can meet as often as you need. To make an appointment, call 801.587.9122. The Writing Center is located on the second floor of the Marriott Library. Visit the website at writingcenter.utah.edu. Let me suggest that before you visit the Writing Center, come to my office, and certainly show me outlines and drafts of the formal essays. I myself have helped train some of the tutors at the University Writing Center, and these tutors are well trained and experienced. But bring me your writing first. Discussing with me your exercises, on which the stakes are low, might be useful as preparation for longer writing assignments.

Students with Disabilities (ADA statement): The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability & Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. *All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability & Access.*

University Safety Statement: The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). Members of the University will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677

(COPS). For fuller explanations of sexual assault and sexual misconduct, visit <http://safeu.utah.edu/>.

If you witness sexual assault or feel that you are in imminent and immediate danger, dial 911. Report sexual assault or sexual misconduct to campus police (801-585-2677) or the Title IX office (<https://utah.i-sight.com/external/case/new>; 801-581-8365; or oeo@utah.edu).

English Department Diversity Statement: Literature allows us to imagine the lives of others and broaden our perspectives. Our conversations about literature, in the physical or virtual classroom, are part of that process. Our diverse identities and experiences will inform and enhance those discussions. As we approach sometimes difficult topics, each member of the class is expected to help foster a respectful, generous, and supportive classroom environment that makes room for productive difference and reasoned debate.

University Accommodations Policy: Students should visit <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php> to review the university's Accommodations Policy (Policy 6-100-Q., especially Q1.-Q3, and in particular Q3a.-Q3d). Students should notify me if they seek any scheduling accommodations under the terms of Policy 6-100-Q. Also in accord with this policy, please note that the content of course materials and consequently of class discussions may conflict with some students' deeply held core beliefs. Any student has the right to petition the instructor in writing for a content accommodation. Please review the syllabus carefully, and if you have a concern about the content of any course materials, please discuss it with me immediately. If you wish to petition for an accommodation, I recommend that you submit it as soon as possible.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is one form of "academic misconduct" (see Policy 6-400 (Student Code), Section 1.B. 2., at <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>). University Policy 6-400, Section 1.B. 2.c., defines plagiarism as "the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person's work in, or as a basis for, one's own work offered for academic consideration or credit for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one's own, without attribution, any individual's words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression." You must cite any material you have consulted on the web or in a library; otherwise you have plagiarized the material, whether you quote (or copy) passages or just allude to concepts discussed on a website. Do not adapt other students' work nor collaborate with others on your essays. The work you submit must be your own.

Student plagiarism is often easy to detect, because plagiarized passages do not sound like student writing and often depart from a thesis you have developed for this course. Google and other digital tools make plagiarism increasingly easy to document. Faculty are required to report for disciplinary action all instances of plagiarism to the Offices of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Students who plagiarize have not learned the skills any discipline tries to cultivate, and professors are authorized to decide appropriate penalties. We can fail plagiarized work or even fail for the course students guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarized work is generally not high quality anyway, so better to discuss with your instructor

any difficulties you encounter while crafting essays. Learn from these difficulties; do not try to disguise them. In general, do not use sources you find on the web to help you fulfill assignments for this course, because you will be unable to evaluate the quality of the source. The questions we discuss in class are specific to this course, and websites will provide only general information.

English 2700

Fall 2019

Professor Howard Horwitz

Office hours: MW: 9:40-11:00; or by appt. (Our offices no longer have phones.)

Diversity in American Literature

MW 8:05-9:25; BEH S 111

3619 LNCO, h.horwitz@utah.edu

All assigned readings not on order at the U. bookstore, are posted on the course Canvas site, in the Course Notes page.

Submit all exercises and formal essays (and any questions) by email, to h.horwitz@utah.edu. **Do not send through Canvas.** Attach formal essays as a Word file (.doc or .docx; don't paste the text into the email) and label the file with your name (not my name or a topic name) (for example: Jones1stEssay, or Jones3223Essay#1; **not** HorwitzEssay#1 or MoriEssay#1 or FirstEssay_2700).

OLD WEEKLY SYLLABUS

Week #1 (Aug. 19): Introduction: Benjamin Franklin, "Observations on Population"

(**Aug. 21):** Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America" (1916)

Excerpt from W.E.B. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

Phyllis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America"

Week #2 (Aug. 26): Charles Chesnutt, "The Goophered Grapevine" (1887),

(**Aug. 28):** Chesnutt, "A Matter of Principle" (1899)

Optional Diagnostic Essay due Aug. 31, by email (not by Canvas)

Week #3 (Sept. 4): Zitkala-Ša, "School Days of an Indian Girl" (1896)

MONDAY, September 2, No Class, LABOR DAY

Week #4 (Sept. 9): Zitkala-Ša, "America, Home of the Red Man"

Henry Dawes, "Defense of the Dawes Act"

Richard Pratt, "Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites"

(**Sept. 11):** Sui Sin Far, "Mrs. Spring Fragrance," Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)

Week #5 (Sept. 16): Sui Sin Far, "The Inferior Woman," "Its Wavering Image"

(**Sept. 18):** Anzia Yezierska, "My Own People"

Week #6 (Sept. 23): Hisaye Yamamoto, "Las Vegas Charlie," "A Day in Little Tokyo"

(**Sept. 25):** "The Legend of Miss Sasagawara,"

Kurashige and Murray, eds., materials on Japanese internment during WWII

Korematsu v. United States

FIRST ESSAY DUE: Friday, Sept. 27, by email

Week #7 (Sept. 30): Toshio Mori, "Say It with Flowers," "Li'l Yokohama"

(**Oct. 2):** Mori, "Slant-Eyed Americans,"

from R. W. Shufeldt, from *America's Greatest Problem: The Negro*

FALL BREAK, October 6 – 13, NO CLASSES

Week #8 (Oct. 14 & 16): Nella Larsen, *Passing*

Week #9 (Oct. 21 & 23): Herman Melville, “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids”

Alice Kessler-Harris, excerpt from *Out Of Work*

“Coal Jobs Prove Lucrative, but Not for Those in the Mines,”

by Hiroko Tabuchi, 5/2/17, *New York Times*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/02/climate/coal-jobs-prove-lucrative-but-not-for-those-in-the-mines.html>

“At Carrier, the Factory Trump Saved, Morale Is Through the Floor,” by Nelson D. Schwartz, 8/10/18, *New York Times*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/10/business/economy/carrier-trump-absenteeism-morale.html>

Week #10 (Oct. 28): Alice Dunbar-Nelson, “Mrs. Newly-Wed and Her Servants”

(Oct. 30): Noria Jablonski, “Pam Calls Her Mother on Five Cent Sundays,”

“One of Us”

SECOND ESSAY DUE: Friday, Nov. 1, by email

Week #11 (Nov. 4): Octavia Butler, “The Evening and the Morning and the Night”

(Nov. 6): Jhumpa Lahiri, “This Blessed House”

Revision of first essay due Friday, Nov. 8

Week #12 (Nov. 11): Louise Erdrich, “The Shawl,” “The Painted Drum”

(Nov. 13): Viet Thang Nguyen, “The Americans”

Week #13 (Nov. 17): Ana Castillo, *The Guardians*

Revision of second essay due Friday, Nov. 19

Week #14 (Nov. 25): finish *The Guardians*

(Nov. 27): <https://baesic.net/minutemanproject/commentary-2/>;

from Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We?*

Week #15 (Dec. 2 & 4): *Real Women Have Curves*, directed by Patricia Cardoso

Proposal for third essay due by Wednesday, Dec. 3

Final Exam Week: THIRD ESSAY Due, Thursday, Dec. 12