



ENGL 442 32669R/American Literature, 1920-present: “Transnational/Postnational Imaginings”

Units: 4

Term—Day—Time: Spring 2018; T & Th; 12:30-1:50 p.m.

Location: Taper Hall of Humanities (THH) 117

Instructor: Professor Melissa Daniels-Rauterkus

Office: THH 439

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-3 pm and by appointment

Contact Info: rauterku@usc.edu; (213) 740-2808; Skype:

m.rauterku718@gmail.com: Timeline for replying to emails/calls: I generally answer emails/phone calls during business hours, i.e. Mon-Fri., from 9 am-5pm. I will reply to all messages within 48 hours.

Teaching Assistant: NA

Office:

Office Hours:

Contact Info: Email, phone number (office, cell), Skype, etc.

IT Help: USC Information Technology Services

Hours of Service: Telephone support available 24 hrs./per day, 7 days/wk. Email support available Mon.-Fri. from 8am-6pm.

Contact Info: consult@usc.edu; (213) 740-5555; see also Dornsife

Technology Services at dornsife.usc.edu/contact-cts/



Course Description

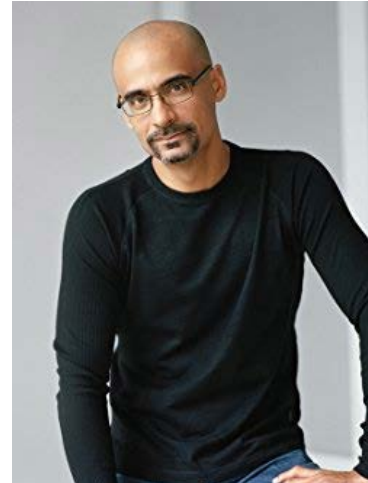
Exile, expatriation, and homelessness are themes that dominate American writing after WWI. From the modernist works of Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, and Langston Hughes to the postmodern fiction of Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon, and Toni Morrison, twentieth- and twenty-first century American literature confronts and reflects a world in which war, capitalism, and increasing globalization have destabilized notions of identity rooted in citizenship and the nation-state. This course is a study of American literature beyond America.

We'll read and discuss a diverse range of texts that: 1) interrogate who and what is American? and 2) view America, as Paul Lauter has described, as part of “a world system, in which the exchange of commodities, the flow of capital, and the iterations of cultures know no borders.” Using recent scholarship about the transnational and postnational turns in American studies as our framework, we will trace and analyze how ideas of Americanness are constructed and deconstructed, at home and abroad, (through the lenses of race, class, and gender and vis-à-vis aesthetic forms) across nearly a century of literary production.



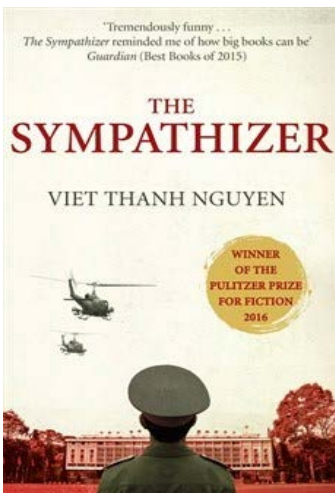
Texts include: Nella Larsen's, *Quicksand* (1928); James Baldwin's, *Giovanni's Room* (1956); Toni

Morrison's, *Tar Baby* (1981); Junot Diaz's, *Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007); and Viet Nguyen's, *The Sympathizer* (2015). Students will be expected to write two short papers (2-3 pages each), a medium-length paper (5-7 pages), and submit a final seminar paper (10-12 pages).



Learning Objectives

- Understand human experience and cultural, historical, and political events as narrative
- Engage with a literary work in a personal and critical way
- Perform a close reading of a literary work that connects issues of aesthetics to the cultural/political realms
- Learn how to read, think, and write critically about complex issues
- Understand America and Americanness both as a geopolitical construct and reality that exists within a larger sphere of global events and forces
- Conduct research and build off existing scholarship to create an original argument that advances the conversation about a literary work(s) or contributes to the field in a meaningful way



Prerequisite(s):

Co-Requisite(s): ENGL 263

Concurrent Enrollment:

Recommended Preparation:

Course Notes

Grading Type: Letter

This is a web-enhanced course that utilizes Blackboard. I will post assignments, lecture notes (occasionally), and supplemental readings and digital content. Please check Blackboard for important announcements, course materials, and informal writing assignment threads. This course may also utilize audio/visual media. Because these files are too large to upload onto Blackboard, they will be available through course reserve, YouTube or other instant streaming services.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Beginner; access to Blackboard and the ability to view digital content.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Ernest Hemingway's, *The Sun Also Rises*

Nella Larsen's, *Quicksand*

James Baldwin's, *Giovanni's Room*

Toni Morrison's, *Tar Baby*

Junot Diaz's, *Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

Viet Nguyen's, *The Sympathizer*

*Additional readings will appear on Blackboard

Description and Assessment of Assignments

1. Response Essay (2-3 pages)—Select one of the readings we have discussed in class. Privileging your own voice and perspective, tell me what you think the author was trying to say, achieve, or reveal. What is your personal position in relationship to the author's? How does the work affirm or challenge your own experience or viewpoint? How did the work affect you? The purpose of the

response essay is to establish a personal connection with a cultural artifact or object of analysis. This is a more subjective exercise. Do not provide a formal, academic appraisal of the work. Focus on what you feel and what you have to say about what you read.

2. Close Reading (2-3 pages)--Select a passage (150-200 words) from the assigned reading (i.e. reading we have already completed) and provide a critical interpretation of it, paying special attention to its formal attributes (e.g. style, grammar, syntax, tropes, literary devices), cultural or historical implications, and its bearing on things/events outside of the text. You should begin by annotating your passage of choice. Make observations about all of the striking details or facts about the text. Look for patterns. Pay close attention to language. Then interpret the details. Why are they fascinating? What deeper meaning do they impart on the passage?

3. Critical Thinking Essay (5-7 pages)—Select a topic or a work that we have discussed and create an original argument about it. Your thesis should be complex—neither easily provable or disprovable. Using relevant examples and evidentiary material, support your argument across several paragraphs. You should include at least 3 critical sources. Your essay should have a highly organized structure. You need to draft an introduction that grabs the reader’s attention, introduces your topic, provides brief background information and context, and states your thesis. Include body paragraphs that advance your argument using topic sentences, concrete details (examples), and commentary (presentation and interpretation of evidence). Draft a conclusion that sums up the value of your argument in a larger context. What are the stakes? Why does it matter?

4. Seminar Paper (10-12 pages)—This course culminates in a seminar paper. This essay should reflect your mastery of the content we studied over the course of the semester. Towards this end, it should be your best and most sophisticated work. In terms of structure, it resembles the critical thinking essay, but it should make broader claims, engage with more scholarly and cultural sources, and spell out the implications of its argument in the context of the current political moment. Why does this matter outside of this class? Why does this matter now? You may choose to build off or extend your critical thinking essay, provided that you add a substantial amount of new work and enhance your previous argument.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation	100	10
Response Essay	100	15
Close Reading	100	20
Critical Thinking Essay	100	25
Seminar Paper	100	30
TOTAL	500	100

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100	C	73-76
A-	90-94	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 and below

Assignment Rubric

A-range (90-100): Essay provides a sophisticated analysis of the topic or work in question; contains an identifiable argument and engages with the material in a complex way to illuminate cultural, historical or political issues relevant to its discussion. The essay is well-written and highly polished. The essay is formatted according to MLA citation guidelines.

B-range (80-89): Essay provides a solid analysis of the topic or work in question and attempts to engage with the material in a complex and thorough manner, but it does not fully address all of the relevant issues or does not provide a thorough accounting of the cultural, historical, or political factors involved. The essay may have a few compositional, structural, or grammatical errors. The essay may contain minor citation errors.

C-range (70-79): Essay does not provide a compelling analysis of the topic or work in question and does not earnestly attempt to address the cultural, historical, or political realms in a complex way. The argument is underdeveloped. The essay may have several compositional, structural, or grammatical errors. The essay may have multiple citation errors or may not properly cite sources or include a bibliography.

D-range (60-69): Essay lacks an argument and does not do the work of analysis. The essay does not engage with the relevant material and does not address cultural, historical, or political issues. The essay may be rife with compositional, structural, or grammatical errors. The essay may not reflect the use of a citation method.

F (59 and below): The essay does not demonstrate appropriate scholarly effort/engagement or the student failed to submit the assignment.

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments are due on the day listed on the syllabus. Please submit all work typed and double-spaced in hard copy format. Please do not email me electronic versions of your work, unless you have received permission in advance.

Grading Timeline

Assignments will be graded and returned within one to two weeks of submission.

Additional Policies

1. **Attendance and Participation:** Consistent attendance and participation is absolutely critical to your success in this class. Try to come to class with 2-3 comments/questions prepared in advance. Please do not come to class late or leave early, as this is rude and disruptive to me and your fellow classmates. If you need to arrive late or leave early on a specific day, let me know as soon as possible.
2. **Late/Missing Work:** In order to receive full credit, all assignments must be submitted by or on their respective due dates. Late assignments will be docked by 5% for each week that they are late. Any outstanding work that you want included in the final grade must be submitted before the last week of class.
3. **Course Format/Meeting Structure:**
The format of this course is a hybrid of lecture and discussion. I may rely on Blackboard posts, small group activities (if attendance permits), or visual aids to structure our discussion time. Always bring the reading material to class.
4. **In-class Behavior:** You are expected to demonstrate proper academic etiquette at all times. Please do not check and/or send emails while in class, text-message, or complete assignments for other classes. You are welcome to bring beverages to class, but please do not eat in class, as it can be

distracting. Please refrain from voicing opinions that may be perceived as being offensive or insensitive.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable
Week 1	Introduction 1/09: Course Overview/Syllabus 1/11: Fishkin & transnational American literature	Shelley Fisher Fishkin, "Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies" John Carlos Rowe, "Post-Nationalism, Globalism, and the New American Studies"	
Week 2	1/16: Rowe; Introduction, <i>Quicksand</i> 1/18: p. 1-36	p. 1-36 p. 37-135	
Week 3	1/23: p. 37-135 1/25: Introduction, <i>Giovanni's Room</i>	Work on response essay p. 1-128	Response Essay due 1/25
Week 4	1/30: p. 1-128 2/01: p. 129-169	p. 129-169 Aliyyah I. Abur-Rahman, "Simply a Menaced Boy: Analogizing Color, Undoing Dominance in James Baldwin's <i>Giovanni's Room</i> "	
Week 5	2/06: Abur-Rahman; Introduction, <i>Tar Baby</i> 2/08: p. 1-61	p. 1-61 p. 62-163	
Week 6	2/13: p. 62-163 2/15: p. 164-205	p. 164-205 p. 206-306	Close Reading due 2/15
Week 7	2/20: p. 206-306 2/22: Krumholz; Introduction, <i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i>	Linda Krumholz, "Blackness & Art in Toni Morrison's <i>Tar Baby</i> " p. 1-53	
Week 8	2/27: p. 1-53 3/01: p. 54-94	p. 54-94 p. 95-193	

Week 9	3/06: p. 95-193 3/08: p. 194-234	p. 194-234 p. 235-335	Critical Thinking Essay due 3/08
Week 10	Spring Break	Work on abstract for final paper	
Week 11	3/27: p. 235-335 3/29: Lanzendörfer; Introduction, <i>The Sympathizer</i>	Tim Lanzendörfer, "The Marvelous History of the Dominican Republic in Junot Díaz's <i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i> " p. 1-71	Seminar Paper Abstract due 3/29
Week 12	4/03: p. 1-71 4/05: p. 72-110	p. 72-110 p. 111-193	
Week 13	4/10: p. 111-193 4/12: p. 194-243	p. 194-243 p. 244-338	
Week 14	4/17: p. 244-338 4/19: : p. 339-382	p. 339-382 Viet Thanh Nguyen, "Speak of the Dead, Speak of Viet Nam: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Minority Discourse"	
Week 15	Conclusion 4/24: Nguyen 4/26: evaluations/course wrap up	Write a 1-page reflection of what you learned this semester and how it has changed your understanding of American literature.	
FINAL	No Final Exam		Seminar Paper due 5/03

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu