

The Ethnic Novel

ENGL 491, section 32759D

Professor Elda María Román
Office: THH 436
Office Hours: Tues. 2-4 and by appt.
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Fall 2018
T 4:30-6:50pm
WPH 200

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course takes an in-depth look at the dynamic world of ethnic novels. The twentieth century witnessed radical changes in this genre as ethnic minorities gained greater access to education and publishing outlets and were able to produce literary works in ways that had not been previously possible. Focusing on the *Bildungsgroman* in particular, we will examine the resulting experiments in storytelling by Latinxs, Asian Americans, and African Americans. We will pay attention to the narrative strategies that enable authors to portray race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the *Bildungsgroman* as a genre, theorizations of race and ethnicity, and the social and political contexts giving rise to the formal and thematic concerns of US ethnic literature in the past century.

COURSE GOALS:

- To understand the thematic concerns and formal developments of ethnic novels
- To gain skills in close reading and textual analysis
- To gain a deeper understanding of the social role narratives play
- To improve analytical skills and writing ability in order to produce well-argued essays with clear thesis statements, supporting evidence, and strong conclusions

REQUIRED TEXTS

Américo Paredes, *George Washington Gómez*
Richard Wright, *Native Son*
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*
Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*
Helena María Viramontes, *Under the Feet of Jesus*
Chang Rae Lee, *Native Speaker*
Justin Torres, *We the Animals*

Texts are available at the bookstore.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

20 % First paper (7-9 pages) Paper topics will be distributed in advance. All papers for this class should be typed in 12 pt. font, double-spaced, and have page numbers and one-inch margins. They are to be printed, stapled, and handed in on the due date in class; I will not accept any papers by email. Written work that comes in after the class period it is due will be marked down half a grade per diem. This will be graded out of a total of 20 pts.

20% Class presentation (15 minutes) and Response paper (3-4 pages) We will begin each class with a student presentation. Presentations can take any format (Power Point, Prezi, a series of close readings, etc.) you prefer. Regardless of the format you choose, your presentation should take one of the following approaches:

- 1) an in-depth analysis of a passage (or passages) from the reading, including its connections to the broader themes of the text and/or the course. How does this passage open up/complicate our understanding of the novel?
- 2) a discussion of a textual/cultural/social/historical reference from the text, giving your interpretation as to why you think this reference is in the text. For example, if the reference is to another literary text, is the novel inviting a comparison to that text or staging a conversation between the texts in some way? If the reference is historical, what might the novel be saying about that moment or the narrating of history?

Presentations should also include questions posed to the class, whether during or after the presentation, or both. Often, the most generative questions are stated simply and are ones the student is genuinely curious about. Presentations will be graded out of 10 points and will be assessed on the basis of depth of analysis, creativity, and delivery.

Response papers should be 3-4 pages, double spaced. They should explain your interpretation of the text and your goals for the presentation, ending with a reflection on what you think went well, what you learned in the process of giving the presentation, and what you might have done differently. Response papers should be turned in a week after your presentation (in class). The response paper will be graded out of 10 pts.

20% Class participation

This class will run as a discussion-based seminar where myriad perspectives and voices collectively generate knowledge and develop varying readings of our texts. For this to occur, you must come to class prepared to engage seriously and deeply with the novels. Participation will be graded out of 20 pts.

40% Final paper (10-12 pages) In this paper, you can choose any question to explore through an analysis of a text from the class that you haven't already written on. For this assignment only, you can email me your paper. The final paper will be graded out of 20 pts.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance and participation are crucial. After three absences, your participation grade will be penalized. If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining assignments and making up all work.

TECHNOLOGY

All phones and other electronics should be turned off. Computers may only be used for taking notes and referring to texts on Blackboard. Surfing the net or engaging in social media is disrespectful to me and to your classmates and if I see you using your computer in these ways, you will be marked absent for that day.

SCHEDULE

T	8/21	Introduction
T	8/28	<i>George Washington Gómez</i> , (up to pg. 157)
T	9/4	<i>George Washington Gómez</i> (finish novel) Selection from <i>The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture</i> , Franco Moretti (Blackboard)
T	9/11	<i>Native Son</i> (Book One and Two)
T	9/18	<i>Native Son</i> (Book Three)
T	9/25	<i>Invisible Man</i> (Chs. 1-9)
T	10/2	No CLASS—Read <i>Invisible Man</i> (Chs. 10-17)
T	10/9	<i>Invisible Man</i> (finish novel) First Paper Due in class
T	10/16	<i>The Bluest Eye</i> (all of novel)
T	10/23	<i>Woman Warrior</i> (all of novel)
T	10/30	<i>Under the Feet of Jesus</i> (all of novel)
T	11/6	<i>Native Speaker</i> (up to pg.171)
T	11/13	<i>Native Speaker</i> (finish novel)
T	11/20	<i>We the Animals</i> (all of novel)
T	11/27	Wrap up discussion.

<p>Final Paper Due Wed. Dec. 12 Emailed to me by 5pm</p>
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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

USC Support and Advocacy (USCSA) – (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/sssa

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