

# ENGLISH 203 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## SPRING 2010

Course Title: **AMERICAN INDIAN LITERARY MODERNISM**  
Time: 10:00 MWF  
Class #: 55399  
Place: 108 Smith  
Instructor: EVANS, Steve

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The title of the course suggests a number of questions that we will consider during the semester. For example, by what characteristics, and within what conceptual framework, can one define “American Indian literature”? Is it possible, even proper, to attempt to place this diverse body of texts within the “traditional” scheme of American literature? What features of written Indian texts mark them as literary, and by whose standards? Perhaps more perplexing, what makes these texts *modern*? Put another way, how does the work of authors such as N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Louise Erdrich compare to the literature now being produced by writers like Sherman Alexie and Thomas King? Paula Gunn Allen has termed this latter group “the third wave of Native writers”--that is, authors who are “more concerned with articulating contemporary Native experience as it is lived than with busting stereotypes or creating ‘authenticity,’ which were the directives of earlier writings.”

Indeed, the term *American Indian* itself is suggestive of the conflicted nature of modern Indian experience: Can a person be both American and Indian at once? We will see how certain characters embrace or resist the pull of assimilation into mainstream America, while others strive fervently to maintain tribal traditions and heritage; how questions of identity, or “essence,” are complicated by interrelated notions of blood, culture, and race; how, for many contemporary American Indian writers, the past is inseparable from the present--both literally and literarily. Their variety and differences aside, the works we will study nonetheless comprise a body of literature meant to sustain, in Gerald Vizenor’s fine phrase, “postindian warriors of *survivance*” (emphasis added)--a term that conflates notions of survival and endurance. **Required Work:** Occasional quizzes and writing assignments; 2 papers; Mid-Term Exam; Final Exam. **Prerequisite:** Completion of English 102 or equivalent.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Dept. of English, Composition and Literature, 2009-2010; Louise Erdrich, Tracks: A Novel; Lester Faigley, The Brief Penguin Handbook; Thomas King, Truth & Bright Water; N. Scott Momaday, The Names: A Memoir; N. Scott Momaday, The Way to Rainy Mountain; John L. Purdy and James Ruppert, eds., Nothing But the Truth: An Anthology of Native American Literature.

Course Title: **BECOMING AMERICAN**  
Time: 9:30 TR  
Class #: 73675  
Place: 4035 Wescoe  
Instructor: COX, Sandra

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** What does “American” mean? How does one become American? What might one gain (or lose) in this process of becoming? This course examines literary depictions of immigration, ethnicity and national identity as represented in the recent works of several prominent authors. Novels, short stories, poetry, a play and a graphic novel will be among the texts assigned; this will allow the class to consider these issues in multiple literary genres. Through interpretative reflection upon narratives about transcultural experiences, students will have the opportunity to contemplate a variety of texts that explore a range of topics pertinent to the history of the U.S. in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and to contemporary U.S. culture in the 21<sup>st</sup>, including (but not limited to): the effects of immigration on families and communities; the relationship between culture, race and national identity; generational differences that manifest in American diasporic communities; and the tensions created by a matrix of acculturation, assimilation and pre-immigration traditions that may complicate the identities of people who have founded a new home in the U.S.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Castillo, The Guardians; Danticat, Breath, Eyes, Memory; Otsuka, When the Emperor Was Divine; Yang, American Born Chinese; Diaz, Drown; Lahiri, Interpreter of Maladies; Wong, Kimchee and Chitlins; Faigley, The Brief Penguin Handbook; and Dept. of English, Composition and Literature.

Course Title: **THE DARK SIDE OF SATIRE**

Time: 11:00 TR

Class #: 55397

Place: 208 Smith

Instructor: POPE, Nicole

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The primary aim of this course is to study the genre of satire, and more specifically, the subgenre of black comedy, a form of satire that finds humor in the most serious and sensitive of situations. During the semester we will examine our course texts to answer the following: What can writers achieve with satire that they could not otherwise? Why has the genre’s popularity steadily increased since its inception? What are the limitations of this genre? Above all, how can humor be found in the most depressing, unfortunate circumstances? We will focus on a variety of texts from the beginnings of the tradition to more contemporary takes, as well as other media such as films, short stories, advertisements, etc. This semester we will also focus much of our attention on the inextricable link between dark comedy and existentialism, particularly in terms of how the characters in our readings find meaning in a seemingly meaningless, cruel world.

**REQUIRED TEXTS TO INCLUDE:** Gogol, The Overcoat and Other Short Stories; Kafka, The Metamorphosis and Other Stories; Beckett, Waiting for Godot; Heller, Catch-22; Ellis, American Psycho; Palahniuk, Fight Club; Faigley, The Brief Penguin Handbook; and Dept. of English, Composition and Literature.

Course Title: **ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACHES TO LITERATURE**

Time: 2:30 TR  
Class#: 55389  
Place: 108 Smith  
Instructor: CROWLEY, Dustin

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Given growing concern over environmental issues big and small and the increasing role the environment plays in our lives and decisions, there is growing interest in environmental (or “ecocritical”) approaches to literature. This course will serve as an introduction to the basic questions and concerns of ecocriticism; such as What is nature? How do these values and assumptions shape the relationship between nature and culture? How can we use literature to better understand our environmental decisions or policies, how we understand ourselves and each other through “nature”? and so on. We will also begin to find connections between environmental concerns and issues of gender, race, class, philosophy, politics, history, and so forth, both inside and outside the texts we read.

In that effort, we will read texts that are both overtly “environmental” and those that have more subtle involvement by nature. We will also read texts from several environmental contexts: Europe, the Americas, Africa, India, past and present. Like the other 200-level literature courses, the class will consist of reading novels and short stories, class discussion of stories and concepts, and essays throughout the semester.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Winterson, The Stone Gods; Castillo, So Far From God; Conrad, Heart of Darkness; Salih, A Season of Migration to the North; Thoreau, Walden, Shakespeare; The Tempest; Lawn, 40 Short Stories; Glotfelty & Fromm, The Ecocriticism Reader; Garrard, Ecocriticism; Faigley, The Brief Penguin Handbook; and Dept. of English, Composition and Literature.

Course Title: **EXPRESSIONS OF YOUTH AND REBELLION**  
Time: 10:00 MWF  
Class #: 71953  
Place: 4019 Wescoe  
Instructor: ELLIS, Iain

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** *Expressions of Youth Rebellion* is a course that will survey a broad range of contemporary discourse relating to youth culture as an arena of socio-political resistance. Issues of generation, class, race, and gender will be central to our cultural analyses. Quizzes, discussions, and essays will revolve around the literature, films, and music that we study in class. In addition, students will be expected to research, write, and present a fully developed analytical research paper that focuses on a writer of “youth rebellion.”

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye; Cleaver, Soul on Ice; Thompson, Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas; Brown, Rubyfruit Jungle; Carroll, The Basketball Diaries; Faigley, The Brief Penguin Handbook; and Dept. of English, Composition and Literature. Recommended text: Ellis, Rebels Wit Attitude: Subversive Rock Humorists.

Course Title: **HOLOCAUST LITERATURE** \*\* 2 Sections \*\*

Time: 11:00 TR and 2:30 TR

Class #: 55401 and 70409

Place: 4035 Wescoe and 1003 Wescoe

Instructor: McLENDON, M.J.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Using testimonies of survivors of the Holocaust, this course will cover literature dealing primarily with the death camps and ghettos.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Wiesel, Night; Müller, Eyewitness Auschwitz; Delbo, Auschwitz and After; Wyszogrod, A Brush with Death; Rotem, Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter; Volavkova, I Never Saw Another Butterfly; Heger, The Men With the Pink Triangle; Sonneman, Shared Sorrows; Klein, All But My Life; Blatt, From the Ashes of Sobibor; Faigley, The Brief Penguin Handbook; and Dept. of English, Composition and Literature.

Course Title: **LITERATURES OF LONDON**

Time: 1:00 MWF

Class#: 55391

Place: 4023 Wescoe

Instructor: McCLENNY, Jackie

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Because of its unique role in history and in literature, London is in many ways as much a symbolic city as a real one. From its Renaissance rise to cultural prominence in the Western world, to its role as the seat of the British Empire, to its current status as a “world city,” London’s image is complex and ever-changing.

In this course, we will explore the idea of London through the critical examination of a variety of texts, including readings, music, still images, and film. Active participation in class discussion will be central to the course. Written work will consist of three critical papers and occasional response papers, and there will be a final project that includes both written work and a presentation.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Quindlen, Imagined London; Burgess, Dead Man in Deptford; Dickens, Oliver Twist; Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway; Sayers, Whose Body?; Levy, Small Island; Faigley, The Brief Penguin Handbook; and Dept. of English, Composition and Literature.

Course Title: **THE LITERATURE OF SPORTS \*\* 2 Sections \*\***  
Time: 12:00 MWF and 1:00 MWF  
Class#: 88254 and 88166  
Place: 1003 Wescoe and 4044 Wescoe  
Instructor: WEDGE, Philip

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In the Literature of Sports course students will study and write essays on a significant body of sports literature, examining such topics as sports as character-building, sports hero types, hero-worship in fans, violence in sports, corruption in sports, and so on. Required coursework consists of 4 major Essays (45%), a Mid-term (15%), and comprehensive Final (25%). Homework (15%) includes pop quizzes and short writing assignments. Class participation is also of considerable importance.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Greenberg, The Celebrant; McPhee, Levels of the Game; Odets, Golden Boy; Sillitoe, The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner; Wilson, Fences; LaMott, Crooked Little Heart; DeLillo, End Zone; Harris, Bang the Drum Slowly; Schinto, Show Me a Hero; Dickey, Deliverance; Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises; Faigley, The Brief Penguin Handbook; and Dept. of English, Composition and Literature.

Course Title: **WRITING WITH STYLE \*\* 2 Sections \*\***  
Time: 9:30 TR and 11:00 TR  
Class#: 69833 and 55387  
Place: 4023 Wescoe  
Instructor: FARMER, Frank

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Style has been defined variously throughout history—sometimes in mystical or romantic terms (the purest expression of the soul), sometimes in scientific terms (as deviation from linguistic norm), sometimes in moral terms (as sincerity, authenticity, the truth of plain speaking), sometimes in rhetorical terms (style as decorum, or fitness for the occasion), and sometimes even in terms of social etiquette (style as ingratiation). This course will examine some of the different conceptions of style, as well as the ideologies that inform these conceptions. Equally important, this course is intended to help students develop their own writing style. Over the course of the semester, then, students will practice such stylistic virtues as diction, concision, amplification, voice, figurative language, clarity, and readability, and at the same time, understand something of the history of these features.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Trimbur, Writing with Style: Conversations on the Art of Writing, (2nd ed); Quinn, Figures of Speech; Faigley, The Brief Penguin Handbook; and English Department, Composition and Literature.