SYLLABUS

Course Name: Literature of American Minorities, English 240, 3 credits
Instructor: Linda Spain
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Office Hours: MWF 10:00-11:00, TR 1:00-2:00,

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course features a selection of works by writers from ethnic minority cultures within the United States. The works of these cultures have traditionally not been well represented in traditional literature courses, and the views from these cultures are often in contrast to the more familiar representations of mainstream literature. These works reflect historical and cultural examples of discrimination and difference across the society. This course will explore how humans have dealt with this discrimination and how these cultures enrich the patterns of the American experience despite their experiences as minorities.

LITERATURE OUTCOMES: All literature courses at LBCC strive to achieve common long-range objectives, that our students will:
1) Recognize how literature helps in understanding the human condition. In this course, students will increase their understanding of how American minority and immigrant groups experience difference, power, and discrimination.
2) Interpret literature through critical reading.
3) Demonstrate how literature enhances personal awareness and creativity.
4) Write and speak confidently about their own and others' ideas.

MINORITY LITERATURE OBJECTIVES:
1. To enrich students' understanding of the history and culture of minority groups within the United States.
2. To expose students to major minority authors.
3. To examine a wide range of experiences and issues related to minority experience in the United States, including those of difference, power, and discrimination.
4. To explore the causes and effects of discrimination, including interpersonal, structural, and institutional discrimination.

PREREQUISITES: None

TEXTS AND REFERENCES: Bridges: Literature Across Cultures by Muller and Williams
Indian Killer by Sherman Alexie
PROJECTS AND EVALUATION

1. Class Exercises and reading quizzes: These will occur at every class. Consistent attendance is important. You may use notes or your reading journal.

   Total 100 pts

2. Journal:
   A. Reaction journal to readings in each unit. These will help prepare you for the exams. Choose at least two assigned works each week to examine in a minimum of two pages. See full explanation.

   Total 50 pts

   B. Personal Journal. Prompts will be provided. If the material is too personal, you may choose to have it graded only for volume.

   Total 30 pts

3. Minority Background Groups:
   The class will be divided into 5 groups: Native American, Latino, Asian American, Jewish American, and African American. Members of each group will research and provide background on history and current issues for each minority group.

   20 pts

4. Author report: share information on the life and ideas of the author you choose in a 3-5 minute presentation.

   10 pts

5. Midterm (30 pts) and Final exam (45 pts): These will be take-home essay exams.

   Approximate Total 300 pts

DISABILITY POLICY: If you have a documented disability or medical situation and need special accommodation, please see me.

INCOMPLETES AND “Y” GRADES - Are available only under special circumstances.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1 - JANUARY 5 - DIFFERENCE AND POWER
For Friday: Read short stories by Jewish American authors:

WEEK 2 - JANUARY 12 - JEWISH AND ARAB AMERICANS
For Wed: Read drama “Death Knocks”, p. 927 and handout “The Red Velvet Dress”
Friday: Jewish and Arab American group

WEEK 3 - JANUARY 19 - LATINO/CHICANO
Monday - No class
For Wednesday: Read poems by Latino authors:
  Children/Families: “His Story”, p. 46; “Learning to Bargain”, p.64;
For Friday:  War/Peace: “Love Poem”, p. 712;
  Faith/Doubt: “From the Secrets II”, p. 895; “Quetzalcoatle”, p. 916;
Friday: Latin American Group

WEEK 4 - JANUARY 26  NATIVE AMERICAN
For Friday: Read the novel Indian Killer by Sherman Alexie to page 150.
  Watch sections of Smoke Signals in Class
Friday: Native American Group presentation

WEEK 5 - FEBRUARY 2  NATIVE AMERICANS
Discuss elements of poetry
For Monday: Read poems by Native American writers in the following sections:
  Children/Families: “Sing with your Body”, p. 55; “Speaking”, p. 57;
  “Family Photograph”, p. 68,
  Women/Men: “Womanwork”, p. 252; “Fishing” p. 274;
  Continue reading the novel Indian Killer by Sherman Alexie to page 300.
TAKE HOME EXAM ONE DUE ON MONDAY

WEEK 6 - FEBRUARY 9
For Monday: Finish the novel
Discuss Indian Killer and related issues of race and culture.
  Video: Race

WEEK 7 - FEBRUARY 16  ASIAN AMERICAN
Monday - No Class
For Wednesday: Read by Asian American authors:
Children/Families: “Sing with Your Body”, p. 55;“Grandfather and Grandmother in Love”,
  p. 56; “Two Kinds”, p. 28
Women/Men: “Ah-Mah”, 281;
  “Picture Bride”, p. 298;
Caste/Class: “Corrosion”, p. 534; “Nightsong in Asian America”. P. 542;“Modern
For Friday:    Secrets”,p. 543;“Desert Run”, p. 565; “Asparagus’, p. 572
  War/Peace:“Prisons of Silence”, p. 726; “For the Record”, p. 734;
Friday: Asian American group presentation

WEEK 8 - FEBRUARY 23  AFRICAN AMERICAN
For Wed: Read the following poems by African Americans:
   Children/Families: “A Song in the Front Yard” p. 44; “Forgiving my Father”, p. 47;
   “Fifth Grade Autobiography”, p. 49; “Mother to Son”, p. 52; “Oya”, 54;
Friday: African American presentation

WEEK 9 - MARCH 1 AFRICAN AMERICAN
   “America”, p. 725;

WEEK 10 -MARCH 8
Discuss elements of drama
For Monday: Read dramas: “Soul Gone Home”, p. 139; plus Raisin in the Sun 76; or Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, p. 594 if you've already read Raisin..

FINAL ESSAY EXAM DUE WEDNESDAY MORNING, MARCH 15 by 12:00 AM.