

Ethnic Women Writers in American Literature

2009-2010

Ms. Ellis

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:45-3:30 and by appointment

Location: L6

Course Description:

This one semester course will focus on ethnic women writers, primarily from the 20th century, and how they express themselves in fiction, poetry, and autobiography. Critical reading in different genres will allow students to understand where these women writers fit into the canon of American literature and to see how their creations differ from more mainstream fiction in theme, characterization, technique, symbolism, and subject matter. Reading assignments as well as analytical writing assignments will be regular components of this course.

Academic Content Standards:

The primary goal of the English department is to help students communicate effectively in both written and spoken English. Upon graduation from Immaculate Heart High School students will:

1. Read critically and recognize literal and implied meaning in varied classic and contemporary texts, assigned and independently selected.
2. Write coherent and focused essays that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates students' awareness of audience and purpose. Students will progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.
3. Write clearly and use formal conventions of the English language: grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, word choice, paragraphing, and figurative language.
4. Speak effectively and employ formal and informal conventions of the English language that are appropriate to a variety of purposes and audiences.
5. Respectfully discuss topics, evaluate alternative points of view, and recognize questions and issues raised in the works they read.
6. Recognize trends and developments in literature as an art form, including literary movements, styles, and conventions.
7. Find, evaluate, and synthesize information for specific purposes, using a variety of properly cited sources.
8. Apply knowledge of word origins to determine the meaning of new words encountered in reading materials and use those words accurately.

Benchmarks and Performance Standards:

Students who have successfully completed two semesters of Senior English will:

- Demonstrate familiarity with the specific works of literature that they will study in elective courses (Content Standard 1,6).
- Demonstrate in writing and discussion greater maturity and sophistication in their understanding of literary texts, voice, diction, and tone (Content Standards 1,2,3,4,6,7,8).
- Formulate an opinion based on a work of literature that results in an original, arguable thesis (Content Standards 1,2,6,8).
- Be able to write more critically and analytically, using an original, arguable thesis (Content Standards 1,2,3,6,7,8).
- Participate in more challenging class discussions, oral presentations, and creative projects that encourage them to confidently articulate their points of view based on a deeper understanding of the text (Content Standards 1,4,5,7).
- Use and properly cite appropriate text and Internet sources (Content Standard 7).
- Compose, edit, and revise a personal statement for college admissions applications (Content Standards 2,3,4,7).

Required Materials:

The English Department requires that you bring to class before the end of the first week of school (or another specified date) **your own unmarked copies** of all the texts listed here. You must also ensure that you purchase the **specified edition** of each text. Please consult the Varsity Books for each book's ISBN --- an identifying number that will help you distinguish between different editions of the same text.

1. Ethnic Women Writers Course Reader 2009-2010
2. Morrison, Toni. *Song of Solomon*. New York: Random House, 2004.
3. Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. New York: Penguin Group, 1977.
4. See, Lisa. *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*. New York: Random House, 2006.
5. Alvarez, Julia. *In the Time of the Butterflies*.
6. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Seventh Edition
7. Composition notebook (college ruled preferred and 9 ¾ x 7 ½)
8. 3-ring binder or folder for note taking and filing of papers
9. Lined paper (notebook or loose leaf)
10. Blue or black pens (Please do not use other colors of ink)
11. Pencils for scantron tests and marking in your texts

****It is imperative that you bring your supplies and the text that we are studying every day!****

Classroom Expectations:

- **Participation:** Students are expected to come to class prepared and ready to actively participate. Both the students and teacher should listen attentively to others and contribute thoughtfully and enthusiastically to the efforts of the group. A respectful attitude is always expected while in the classroom. Please refer to the English Department rubric for class discussion to understand what is expected of you. Note that participation counts for 20% of your grade!
- **Web Pages:** The syllabus and the daily work of this course may be found on my web page. I expect you to check this page daily.
- **Make-Up Work:** It is always advised to avoid tardiness and unnecessary absences. However, if absent, **you are responsible** to find out about and make up what you have missed, and you can do so by checking the assignment pages posted on my webpage. You have one day to make up work missed due to an absence. If you are absent on an exam day, please come prepared to take the exam immediately upon returning to school. If absent for multiple days, please plan on meeting with me so that we can discuss an appropriate make-up schedule for your work.
- **Late Work:** My late work policy will be explained in detail during the first week of class. You will be given three “goof slips” that you may use for a variety of circumstances, including turning in a homework assignment late. Once you have run out of slips, however, you will receive zeros on late work. These passes **may not** be used for formal writing assignments, projects, or presentations. However, I do realize that certain situations may arise that result in late work, and if you have need of a **legitimate** extension, please see me **IN ADVANCE** OF the due date so that we can work something out.
- **Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism is the *intentional or unintentional* use of someone else’s WORDS or IDEAS without giving proper credit. This includes paraphrasing a source without giving due credit. See the MLA Handbook, 7th Edition for an exhaustive discussion of this matter. As you know, plagiarism is a serious breach of academic integrity and any assignment containing plagiarism earns a zero.
- **Test Return Policy:** English teachers keep summer reading tests, vocabulary tests, and objective exams so that assessment questions are field tested and can be revised when necessary. This practice allows the department to reuse most parts of an exam for comparison of achievement from year to year and to adjust the emphasis of instruction when required. Students may access their past tests by making arrangements with their teacher.
- **Other classroom rules:** Generally, students may not leave the classroom unless they have an appointment to see an administrator, a counselor, or permission from me. Goof slips may be used to excuse yourself from class in order to retrieve homework or class materials from your locker.

All classroom rules and regulations regarding conduct, attendance, dress code, grading, plagiarism, etc. shall be implemented and followed as stated in the school handbook.

Types of Assignments:

- **Writing:** You will respond in writing to some of the major and the minor works we study. You may also work on various projects and presentations that involve writing. All essays must be word-processed and include a *properly formatted works cited/consulted page*. Please refer to the English Department rubric for essays for a more detailed understand of what is expected of you.

You must upload all essays and any other specified assignments to the website: www.turnitin.com. You will need to set up a user profile using a valid email account. You will also need the appropriate class ID number and enrollment password designated for your class period. **You must upload all your written**

work to Turnitin or you will not receive credit for your work. Keep the digital receipt you receive to prove you uploaded your work.

Period	Class ID	Enrollment Password
Fall	2812698	morrison
Spring	2812700	silko

- Homework:** You should plan on spending about thirty minutes to an hour per day reading, writing, revising work, or completing homework for this class. Some days will be heavier than others will---- especially if you do not plan ahead on long-term assignments. Do plan ahead! You will have regular homework assignments involving reading, writing, and other activities.
- Independent Reading:** Reading is the best way to become a better writer. In light of this, you will be doing independent reading of fiction books selected for this class. Procedures for independent reading will be discussed further in class.
- Midterm and Final Exams:** Students should expect a cumulative midterm and final exam, including both objective response and open ended questions. Be sure to take thorough notes throughout the semester to help you prepare.

Grading Policy:

Grades will be computed using the following percentage system:

Participation:	20%	(includes discussion, notebook entries and pop quizzes)
Essay #1:	15%	
Essay #2:	20%	
Midterm:	20%	
Final Exam:	25%	

Grading Scale

100-93 A	89-87 B+	79-77 C+	69-67 D+	59-0 F
92-90 A-	86-83 B	76-73 C	66-63 D	
	82-80 B-	72-70 C-	62-60 D-	