

ENGL 312: American Diversity
Instructor: Dr. Kelly C. Walter Carney

SPRING 2007
e-mail: kcwaltercarney@vanguard.edu

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce students to literature representing American authors of various ethnic and racial backgrounds, focusing on the role those cultures and experiences play in the literature.

The course contributes towards several of Vanguard's Educational Targets and Goals, including *Intellectual Engagement*, as students focus on critical thinking, use research, and develop communication skills, and *Sociocultural Responsiveness*, as students pay particular attention to questions of diversity, inclusiveness, justice, and reconciliation.

Grades will be based on:

Attendance and Participation: 20%

Myself as Minority Paper: 15%

Literary Analysis: 20%

Presentation: 15%

Helms Paper: 15%

Final Exam: 15%

TOTAL: 100%

Your **attendance and participation** in this class are important to your learning experience. Due to the discussion-oriented nature of this course, your thoughtful preparation will directly affect the quality of the class for all of us. After three absences, your grade will begin to drop. The attendance and participation grade includes any reading quizzes, book checks, or other in-class activities that I might collect.

Guidelines for Electronic Submissions: Documents should be saved in MSWord format and sent to vugrading@gmail.com by 9:00 pm on the due date. The documents should be named thus: lastname H 312SP07 and lastname MM 312SP07 and lastname LA 312 SP07, for the Helms, Myself as Minority and literary analysis papers, for example. The last name that should be used is the student's, not the instructor's. Please do not submit papers with generic titles like "English paper" or "definition paper." Improperly named documents may be returned to the student and considered late, or lose formatting points. All documents should follow MLA format: that is, headers containing the student's name, date of submission, and course should be included, as should page numbers and appropriate citations of research.

Do not send any correspondence, other than paper submissions, to this address. If you wish to e-mail me regarding the class, questions about our reading, etc., please use the vanguard e-mail address.

Myself as Minority paper: Your task is to go by yourself to two separate places where you have never been before and observe what you see, hear, and experience. Use your good judgment and do not place yourself in a situation that is physically dangerous to you. Some examples of experiences you might choose include: attend a religious service of a different faith, visit a home for the elderly, spend time among the physically disabled at a veterans' hospital, attend a wedding ceremony performed in a different language and culture; visit a school for the blind or deaf, spend time at a club or event reflective of a

different sexual orientation, attend a street fair of a unique culture and language, visit a museum likely to draw an audience different from your background, eat at a restaurant where the primary language and culture is different than your own, attend a political rally or event contrary to your own political preference, or shop at a grocery store where you don't speak the customer's language.

In your paper, you should discuss your reaction to the two situations in terms of your behavior and feelings, the reaction of the other individuals toward you, what these experiences taught you about being different from others, the similarities and differences between your two situations, and how such experiences might influence your development if you were to live or work in such settings all your life. Feel free to integrate ideas from our readings and discussion into your analysis of your own experience. This 3-page (750-word paper) must be in MLA format and is due by 9:00 pm on 5 March.

Helms Paper: Building on our reading and discussion of Janet Helms' *A Race is a Nice Thing to Have*, describe and analyze your own racial consciousness. Interact with the questions posed to you by the text. What is your racial identity? Do you identify as White, or as some other race? What does that mean to you? Why? How does your race affect the way people perceive you? How does it affect the way you interact with other people, with history, and with society at large? This 3-page (750-word) essay should be MLA format, and is due by 9:00 pm on 9 February.

Literary analysis paper: In this paper, you are expected to analyze one of our texts, focusing on a literary issues such as theme, character, etc. You may use any theoretical perspective you wish, and you are encouraged to use scholarly research to support your arguments. This 7-10 page (1750- 2500 word) paper must be in MLA format, and is due by 9:00 pm on 13 April.

Cultural Presentation: for this project, you will work with a partner to develop a 10-15 minute power-point presentation. Select a cultural or historical subject from one of our books, and explain it to the class, in detail. For example, you might present to the class on Chinese participation in building the railroads, or on the occupation of Alcatraz, both mentioned in *Homebase*. You might talk about passing, an issue in *Little Scarlet*, or about the particular history of women slaves, as Harriet Jacobs does. The participation of Native Americans in the military is a topic raised by *Ceremony*. You should not present an author biography.

The slide show should include relevant passages from the primary text, as well as a MLA-format bibliography. Illustrations (photographs, maps) are expected. Both partners are expected to participate in both the creation of the slide show and in the in-class presentation. The quality of your presentation is part of the grade: consider that a good presenter does not fill the slides with small print and then read them to the class; rather, the slides ought to function as an outline, with quotes, statistics, illustrations that it would help your audience to see as you speak. Please send your Power Point presentation to the instructor by 10:00 pm the night before your presentation, so that I will have it ready for you the next day.

Final Exam: This cumulative exam will be during the scheduled exam time, 8:00-10:00, Wednesday, 1 May. Students have the option of turning in a second Literary Analysis paper by 9:00 pm on 31 April in lieu of sitting for the exam.

Late work is strongly discouraged. All take-home materials (papers, worksheets) will drop a letter grade for each calendar day that they are late. Make-up exams are at the discretion of the instructor.

Plagiarism is a form of theft that I take very seriously. In my classes, the first instance of plagiarism generally results in a failing grade for that assignment; further plagiarism can cause you to fail the class and/or be reported to the dean's office.

According to the *Student Handbook*, "Either cheating or plagiarism (presenting as one's own, the words or opinions or others). is regarded as a serious violation of both the academic and moral standards of VUSC.... The dean of the program and the Vice President for Student Affairs are to be notified in instances of academic dishonesty.

A student commits plagiarism if submitted as his/her work: Part or all of an assignment copied from another person's assignment, notes, or computer file. Part or all of an assignment copied or paraphrased from a book, magazine, pamphlet, or website. A sequence of ideas transferred from another source which the student has not digested, integrated and reorganized and to which he /she fails to give proper acknowledgement. A student is an accomplice in plagiarism if he/she: Allows his/her paper or other assignment, in outline or finished form, to be copied and submitted as the work of another. Lends his/her computer disk to another student or otherwise allows his/her computer files to be copied for the purposes of plagiarism. Prepares a written assignment for another student and allows it to be submitted as another's work" (61-62).

The REQUIRED books for this class include:

Sandra Cisneros	<i>The House on Mango Street</i>	0679734775
Firoozeh Dumas	<i>Funny in Farsi</i>	0812968379
Will Eisner	<i>The Contract with God Trilogy</i>	0393061051
Janet E. Helms	<i>A Race is a Nice Thing to Have</i>	0917276124
Harriet Jacobs	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>	0486419312
D'Arcy McNickle	<i>The Surrounded</i>	0826304699
Walter Mosley	<i>Little Scarlet</i>	0446612715
Leslie Marmon Silko	<i>Ceremony</i>	0140086838
Shawn Wong	<i>Home Base</i>	0452265290

This syllabus is tentative and may be changed by the instructor at any time.

Course Schedule

M 8 Jan	Course Introduction
W 10 Jan	African American culture/ history

F 12 Jan	African American culture/history	
W 17 Jan	Harriet Jacobs	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>
F 19 Jan	Harriet Jacobs	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>
M 22 Jan	Harriet Jacobs	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>
W 24 Jan	Walter Mosely	<i>Little Scarlet</i>
F 26 Jan	Walter Mosely	<i>Little Scarlet</i>
M 29 Jan	Walter Mosely	<i>Little Scarlet</i>
W 31 Jan	Janet Helms	<i>A Race is a Nice Thing to Have</i>
F 2 Feb	Janet Helms	<i>A Race is a Nice Thing to Have</i>
M 5 Feb	Janet Helms	<i>A Race is a Nice Thing to Have</i>
W 7 Feb	Latino/a culture/history	
F 9 Feb	Latina/o culture/history	
	HELMS PAPER DUE	
M 12 Feb	Sandra Cisneros	<i>House on Mango Street</i>
W 14 Feb	Sandra Cisneros	<i>House on Mango Street</i>
F 16 Feb	Sandra Cisneros	<i>House on Mango Street</i>
W 21 Feb	Luis Valdez	<i>Always Running</i>
F 23 Feb	Luis Valdez	<i>Always Running</i>
M 26 Feb	Luis Valdez	<i>Always Running</i>
W 28 Feb	Native American culture/history	
F 2 March	Native American culture/history	
	MYSELF AS MINORITY PAPER DUE	
M 5 March	D'arcy McNickle	<i>The Surrounded</i>
W 7 March	D'arcy McNickle	<i>The Surrounded</i>
F 9 March	D'arcy McNickle	<i>The Surrounded</i>
M 19 March	Leslie Marmon Silko	<i>Ceremony</i>
W 21 March	Leslie Marmon Silko	<i>Ceremony</i>
F 23 March	Leslie Marmon Silko	<i>Ceremony</i>
M 26 March	Leslie Marmon Silko	<i>Ceremony</i>
W 28 March	Leslie Marmon Silko	<i>Ceremony</i>
F 30 March	Asian American culture/history	
M 2 April	Shawn Wong	<i>Homebase</i>
W 4 April	Shawn Wong	<i>Homebase</i>
M 9 April	Firoozeh Dumas	<i>Funny in Farsi</i>

W 11 April Firoozeh Dumas *Funny in Farsi*
F 13 April Firoozeh Dumas *Funny in Farsi*
LITERARY ANALYSIS PAPER DUE

M 16 April Jewish American culture/ history
W 18 April Will Eisner *The Contract With God*
F 20 April Will Eisner *The Contract With God*

M 23 April PRESENTATIONS
W 25 April PRESENTATIONS
F 27 April PRESENTATIONS

W 1 May FINAL EXAM, 8:00-10:00 am