

**College of Arts and Sciences**  
**Department of Humanities, Arts, and Religion**  
***HUM 291: American Multicultural Ideas and Values***

**General Information**

Spring 2006  
T&TH  
9:35-10:50 (#5227)  
11:10-12:25 (#5228)  
LA306  
3 credit hours

Prof. Gioia Woods  
Riles 104E  
523-8168  
Gioia.Woods@nau.edu  
Office hours: M 1:30-2:30  
T 12:30-2:00, or by appointment

*One song, America, before I go,  
I'd sing, o'er all the rest, with trumpet sound,  
For thee—the Future.*

*I'd sow a seed for thee of endless Nationality;  
I'd fashion thy Ensemble, including Body and Soul;  
I'd show, away ahead, thy real Union, and how it may be accomplish'd*  
~Walt Whitman

**Course Description**

Like many of his contemporaries, poet Walt Whitman was greatly disturbed by the American Civil War. He feared for the future of the United States. But Whitman also had faith that the American nation could become what he called a “new Eden,” where democracy would bloom throughout. Toward the end of his life, Whitman wrote: “Did you, too, O friend, suppose democracy was only for elections, for politics, and for a party name? I say democracy is only of use there that it may pass on and come to its flower and fruit in manners, in the highest forms of interaction between [people], and their beliefs -- in religion, literature, colleges and schools -- democracy in all public and private life.”

In order to examine Whitman’s idea of “endless nationality,” democracy, and related issues, we will study cultural expression, especially the arts and literatures produced by multicultural America. How do diverse American peoples identify themselves? How are they identified by others? How do Americans, particularly ethnic Americans, respond to the demands and complexities of being “American?”

The critical approach we take in this course is developed from Integrative Humanities, which requires us to look closely at the relationship between human thought, human expression, and human action.

**Thematic Focus: Valuing the diversity of human experience**  
**Distribution block: Cultural understanding**  
**Essential skills: Critical thinking, effective writing**

**Course Format**

This class will proceed through lecture and large and small group discussion. Slides and video will be used to supplement course material.

### **Required Materials**

1. *One Stick Song*, Sherman Alexie
2. *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, edited by David Levering Lewis
3. *The Kitchen God's Wife*, Amy Tan
4. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, Art Spiegelman
5. Article handouts made available online at the Cline Library electronic reserves page, <http://www.nau.edu/library/>; click on "course reserves for students." You may also access hard copies of articles at the Cline Library reserve desk.

### **Course Objectives**

At the end of this course, the attentive student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a *knowledge of the field* in contemporary ethnic arts;
2. *Think critically* and *write effectively* about American ethnic expression;
3. Engage interdisciplinary perspectives about diverse cultures, which will enhance *cultural understanding*.

### **Course policies**

- No late work is accepted. If you are having trouble meeting a deadline, consult your instructor before work is due.
- Attendance in a discussion class such as this is crucial! Your presence enriches our classroom community and enhances the quality of your own learning. In the humanities, the exchange of ideas has always been central in developing knowledge and debating arts, ideas, and values. In order to participate in this powerful process of making meaning, you need to attend class regularly. More than four absences will result in a lower course grade for the class.
- Plagiarism, the intentional or unintentional representation of another's ideas as your own, is prohibited. In extreme cases, it will result in a failing course grade.

### **Evaluation**

You will complete a variety of assignments designed to assess your achievements of the course objectives.

All written assignments will be graded based on the following criteria:

- Clarity of communication
- Thoughtful organization
- Depth and detail of thought
- Control of mechanics, spelling, and usage

**Participation 100 points.** Each week you will have a variety of opportunities to earn participation points. These points will accumulate through reading-based quizzes, small group work, and in-class writing. Participation points can only be earned in class---no make ups allowed. Quizzes will generally be given on days when new readings are to be discussed.

**Response papers 100 points.** These essays will require you to demonstrate your growing knowledge of the field of contemporary ethnic arts and to practice thinking critically about how ethnic expression is related to political, social, economic, and national issues in the United States. For each of the four essays, please respond to the following prompts in 3-4 pages.

1. In no more than one page, *summarize* what you have learned about ethnic art in the United States. Include mention of art, artists, and influences (political, social, economic, gendered, etc.).

2. In no more than one page, *describe* the *rhetoric* of a few of the visual or verbal texts. What, in particular, do these texts want you to feel, think, do? How do you know? This step prepares you for the final step.
3. Finally, in one-two pages, *analyze* one of the visual or verbal works we've referred to in class. In order to write a successful analysis, keep in mind the following tips: pay attention to the language the text is using; pay attention to the "argument" the text is making; break down the whole text into parts to describe how the whole works; and finally, integrate your argument about the text with examples from the text. Your analysis section should always begin with your original thesis or topic sentence indicating your basic interpretation of the text.

**Final exam 100 points.** Your final exam will be part take-home essay and part in-class short answer.

## Humanities 291 Course Calendar

All readings are to be completed before coming to class. Sources for your readings include required texts, virtual museums, and Cline Library electronic reserve, <http://www.nau.edu/library/>. Click on "course reserves for students."

### WEEK 1

- T** 1/17 Course introduction. Whitman & Hughes.  
**TH** 1/19 Terms defined  
Reading: "Theme for English B," Langston Hughes; "Ethnic Studies: Its Evolution in American Colleges and Universities," Ramon A. Gutierrez; and an excerpt from "Good-Bye, Columbus? Notes on the Culture of Criticism," Henry Louis Gates Jr. Cline electronic reserve.

### WEEK 2

- T** 1/24 Doing cultural studies  
Reading: excerpt from "Representation, Meaning and Language," Stuart Hall. Cline electronic reserve  
**TH** 1/26 Discussion

### WEEK 3

- T** 1/31 Native American history  
Reading: "The Indian Movement," Vine Deloria Jr. Cline electronic reserve.  
**TH** 2/2 Visual arts: The Native American Fine Arts Movement

### WEEK 4

- T** 2/7 Reading: *One Stick Song*, Sherman Alexie  
**TH** 2/9 Reading: *One Stick Song*, cont.  
Due: Response paper #1

### WEEK 5

- T** 2/14 Film clips from *Smoke Signals & The Business of Fancy Dancing*  
**TH** 2/16 **Fieldtrip, Museum of Northern Arizona, 9:40-12:00.**

### WEEK 6

- T** 2/21 The Harlem Renaissance, before & after  
Reading: "Introduction" from *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*  
**TH** 2/23 Reading: "Returning Soldiers," "The Migration of the Talented Tenth," "Africa for Africans" & "Liberty Hall Emancipation Day Speech," "On Marcus Garvey" from *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*

### WEEK 7

- T** 2/28 Reading: "The New Negro," "The Task of Negro Womanhood," Langston Hughes excerpts pgs. 77-95 from *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*  
**TH** 3/2 Reading: "Criteria of Negro Art," "Dust Tracks on a Road," "Blueprint for Negro Writing," "The Negro Renaissance and Its Significance" from *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*

### WEEK 8

- T 3/7 Reading: In the poetry section of *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, please read all poems by Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Claude McKay. Film clips: Langston Hughes
- TH 3/9 Film clips for: *Jazz*, Ken Burns  
Due: Response paper #2

### WEEK 9

- T 3/14 Readings from **The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco** at <http://www.sfmuseum.net/hist1/index0.html#chinese>. Under the subheading "San Francisco-Chinese," please access and read the following archival holdings: "The Gold Rush and Anti-Chinese Race Hatred," "Photograph: Chinese Girl with Bound Feet," "Chinese Miners in the Gold Fields," Arnold Genthe Photograph of Chinatown," and "Smuggling of Chinese Slave Girls Thwarted," and "Brief History of Chinatown."
- TH 3/16 *The Kitchen God's Wife*, by Amy Tan, chapters 1 & 2.

### WEEK 10: SPRING BREAK 3/20-3/24

### WEEK 11

- T 3/28 *The Kitchen God's Wife*, chapters 3-20
- TH 3/30 *The Kitchen God's Wife* through the end

### WEEK 12

- T 4/4 Film clips: *Sagwa: The Chinese Siamese Cat* and discussion
- TH 4/6 Asian history in the United States  
Due: Response paper #3

### WEEK 13

- T 4/11 Chicano history and film, "The Art of Resistance."
- TH 4/13 Reading: "El Teatro Campesino: The Farmworkers' Theatre," by Theodore J. Shank  
Cline electronic reserve

### WEEK 14

- T 4/18 Reading: "Los Vendidos," by Luis Valdez. Cline electronic reserve
- TH 4/20 Film clips: Luis Valdez

### WEEK 15

- T 4/25 Reading: *Maus*, Art Spiegelman
- TH 4/27 Reading: *Maus*, through the end.  
Due: Response paper #4

### WEEK 16

- T 5/2 Reading: short story by Tillie Olsen, "Tell Me a Riddle." Cline electronic reserve
- TH 5/4 Catch up and review

### **Finals week begins May 8**

**Exams for HUM 291 will be administered for the 9:35 class on Tuesday, May 9 at 7:30 am, and for the 11:10 class on Thursday, May 11 at 10:00 am.**