Seminar: Issues in Culture: Feminist Writers of Color

Course Description

Catalog: Seminar: Issues in Culture (3-0) 3 hours credit. Prerequisite: ENG 6013. Advanced and intensive research of key issues in cultural and/or cross-cultural studies. May be repeated once for credit when topics vary. For course requirements the course fulfills, see the UTSA Graduate Catalog and/or your advisor.

This course will examine non-traditional constructions of self or “out-law” genres such as testimonios, ethnographies, oral histories, and life stories. We will ask, for example, how deterritorialization, linguistic alienation and forced assimilation contribute to the formation of identities and to cultural representation. And how life stories challenge our conception of literacy and interpretation by problematizing fixed notions of the oral and written traditions. We will also read several novels and books of poetry by feminist writers of color and focus on alternative historical narratives that write marginalized communities back into history. In addition, we may review the works of several artists (e.g. photographers, muralists) and examine the ways in which their art intersects with storytelling practices. Our readings of identity-based multi-genre anthologies will explore further the relationship of testimonial writing to socio-political movements and activism. Required assignments include: research essay, annotated bibliography, conference paper, community-based learning projects, and final creative project to take the form of (e.g. autobiography, life story, art installation, photography, multi-media, creative non-fiction).

Course Objectives

• Provide students the opportunity to effectively write a graduate level essay including form and content as well as successful integration and documentation of secondary sources
• Provide students the opportunity to effectively write a conference abstract for submission to a national conference
• Provide students the opportunity to effectively engage in extensive research and write an annotated bibliography
• Provide students the opportunity to develop significant interpretations of a wide variety of literary texts by women writers, theorists and artists of color
• Provide students the ability to apply this knowledge beyond the classroom
• Provide students the ability to participate in service-learning within San Antonio and on campus

Required Texts

• Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom by bell hooks
• White Privilege: essential readings on the other side of racism by Paula Rotheberg
• Canícula: Snapshots of Girlhood en la Frontera by Norma Cantú
Borderlands/La Frontera by Gloria Anzaldúa
This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color, eds. Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga
this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation, eds. Gloria Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating
Making Face, Making Soul: Hacienda Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color, ed. Gloria Anzaldúa
Raven Eye by Margo Támez

Recommended Texts

Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Interviews/Entrevistas, ed. AnaLouise Keating
Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios, eds. Latina Feminist Group
Storyteller by Leslie Marmon Silko
Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today by Leslie Marmon Silko
Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches by Audre Lorde
Homegirls: A Black Feminist Anthology, ed. Barbara Smith
Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Interviews/Entrevistas, ed. AnaLouise Keating
Methodology of the Oppressed by Chela Sandoval
The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader, ed. AnaLouise Keating
Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought by Sandy Grande
Sentipensante (sensing/thinking) Pedagogy: Educating for Wholeness, Social Justice and Liberation by Laura Rendon

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

No late assignments accepted!

Attendance-Class Discussion: You are required to attend class regularly with prepared questions and/or substantive comments on the day’s readings. I will record your participation during every class and you will be graded accordingly. For every unexcused absence your grade will be lowered by 15 points. For each class you should be prepared to discuss the material. The issues raised in this class are by no means resolved. It is thus expected that as a class we will often disagree and rarely come to a consensus about the material. This should be seen as positive rather than negative. Your participation is key to creating a more dynamic class, one that allows us to learn from each other. I expect everyone to be respectful of their fellow peers and come to class with open minds that will allow for constructive debate and discussions about the material presented, especially during student presentations. I encourage you to continue your in-class discussions online through Blackboard. Please see “UTSA Handbook of Operating Procedures” for a more detailed outline of approved excused absences and the process for proper notification to the instructor. http://www.utsa.edu/hop/chapter5/5-9.cfm

Weekly Reading Responses/Blackboard Discussions: (1p responses); (2 questions); (1p peer response); (answer at least 2 questions). These formal weekly responses/dialogues will provide a space where you can critically analyze the readings AND discuss the material with your peers. Please submit your questions and preliminary comments to BB at least 2 days prior to our class meeting. You will be required to submit at least two questions per week; respond to at least two of your peers’ questions; and respond to at least one student’s reading response. This will take the form of “dialogue,” similar to an in-class discussion. Thus, you are encouraged to respond
back and forth with a peer who has answered one of your questions and/or responded to your reading response.

Note: All responses and dialogue that occur on BB are not to be treated as informal “chats.” Please see the following websites for universal practices of online “netiquette”:
http://www.csustan.edu/Blackboard/Netiquette.html
http://www.netmanners.com/

My criteria for these formal reading responses/conversations will be based partly, but not exclusively on the following:

- Your ability to critically analyze and interpret the readings
- Your ability to properly explicate and evaluate socio-historical essays and creative works
- Your ability to NOT simply summarize the articles/readings, but rather, discuss your own ideas and interpretations of a particular text
- Your ability to write well-thought responses and/or questions that are coherent and illustrate proper use of grammar, mechanics, and style (e.g. basic elements of language use; clear, effective, correct sentence structures, word choice, tone, voice)
- Your ability to critically analyze another student’s comments and give critical feedback
- Your ability to engage in meaningful and substantial dialogue with your peers that focuses on the readings
- Your ability to bring in examples of lived experience that are relevant to the main topic of discussion
- Your ability to ask questions that engage your peers to think critically about a particular work
- Your ability to introduce new material (e.g. websites, new articles, current events, other journal articles, books, films, documentaries, etc.)

Conference Abstract: This assignment will give you the opportunity to produce a coherent and concise abstract with the intention of submitting to the 2011 UTSA Graduate English Symposium. Theme: “Theory in the Flesh: Bodies of Scholarship, Activism, and Community.” This abstract should be written specifically for this conference. Please see complete call for papers at the following link: http://colfa.utsa.edu/English/English%20Grad%20Symposium.pdf

Paper Proposal: (1p) This assignment will give you the opportunity to produce a coherent and concise proposal that defines your topic. You should provide a thesis (although this may change before the final essay). Discuss the major issues and questions your paper will be addressing. Include comments on how your secondary sources will contribute to your thesis. And explain why these sources are important to your project.

Annotated Bibliography: You are required to turn in an annotated bibliography of at least five major sources (e.g. books and peer-reviewed journals) outside of our assigned class readings. Annotations are descriptive and critical and should interpret the author’s point of view, clarity and appropriateness of expression, and authority. It should summarize the central theme and scope of the book or article. This assignment will require the application of various intellectual skills such as: concise exposition, succinct analysis, and informed library research. Include one or more sentences that evaluate the authority or background of the author, comment on the intended audience, compare or contrast this work with another you have cited, or explain how this work
illuminates your bibliography topic. In addition, this assignment should also include a compilation of your extensive research history.

**Conference Paper: (8-10p)** All essays are to be turned in electronically via Blackboard as well as in person. All papers should be double-spaced and typed in 12-point font with a one-inch margin on all sides. (MLA Style) My criteria for grading ALL essays will be based partly, but not exclusively on the following:

- Your ability to produce a coherent, well thought-out graduate level essay that includes secondary sources
- Your ability to submit an MLA style paper with proper documentation
  Reference websites for proper MLA style (also refer to latest edition of the MLA Handbook): http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/
- Coherence: thesis clarity and creativeness; paragraph topic-sentence clarity and cohesion with thesis; ideas are clearly stated; supporting evidence is appropriate to chosen topic; addresses the target audience
- Structure: the order around which the paper is organized; degree to which introduction and body develop towards conclusion; overall soundness of structure
- Thematics: creative use of topic (as opposed to simple summary); relevance of paper to the given assignment suggestions; level of engagement of the author(s)
- Grammar and Mechanics: basic elements of language use; clear, effective, correct sentence structures
- Stylistics: word choice, tone, voice

**Presentations:** Everyone will present one of the weekly assigned readings in order to facilitate class discussion. Although it is not required you can utilize any of the following multi-media formats to aid in your presentations: film/documentary clips, PowerPoints, material objects, music, visual art, youtube clips, and current news events that relate to the course readings. As a presenter you may synthesize the main points of the day’s reading and evaluate the author’s main arguments or narrative style, theme, etc. You may also provide historical background, biographical information of the author, or review current literary/historical criticism of the works. Please see me in office hours or e-mail at least one week before your presentation. Remember that your presentation must include questions that you present to the class.

For your second presentation you will choose one artist and present their work. These “art” presentations require PP or weblinks where we can view the artist’s work.

**Reflection Essay: (1-3p)** This essay should be a well thought out reflection of the course and its major objectives. You should also discuss what you learned and your own intellectual growth after taking this course. You may also utilize this essay to discuss your future projects and/or dissertation work that will build on the research you have done for this class.

**Creative Projects:** In addition to your conference papers, you will produce a creative project that reflects the themes of the course. For example, art installation, creative non-fiction, poetry, autobiography, photography, painting, sculpture, visual/multi-media, multi-genre text, testimonio, etc. (These are extremely open-ended and the length of written material (pp) is negotiable). Each project should also include a 1-2p thought process. Everyone is required to meet with me early in the semester to discuss these projects. Before making this appointment please read and be prepared to discuss the following thought process essays: “On the Process of Writing Borderlands/La Frontera” by Gloria Anzaldua and “The Writing of Canícula: Breaking Boundaries, Finding Forms” by Norma Cantú.
Service Learning: (5 Reports) All students are required to participate in service-learning. This can take the form of working with a non-profit, human rights, or community activist group. Or you can participate in, and/or establish a social justice student organization with the purpose of inviting relevant speakers, hosting a film series, discussion panels, poetry/fiction readings, etc. You will be required to turn in formal reports (1p) on your progress every three weeks. My grading for this assignment will be based on evidence of your regular participation and active role in the group/organization.

Point Distribution
Weekly Reading Responses/Blackboard Discussion ...........15pts x 10=150
In Class Discussion/Participation ...............10pts x10=100
Presentations .................................. 20pts x 2 = 40
Conference Abstract ........................................=10
Conference Paper .........................................=70
Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography ..........=30
Service Learning ??????10pts x5=50
Creative Projects .........................................=40
Reflection Essay ..........................................=10
Total Points ........................................... 500

Final Grading Scale

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<td>A</td>
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<td>299 and below</td>
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Students with Disabilities

The University of Texas at San Antonio is committed to providing students, faculty, staff, and visitors access to all university programs, activities, and facilities in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. The university prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in all programs, services and activities. Disability Services (DS) coordinates support services, accommodations, and equipment for students with disabilities. DS certifies eligibility for services, determines reasonable accommodations, and develops plans for the implementation of accommodations. The DS director also assists students in the informal resolution of complaints. Information regarding support services, accommodations and equipment for students may be found at the website: (http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.htm) The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator assists faculty, staff, and visitors in the certification process and in the informal and formal resolution of complaints related to accommodation requests. The Human Resources Department serves as liaison for faculty and staff with disabilities in ensuring reasonable accommodation by the university. The procedure to request an accommodation under this policy can be found at: http://www.utsa.edu/hr/EmployeeRelations/ada.cfm

Scholastic Dishonesty (Plagiarism)

You will automatically receive a “0” for any assignment that has been plagiarized.
The Office of Student Judicial Affairs or faculty may initiate disciplinary proceedings against any student accused of scholastic dishonesty. “Scholastic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act. “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit. “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty. For a more detailed overview please see the student code of conduct bulletin: http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html

Refer to following websites for avoiding plagiarism and read “plagiarism handouts thoroughly”:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/
http://cambridge.cic.tsinghua.edu.cn/reading/plagiarism.html
http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-AvoidDishonesty.html
http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/students/writing/plagiarism.pdf

**Student Code of Conduct**

Please Note: This course will foster an environment that instills dignity, respect, tolerance, appreciation of diversity and positive regard for all members of our college community. It will nurture an atmosphere free from racism, religious intolerance, sexism, ageism, homophobia, harassment, discrimination against those with disabling conditions, or discrimination based upon an individual’s political views or beliefs. Hate speech of any type in class or online (i.e. Blackboard, e-mail correspondence, etc.) will not be tolerated.

By enrolling at The University of Texas at San Antonio, a student neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. All students are expected to obey federal, state, and local laws, the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System, the rules and regulations of The University of Texas at San Antonio, and directives issued by an administrative official in the course of his or her duties. A student who enrolls at the University is charged with the obligation to conduct himself or herself in a manner compatible with the University’s function as an educational institution; consequently, conduct which interferes with the use or utilization of University facilities by other persons may be punished regardless of whether such conduct is specifically proscribed by the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

According to the UTSA “Information Bulletin” section regarding student code of conduct, Sec. 202. Specific Conduct Proscribed, disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student for acts or violations including, but not limited to the following: advocacy, either oral or written, that is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action; engaging in conduct, either alone or in concert with other people, that is intended to obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with, or that in fact obstructs, disrupts, or interferes with any scheduled class, etc. For more details of this university policy please see: http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html
Violations of these guidelines will result in a significant lowering of the student’s class participation grade at the instructor’s discretion, and may lead to other sanctions, including administrative removal from the class if necessary.

**Detailed Course Schedule**

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<th>Day</th>
<th>Weekly Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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| Jan 13th | • Introductions; Review Syllabus; Sign Up for Presentations  
|          | • *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* by bell hooks (entire book)  
|          | • *White Privilege: essential readings on the other side of racism* by Paula Rothenberg (excerpts) |
|          | • From *Sending My Heart Back Across the Years: Tradition and Innovation in Native American Autobiography* by Hertha Dawn Wong, “Chp.1: Native American Self-Narration and Autobiography Theory” (p.11-24)  
|          | • From *De/colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women’s Autobiography*, eds. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, “The Margin at the Center On Testimonio (Testimonial Narrative)” by John Beverly (p. 91-114)  
|          | • “How Scholarship Defames the Native Voice …and Why?” By Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (p. 79-92)  
|          | **Recommended**  
|          | • *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios*, eds. Latina Feminist Group |
| Jan 21st | **Creative Writing Reading Series**  
|          | Belinda Acosta-Fiction Reading  
|          | University Room. BB 2.06.04 |
| Jan 27th | • *Canícula: Snapshots of Girlhood en la Frontera* by Norma Cantú  
|          | **Secondary Sources**  
|          | • “Storyteller: Leslie Marmon Silko’s Reappropriation of Native American History and Identity” by Cynthia Carsten (p. 105-126)  
|          | • “Heightened by Life’ vs. ‘Paralyzed by Fact’: Photography and Autobiography in Norma Cantú’s *Canícula*” by Timothy Dow Adams (p. 57-71)  
|          | • “Norma Elia Cantú’s Fictional Autobioethnography: Not-Quite-True Stories about Real Life on la Frontera” by Jeraldine R. Kraver (p. 76-89)  
|          | **Recommended**  
|          | • *Borderlands/La Frontera* by Gloria Anzaldúa  
|          | • From *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today* by Leslie Marmon Silko “Interior and Exterior Landscapes: The Pueblo Migration Stories” (p. 25-47) and “Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective” (p.48-59)  
|          | **Service Learning Report #1 Due** |
| Feb 3rd  | • From *Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches* by Audre Lorde “Poetry is not a Luxury” (p. 36-39) and “The Transformation of Silence Into Language and Action” (p. 40-44)  
|          | • From *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, Eds. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (3rd edition 2002); Forward 2001 (p. xiv-xxxix), Forward 1981 (p. xl-li); Introduction 1981 (p. lii-iviii); “Children Passing in the Street: The Roots of
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From *Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Interviews/Entrevistas*, ed. AnaLouise Keating (Intro, “Risking the Personal p. 1-15); “Quincentennial: From Victimhood to Active Resistance” with Inés Hernández (p. 177-194)  
*From Methodology of the Oppressed* by Chela Sandoval, “Chp. 2: U.S. Third World Feminism: Differential Social Movement I” (p. 41-63)  
*From Writing Women’s Communities: The Politics and Poetics of Contemporary Multi-Genre Anthologies* by Cynthia Franklin “Introduction: Writing Across Communities” (p. 3-30) |
| Feb 17th   | Service Learning Report #2 Due                                            |                                                                                      |
| Feb 24th   | Recommended                                                               | *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, ed. AnaLouise Keating                                   |
| Mar 1st    | Conference Abstracts Due                                                  | (submit electronically under Assignments Link)                                       |
|            | *Attend Walter Mignolo Lecture: Crossing Gazes and the Silence of the Indians: Theodor De Bry and Guaman Poma de Ayala ; Art Gallery (Art Building) 7-9 pm* | (submit form and abstract to UTSA English Dept)                                       |
|            | *AAHHE Conference (7pm)*                                                  |                                                                                      |
| Mar 2nd    | *Attend Walter Mignolo Lecture: Decolonial Aesthetics: On Geopolitics of Knowing and Sensing: University Room, BB 2.06.04, 2-4 pm* |                                                                                      |
| Mar 3rd    | **Guest Speaker:** Dr. Walter Mignolo  
Brackenridge Distinguished Visiting Lecturer  
William H. Wannamaker Professor of Literature and  
Romance Studies at Duke University  
*AAHHE Conference (all day)* |                                                                                      |
<p>| Mar 5th    | INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’s DAY MARCH                                           | <a href="http://www.swomenwillmarch.org/">http://www.swomenwillmarch.org/</a>                   |</p>
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| Mar 10th   | • *Raven Eye* by Margo Támez  
• “Restoring Lipan Apache Women’s Laws, Lands, and Strength in El Calaboz Ranchería at the Texas-Mexico Border” by Margo Támez  

*Selected essays and interviews*  
• Militarization and Indigenous Women  
• Censored News – Earth Cycles  
• No One Is Illegal Radio  
  [http://emma2.radio4all.net/pub/files/jaggisingh@gmail.com/2840-1-20080208-MargoTamez-FINAL.mp3](http://emma2.radio4all.net/pub/files/jaggisingh@gmail.com/2840-1-20080208-MargoTamez-FINAL.mp3)  
• Conspiring With Margo Támez  
| Mar 17th   | Spring Break                                                           |
| Mar 22nd   | Women’s History Month  
  Guest Speaker: Dr. Margo Támez, Lipan Apache/Jumano Apache  
  Assistant Professor, Gender-Women's Studies and Indigenous Studies, Community, Culture and Global Studies  
  Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences  
  University of British Columbia Okanagan  
  Location/Time: TBA |
| Mar 24th   | • Annotated Bibliography & Paper Proposals Due (submit electronically under Assignments Link)  
  • Attend COLFA Research Conference:10a-4p  
| Mar 31     | • *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought* by Sandy Grande (excerpts)  
• *Sentipensante (sensing/thinking) Pedagogy: Educating for Wholeness, Social Justice and Liberation* Laura Rendon (excerpts)  

*Service Learning Report #4 due* |
| TBA        | Trip to Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center and/or Gallista Gallery |
| Apr 7th    | Art presentations  
  Judy Baca, Yolanda Lopez, Alma Lopez, Amalia Mesa–Bains, Ruby Chacon, Jolene Rickard, Shelly Niro, Jaune Quick-To-See Smith, Nora Narango-Morse  

*Recommended*  
• *Creative Collectives: Chicana Painters Working in Community* by María Ochoa  
• *Chicana Art: the politics of spiritual and aesthetic alterities* by Laura Perez  
• *About Face: Self-Portraits by Native American, First Nations, and Inuit Artists* |
| Apr 14th   | Art presentations  
  Ester Hernandez, Happy/L.A. Hyder, Betye Saar, Carmen Lomas Garza, Santa Barraza, |
Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie, Carmen Little Turtle, Kay Walking Stick, Roxanne Swentzell

**Recommended**
- From *Photography, Criticism, and Native American Women’s Identity* “When Is a Photograph Worth a Thousand Words?” by Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie (p.53-66)
- From *Reframings: New American Feminist Photographers* “As in Her Vision: Native American Women Photographers” by Theresa Harlan

**Service Learning Report #5 Due**

| Apr 21st | • **Conference Papers Due** (submit electronically under Assignments Link)  
| | • Presentation of Final Projects  
| Apr 27th | • **Creative Project/Thought Process Due** (submit electronically under Assignments Link)  
| Apr 28th | • Study Day  
| Apr 30th | • **Reflection Essay Due** (submit electronically under Assignments Link)  
| May 6th | • Final Exam (10:30-1pm)  
| May 7th | Conference: 2011 UTSA English Graduate Symposium  
| | "Theory in the Flesh: Bodies of Scholarship, Activism, and Community"  
| | Location/Time: TBA