

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
University Honors Program
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866
(714) 744-7646

COURSE SYLLABUS

HON 393
Tricksters and Cosmopolitans

Spring 2016

Catalog Description:

This course explores U.S. narrative fiction in the twentieth century, approaching the figures of tricksters and cosmopolitans within the literary works and in the process of literary production. Writers include Charles Chesnutt, Sui Sin Far, Nella Larsen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Philip Roth, Timothy Yu, and Edwidge Danticat. (Offered as needed.) 3 credits.

Restrictions: Acceptance to the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor.

Essential Equipment and Facilities: Seminar-style classroom with computer equipment.

Course Goals, Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

This is a reading intensive class, which also places a considerable emphasis on building an intellectual community. It is designed to offer students ways of understanding basic key concepts in literary studies and developing skills of critical textual analysis. On the one hand, the class discussion is envisioned as an important site that allows for a collaboration to engage with the wealth of material at hand, to explore further the questions and conversations which may arise, and to provide a space for making discoveries and rediscoveries together, each as an active and helpful participant. At the same time, the course seeks to cultivate the process of critical thinking involved in the search itself, honing the skills needed to be a careful reader and an assertive writer.

Content

This course will approach U.S. literature in the twentieth century which feature trickster figures and cosmopolitan figures in narrative fiction. We will look at how these key figures interact in different ways as characters who fashion themselves in order to navigate the world, masking themselves as they reach across a cultural divide. Writers themselves are also considered tricksters as well as cosmopolitans, adept at manipulating

two different set of cultural codes as we consider the doubleness of their writing and the their ability to manipulate two different social worlds. The texts we examine will include short stories and novels which display innovative poetics from plantation tales, passing narratives, to postcolonial and contemporary fiction. Moving from domestic U.S. to global history, as we think about how literature serves as a connective medium which challenges pre-existing boundaries and limitations.

Current Required Texts:

Charles Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman*
 Sui Sin Far, “Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian”; “Down Away in Jamaica”
 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “A Jury of Her Peers”
 Ernest Hemingway, “Indian Camp”
 Nella Larsen, *Passing*
 F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
 Philip Roth, *Human Stain*
 Edwidge Danticat, *Krik! Krak!*
 Timothy Yu, “Designer Emotion No 67”

Instructional Strategies:

The class will rely on class discussion and group work if needed. Discussion questions may be circulated beforehand or appear as reading quizzes. The class will be provided with visual and auditory materials, and pertinent handouts on cultural theory, interviews, and existing scholarship will be distributed in class in order to generate and promote discussion.

Methods of Evaluation:

General Policies: Keeping up with the reading and attending class regularly are bare minimum requirements expected of you, and it will be very important to contribute to classroom discussions. Please come to class having made your own notes for yourself (this may include questions you have about characters or events, images or passages which are striking to you, or any difficulty you might have) and be committed to presenting your views to others, as well as making this easier by trying to respond to others in discussing important themes, conflict, or similarity between texts. Be encouraged or forewarned that your development in becoming useful to others in providing active participation and positive engagement with discussion will count towards a significant part of the final grade.

You will be allowed three absences throughout the semester, for which you are responsible for timely notification. Each day missed beyond your excused absences will be reflected in your final grade (1/3 of a letter grade per class missed), as with frequent lateness (1/3 of a letter grade).

If you would like to discuss your ideas about texts and assignments, or if you have other concerns during the course of the semester, you are always welcome to make use of my office for consultation.

Written Assignments: In fairness to others in class, late papers will not be accepted unless an extension is granted beforehand for special circumstances. Plagiarism will cost you your entire credit. Please refer to the following definition: “Plagiarism is presenting another person’s work as your own. Examples of plagiarism include copying another person’s paper, restating ideas from a book or article without citing the articles as a source, or copying more than seven words from a book or article without quotation marks and a citation of the source of the quotation. These examples do not exhaust the possibilities. Any example of presenting another person’s work as your own is plagiarism.”

Final Grade Breakdown: The final grade will consist of midterm and final papers (50%), in-class presentation of formal and comparative analysis (15 %), a group interpretive/creative project for the final day of class (15%), your useful contribution to class, active participation, and positive engagement with discussions (20%). Quizzes may be administered during the semester and may count towards your final grade.

Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy:

The course syllabus should include the following statement:

Chapman University is a community of scholars which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university

Students with Disabilities Policy:

The course syllabus should include the following statement:

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. The University, through the Center for Academic Success, will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a student in determining what accommodations are suitable based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

Bibliography (optional):

Prepared by:

Rei Magosaki, Fall 2015

Last revised:

Rei Magosaki, Fall 2015