

ARLT 100g • Fall 2008

RACE, RELIGION, AND RHETORIC IN AMERICA

INSTRUCTOR

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Office: ACB 234 | Office hours: Tuesday 1:30-2:30 or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will explore the complex intersections of race and religion in contemporary America through the rhetorical analysis of written texts and film. In the ongoing formation of a national religious identity, two competing models have emerged: America as “one nation under God,” and America as a land of religious freedom and tolerance. We will examine how these ideological frameworks complicate and are complicated by religious position and racial-ethnic identity. We will also investigate the concept of a unified national religious identity by critically analyzing popular constructions of the religious “other” on which this identity relies. The insights we gain through our study will then be used to illuminate present-day controversies and issues (e.g., the portrayal of Islam and Muslim Americans in the popular media), linking discourse on religious identity with political reality.

TEXTS

- James Cone | *Risks of Faith: The Emergence of a Black Theology of Liberation, 1968-1998*
- Leslie Marmon Silko | *Ceremony*
- Gloria Anzaldúa | *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*
- David Henry Hwang | *Golden Child*
- *Various handouts*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance and Participation (5%)

You are allowed one excused absence throughout the term. All other absences will be counted against the Attendance/Participation grade, unless cleared with me. (Note: Coming to class LATE will also adversely affect your grade.)

You will also be required to meet with me during my office hours at least once during the term. This meeting will be counted as part of the Attendance/Participation grade.

- Unannounced Quizzes and Discussion Board Posts/Journal (15%)

You are responsible for contributing to an on-line discussion of the text(s) for a given section. The online address for our course Blackboard site = collegeniki.usc.edu

Your journal entry must be...

- At least 500 words
- Address the primary text(s) for the section
- Respond to the journal entries already posted
- Include at least one question you have about the text(s)

Your reflection should be posted to the Discussion Board by 10:00am on the Tuesday it is due.

- Papers: Two 5 pp. Papers (40%) Late papers will not be accepted.
- Midterm: In-class (20%) Scheduled for Thursday, February 28.
- Final Exam: Take-home, 5 pp. (20%) Due Tuesday, December 16, 3:00pm >> my box (ACB 130)

POLICIES & RESOURCES

- Academic Dishonesty

At USC, academic dishonesty includes: “**plagiarism, cheating on exams, unauthorized collaboration, and falsifying academic records.**” In ARLT 100g, I have adopted a **zero-tolerance** policy towards such acts. Any student caught engaging in any of these behaviors will be reported to the Office for Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards; and will receive an automatic “Fail” for the course. For more information on what constitutes academic dishonesty and USC’s ethical standard, see: *Trojan Integrity: A Guide to Understanding and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty*; and *Trojan Integrity: A Guide for Avoiding Plagiarism*. Both documents can be downloaded at
< <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/pages/resources/resources.html>>

- Academic Accommodations

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSPO. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSPO is 213-740-0776
<http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html>.

- Stress

Students are under pressure. If you feel overwhelmed, contact the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. This free service is confidential.
<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/Health_Center/cs.index.shtml>

SCHEDULE

1	Aug 26 Aug 28	T Th	Introduction <i>No Class</i>	
2	Sep 2 Sep 4	T Th	Bellah, "Civil Religion in America" Bellah, "Is There a Common American Culture?"	Journal entry DUE
3	Sep 9 Sep 10 Sep 11	T T Th	Handouts: Martin Luther King, Jr. / Malcolm X Extra Credit: "Live from LA: Good/God and Evil" I Martin / Malcolm	Exercise DUE
4	Sep 16 Sep 18	T Th	Cone, Section I Cone, Section II	Journal entry DUE
5	Sep 23 Sep 25	T Th	Cone, Section III FIRST PAPER DUE	
6	Sep 30 Oct 2	T Th	Silko, Pages 1-100 Silko, Pages 100-170	Journal entry DUE
7	Oct 7 Oct 9	T Th	Silko, Pages 170-262 Silko	Journal entry DUE
8	Oct 14 Oct 16	T Th	Midterm Review MIDTERM	
9	Oct 21 Oct 22 Oct 23	T W Th	Anzaldúa, Chapters 1-4 Extra Credit: "Live from LA: Good/God and Evil" II Anzaldúa, Chapters 5-7, Notes	Journal entry DUE
10	Oct 28 Oct 30	T Th	Sightings of the Virgen Sightings of the Virgen	Journal entry DUE
11	Nov 4 Nov 6	T Th	Hwang, 1-62 Hwang	Journal entry DUE <i>Election Day</i> - VOTE
12	Nov 11 Nov 13	T Th	<i>No Class</i> SECOND PAPER DUE	
13	Nov 18 Nov 20	T Th	Iwamura, "Critical Faith" Screening: <i>Pilgrimage</i>	Journal entry DUE
14	Nov 25 Nov 27	T Th	Screening: <i>Divided We Fall: Americans in the Aftermath</i> <i>Holiday</i>	Journal entry DUE
15	Dec 2 Dec 4	T Th	Course wrap-up Pick up Final Exam	
	Dec 16	T	FINAL EXAM DUE --> 3:00 pm --> My box (ACB 130)	