



## Syllabus



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# ENG 620: Multicultural Perspective Through Literature

**Credits: 4, CRN #: 40221**

**Summer Term 2008, July 12th - September 5th**

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## Course Description

### Overview

As the new realities of the global village erode longstanding assumptions about discrete nationhood and fixed cultures, the concept of what it means to be an "American" is also shifting. Through representative literary works, this course explores the challenges individuals from various ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds confront within a pluralistic society. Learners construct a more inclusive definition of "culture," assess traditional attitudes about race and ethnicity, and appreciate just how deeply Native, African, Hispanic, Asian, and European Americans have enriched our national identity. This course counts for Granite State College's global perspectives requirement in Bachelors degree programs.

At the end of the prologue to his 1938 trilogy, U.S.A., John Dos Passos writes that, "U.S.A. is the letters at the end of an address when you are away from home. But mostly U.S.A. is the speech of the people." In U.S.A., Dos Passos recognizes that America is home to a diverse body of people and the differences among ethnic, religious, and political groups create the harmonies and melodies contained in "the speech of the people."

In this course, we will explore the concepts of "home" and "American culture." What is America? Who is an American? And what is the speech of the American people? Through the exploration of writing by men and women from different cultural periods, ethnic backgrounds, and class groups, we will create a definition of America giving special attention to the on-going struggle for freedom and equality. We will chart our reactions to questions that deal with what America means to us and to the writers of the past and the present. Does the vision of immigrant writers and minority groups change our own vision of America and the American dream? How does this vision help us to read America?

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## Prerequisites

ENG 500 The Writing Process

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## Blackboard Orientations

**There are no face-to-face sessions for this course.** If you have never taken an Online Interactive Course (OIC) at the college, we highly recommend that you attend one of the [2-hour Blackboard Orientation sessions](#) available throughout the state. If you choose not to attend a face-to-face session, you are encouraged to view our new [Online Orientation with audio](#) at your own convenience.

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## Required Resources

### Textbook:

- Rico, Barbara Roche and Sandra Mano. **American Mosaic: Multicultural Readings in Context**. Third Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. ISBN: 0-395-88661-9

The textbook is available online at MBS Direct at: <http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/gsc.htm> (The course-CRN number for ordering this textbook is: 40221). Textbooks can also be purchased from MBS via phone, mail or fax. For additional information, visit the [Online Bookstore](#) section of the college web site.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is the learner's responsibility to have purchased all required course materials before the start of the course. Learners are expected to meet all course expectations even if the shipment of a required textbook or other learning resource is delayed. Be sure to choose the shipping option that will get your text/resource delivered in a timely manner.

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## Learning Outcomes

This is an upper level course, appropriate for students in all disciplines to fulfill a general education humanities requirement. Multicultural Perspectives in Literature will among other things, compare and contrast the traditions, belief systems, and customs of several co-cultures as they are represented in works of fiction and nonfiction.

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

1. Define "culture" as a social, political, religious, linguistic, economic, and ethnic construct
2. Explain how America is a nation of immigrants and appraise the ramifications of this heritage as it is depicted by selected writers who treat multicultural themes in their work
3. Compare and contrast the traditions, belief systems, and customs of several co-cultures as represented in works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.
4. Evaluate the assumptions behind and the validity of such cultural myths as "America as melting pot," "the Golden Mountain," and "the American Dream" as embodied in specific literary works that focus on multicultural issues
5. Compare and contrast the various waves of immigration into the U.S. and draw from literary accounts to evaluate societal and institutional responses to them
6. Realign their understanding of in- and out-groups, define ethnocentrism, analyze the roots of racial, ethnic, class, and cultural biases, and debunk cultural stereotypes
7. Debate the benefits and losses related to cultural assimilation for selected characters in literature.
8. Interpret orally and in writing complex ideas, themes, and conflicts embedded in literary works

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## Evidence of Accomplishment

Participation in the course and on the Discussion Board:

Participation means logging in to the course every other day or so, being active in the discussion sessions and displaying knowledge of the reading material on a weekly basis. At the start of each module, I will post several concept related discussion questions. You will be asked to pick one question that has meaning for you, and then post your opinions, ideas, and reactions for others to see at your convenience. During the week, you are to respond to the postings of two other students. The issue here is quality rather than quantity. To be clear, the key to making this interaction meaningful is not how many times you post; it's the quality of your thinking and reflection that counts the most. Participation is worth 30% of your grade.

**Short Research Project:** Faced with the unhappiness of new (or old) immigrants, our initial reaction

is to question their reasons for immigrating to America. Choose one cultural group that you are interested in learning more about, and give a general overview of the motivations behind their movement to America. This essay should be a one to two-page report that provides a summary of the immigrant experience. I will provide a list of websites, and you should use the textbook as a reference if appropriate. Please document your sources using MLA format.

**Response Papers:** Two reading exercises will be due on the dates noted in the course schedule. These are reflective responses to questions about the poetry, essays, and short stories that we read throughout the semester. Response papers should be written in the style of a literary analysis by analyzing and synthesizing meaningful lines and passages from the text in order to support your thesis. Papers should be at least two full pages long and typed.

**Cultural Analysis Essay:** As we gain a broader understanding of the various groups that make up American culture, our definition of who we are as Americans will change and expand. In this paper, you will explore what American culture is and what it means to you. You can take a reflective (first-person point of view) approach and incorporate the rhetorical methods of narration, description, and illustration if you would like. References to the assigned readings of your choice must also be incorporated. With this in mind, copy meaningful passages from the text while you read and write down page numbers in your notebook. All of this preparation will save you valuable time when you write and revise your paper. The final draft should be at least 5 full pages long.

## Academic Honesty

An academic community is based on honesty and integrity. All work that you submit should be your own. When summarizing or explaining ideas that are based on another's work, make sure to cite references appropriately. (For more information on proper citation, see the Library's website: <http://granite.edu/library/citing.htm>). Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is using another's words or even paraphrasing another's work without giving proper credit through the use of citations. For questions regarding Granite State College's academic honesty policy, see page 65 of the college catalog.

## Performance Evaluation

Grades will be assigned using GSC guidelines, rubrics and scales. Course grades will be based on an evaluation of the student's performance on the following assignments:

Course Activity	% of Final Grade
Course Participation	<b>30%</b>
Research Paper	<b>15%</b>
Response Papers	<b>15% each</b>
Cultural Analysis	<b>25%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Course Grading Scale:** The letter grade is representative of Granite State College's grading system.

A: 100-95	B: 86-84	C: 76-74	D: 66-64
A-: 94-90	B-: 83-80	C-: 73-70	D-: 63-60
B+: 89-87	C+: 79-77	D+: 69-67	F: 59-0

**NOTE:** Students must receive a grade of "C" or better for all courses in their major.

## Outline of Course Structure & Content

This course is organized into eight modules. The outline of the general reading assignments and discussion topics is provided below. Note, though, that this schedule may change and the final version is posted within the Blackboard course. More details on specific assignments are available within the course when you register for this class.

Module Title, Date and Description	Assignments
<p><b>Module 1: Points of Entry</b> July 12 - 18</p> <p>In order to discuss multicultural America, we need to share the same language. Often, terms such as “assimilation” and the “melting pot” are tossed about without attention to their historical context or to their underlying meaning. During this introduction, we will create a shared language that will provide a foundation to explore American culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduction to course tools</li> <li>● Selected short readings from Chapter 1</li> <li>● Define key terms</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 2: American Indians</b> July 19 - 25</p> <p>As Euro Americans settled the West, an acculturation program was put into place by the new American government. As a result, the American Indian endured forced displacement, a loss of language and religion, and the erosion of tribal customs. In this chapter, writers of the American Indian Renaissance offer different perspectives on their tragic history and the results of acculturation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Selected short readings from Chapter 2</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 3: Early Immigrants</b> July 26 - August 1</p> <p>The second wave of immigration in the late 19th century brought many Europeans and Jews to America. They were fleeing political and religious persecution and had high expectations for their new life in America. The “American Dream” beckoned, but what they found in America were low wages, horrid living conditions, and intense pressure to assimilate to the new culture. The readings in chapter three address the hardships that the new immigrants faced and their reaction to the assimilation process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Selected short readings from Chapter 3</li> <li>● Short Formal Writing Assignment Research Essay on immigration (due this week)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 4: Chinese Americans</b> August 2 - 8</p> <p>The myth of the “Gold Mountain” brought many Chinese nationals to America during the Gold Rush. Those who came did not plan to stay, but to earn a fortune and return to their family in China. Fierce discrimination occurred when Americans began to blame the Chinese for a failing economic situation, and racial violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Selected short readings from chapter 4</li> <li>● Response paper 1 due</li> </ul>

<p>ensued. The readings in chapter four discuss a range of issues that the Chinese faced including exclusion, violence, and the relationships between an immigrant parent and an American born child.</p>	
<p><b>Module 5: African Americans</b> August 9 - 15</p> <p>African American history is long and complex. However, the civil rights movement was a formative period in American history and one that many writers of the time explored. As African Americans began to create a unique identity, they were also increasing their demands for equal treatment. The writers in this chapter offer a variety of ways to think about segregation, equality and racism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selected short readings from Chapter 5</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 6: Latin Americans</b> August 16 - 22</p> <p>Similar to American Indians, the people of Puerto Rico and many Mexican Americans, who became citizens when borders shifted, are not immigrants. Also faced with the expectations of acculturation, Latin Americans fear the loss of language, heritage and identity and many deal with homesickness and nostalgia for the past.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selected short readings from Chapter 6 and 8</li> <li>Response paper 3 due</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 7: Japanese Americans</b> August 23 - 29</p> <p>After years of exclusionary tactics and discriminatory practices, Japanese Americans were forced to leave their homes and businesses and move into internment camps. Some special interest groups held Japanese Americans responsible for the attack on Pearl Harbor and the move was to prevent spies from reporting back to Japan. The readings in this chapter deal with the effect of World War II on the Japanese communities and explore life in the camps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selected readings from Chapter 7</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 8: The New Immigrants</b> August 30 - September 5</p> <p>The American Dream reappears in the literature of new American immigrants, who are from many different nations. Displaced by war, oppressive regimes, and genocide, many new immigrants are confused in their new land. Some are welcomed and accepted, others are faced with prejudice and all must quickly learn about American customs and traditions. The readings in this chapter echo themes from earlier immigrant groups and offer an opportunity for further reflection on the American Dream, assimilation and American culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short selected readings from Chapter 9</li> <li>Cultural Analysis essay due at the end of the module</li> </ul>

**Note:** The content of this syllabus is subject to change as needed.

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## ADA

Granite State College will provide qualified individuals with disabilities the same educational opportunities available to persons without disabilities. When an individual's documented disability creates a reasonable accommodation to remove the barrier. If you need assistance, it is important that you make contact early to ensure that your requests can be reviewed prior to the start of each term. If you wish to apply for accommodations, contact your academic advisor or the dean of learner services in the Administration Offices in Concord. See ADA in the college catalog for details.

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## Institutional Assessment

Assessment is an ongoing process that enables the College to improve its programs, courses, and teaching methods. Institutional evaluation may be embedded in tests, exams, and other measurements of student learning. As members of a learning community, students, faculty, and staff will be expected to participate in the important process of assessment on occasion. Confidentiality of any data that identify participants is maintained.

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## Technical Assistance

For assistance with accessing your course or with other technical issues regarding your online course, contact the GSC Technical Assistance Center (<http://bbresources.granite.edu/techassist/help.htm>) or call 1-888-372-4270 (Hours: M-F, 8:30-5:00, on weekends messages are checked daily)

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