

## **Engaging Diversity in a General Education Learning Community**

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### **I.) from St. Edward's University mission statement:**

A caring faculty and staff . . . encourage individuals to confront the critical issues of society and to seek justice and peace. Students are helped to understand themselves, clarify their personal values and recognize their responsibility to the world community.

St. Edward's expresses its Catholic identity by communicating the dignity of the human person as created in the image of God, by stressing the obligation of all people to pursue a more just world . . . . St. Edward's seeks to provide an environment in which freely chosen beliefs can be deepened and expressed.

### **II.) General Education at St. Edward's University**

General Education 57 hrs

Cultural Foundations 18 hrs

The American Experience

Literature and Human Experience

Understanding and Appreciating the Arts

American Dilemmas

Hist/Evolution of Global Processes

Contemporary World Issues

### **III.) Some Strategies for Teaching Diversity Inclusively**

- ***BE DIVERSE***: engage with programs that foster diversity to create a diverse classroom environment, such as St. Ed's CAMP program.
- **CREATE A LEARNING COMMUNITY** (or a learning community environment) to raise student comfort levels for sensitive topics. Plan events that foster community and familiarity.
- **COLLABORATE** with other instructors to model dialogue and intellectual debate for students, as in team-taught or linked courses.
- **BE TRANSPARENT**: reflect on course goals and agendas openly with students. Include and show respect for opposing views, including conservative ones.

- **MODEL SELF-REFLECTION:** include yourself and examples from your own socialization in the discussion. Fess up to biases that *you* might struggle with, such as class assumptions, to model the process of interrogating one's own beliefs and socialization.
- **COMPLICATE GOOD-EVIL NARRATIVES:** Avoid “guilt-tripping” students by replacing moralism or blame with analysis and context. Focus less on individuals, than on the forces that shape human behavior:
  - Ideology
  - Economic pressures
  - Institutional forces.
  - Processes of socialization.
- **USE SOCIOLOGY:** emphasize the pervasiveness of ethnocentrism, stereotyping, and prejudice in processes of group identity formation. Reflection on these processes can help ALL students negotiate cultural difference, not just those in “dominant” groups.
- **FOCUS ON MULTIPLE IDENTITIES:** avoid making students inhabit uncomfortable oppressor or victim roles by emphasizing the different and multiple identities we ALL experience in different contexts, including religious and/or subcultural identities. By focusing on how we all undergo processes of identity formation, and harbor forms of ethnocentrism and prejudice, the goal becomes not blame but self-reflection and clearer critical thinking.

Further Reading:

- <http://anthro.palomar.edu/ethnicity/default.htm>
- S. Dale McLemore and Harriet D. Romo, *Racial and Ethnic Relations in America, 7th ed.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2005.

## LINKED COURSE POLICIES

### AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Instructor: Dr. Todd Onderdonk  
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### LITERATURE AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Instructor: Dr. Cory Lock  
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Welcome to American Experience and Literature and Human Experience. These courses are linked both physically and in the content of what you will study. This means that all of us, instructors and students, will attend the back-to-back classes together, creating a learning community like the one you experienced in Freshman Studies (except more intimate), and one in which subjects can be examined from multiple angles. It also means that the content in each of the two courses will reinforce the lessons of the other, resulting in a deeper, higher-impact learning experience. Both courses are required components of St. Edward's Cultural Foundations curriculum, which is designed to introduce students to issues of diversity and discrimination in American culture and history. We believe that linking the historical and literary content of these courses will provide you with a deeper and more specific understanding of the human dramas we will examine. We hope to create an environment where all students will feel comfortable exploring the sometimes sensitive, but deeply interesting issue of how we form our cultural identities—our sense of belonging to one group or another, whether ethnic group, sex, class, race, religion or even social cliques.

**The American Experience course** presents the history of American minorities and investigates processes of racism and discrimination. Since the "American Experience" has varied with the gender, race, ethnicity, and social class of the participant, the purpose of this course is to examine this diversity of experience throughout the country's history. The course places individual and group experiences within the social, economic, and political contexts of various historical periods, exploring group differences in experience and perspective, as well as the ideals and values that define American civic culture.

**The Literature and Human Experience course** focuses on the ways a diverse range of Americans have used literature to express their struggles and their joys. We will examine the themes expressed in the American Experience class as expressed in short stories, poetry, drama, essays, and novels.

### AMERICAN EXPERIENCE COURSE AND COURSE GOALS

Your work in the course will be divided between reading and discussing readings and videos in history, and writing two papers: the Roots Paper, and the Socialization Paper. You will show you did the readings by doing well on brief quizzes the days readings are assigned, by participating in class discussion, and by expressing yourself in short writing assignments. There will also be a midterm and final exam testing your knowledge of the major events and concepts we discuss over the semester.

Here is what you should be able to do by the end of the semester:

- Recognize the origin and evolution of the values, myths, and ideals that comprise American civic culture and their influence on society as a whole.
- Be familiar with significant forces, events, and persons relevant to historical struggles over equality, identity, and social justice in America.
- Understand the relation of identity formation and issues of discrimination and prejudice, and how these phenomena are to our experiences of socialization.
- Recognize the diversity of persons and viewpoints that exist within the groups studied and the cultural pluralism that has evolved in America as a result.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

- Green, Timothy. *Seeking Justice: A History of American Minorities*. Rev. 2007
- *The American Experience Anthology*

### **AMERICAN EXPERIENCE GRADING**

- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Final Exam: 15%
- Reading Quizzes: 25%
- Roots Paper: 15%
- Socialization Paper: 20%
- Daily Work and Writing Assignments: 10%

### **LITERATURE AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE COURSE AND COURSE GOALS**

Literature and Human Experience is an introductory literature course. As such, we will focus on developing your skills in critically analyzing fiction and nonfiction literary texts. This course also fosters the goals of general education by addressing issues of cultural difference and developing students' understanding of how their own cultural heritage and perspectives relate to those of others. Our investigation of these issues will tie in directly with the course content of the American Experience class.

Here is what you should be able to do by the end of the semester:

- Be familiar with a selection of literary works of different genres;
- Examine human concerns and problems as these are aesthetically formulated in literary works by a culturally diverse group of authors;
- Competently use literary terminology necessary for an informed discussion of the literary features of texts;
- Display basic, analytical reading and writing skills relevant to the study of literature.

### **LITERATURE AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE REQUIRED TEXTS**

- *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, shorter 7<sup>th</sup> ed.
- *And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*, Tomás Rivera
- *Angels in America*, Tony Kushner

**LITERATURE AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE GRADING**

- Midterm exam: 20%
- Final exam: 20%
- 2 papers (3-5 pages each): 30%
- Discussion Leader Oral presentation: 10%
- Daily work (quizzes, wiki postings, etc.): 20%

**Overview of Linkages**

*American Experience & Literature of the American Experience*

	<b>American Experience</b>	<b>Literature of the American Experience</b>
Week 1	<b>Cultural Contexts of the Linked Course</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Marianne Hopper: "Why Multicultural Education?"</li> <li>• Lynn Cheney "Teaching Our Children about America."</li> </ul>	<b>Introductions/What Is an American?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur biography and "What is an American?"</li> </ul>
Week 2	<b>US Origins and Contexts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Revolution and ideals in Enlightenment context: Founding Documents</li> <li>• Motives for Exploration/Arrivals in "New World"</li> <li>• Read Howard Zinn: "Columbus, The Indians, and Human Progress"</li> <li>• View <i>Apocalyppto</i> excerpts</li> </ul>	<b>Truth and Consequences: The "Settling" of America</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, <i>La Relación</i> selections</li> <li>• Biographies and writings/speeches of Black Hawk, Petalesharo, and Elias Boudinot</li> <li>• Sarah Winnemucca, <i>Life Among the Piutes</i> selections</li> </ul>
Week 3	<b>The Slave Trade and Colonial Era</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Origins of the Atlantic slave trade; slavery, women, Native Americans in the colonial era.</li> </ul>	<b>The Middle Passage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olaudah Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano . . .</i> selections</li> </ul>
Week 4	<b>Six Flags Over Texas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit Texas State History Museum</li> <li>• Texas and Mexico through the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo</li> </ul>	<b>Six Flags Over Texas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field Trip to Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum</li> <li>• Selections from Jovita Gonzalez, <i>Caballero</i> selections</li> </ul>
Week 5	<b>Challenges of a New Nation 1800-1865</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manifest Destiny</li> <li>• Indian Removals</li> <li>• Beginnings of Women's Rights</li> <li>• Ideology and Economic Determinism</li> </ul>	<b>Why the West Was Won: The Frontier in American Culture and History</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History"</li> <li>• Stephen Crane, "The Blue Hotel"</li> </ul>
Week 6	<b>Abolition/Reconstruction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slavery and slave rebellions</li> <li>• Abolition, Reconstruction, Jim Crow Era</li> </ul>	<b>Slavery and Its Effects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i></li> <li>• Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" and "The Wound-Dresser"</li> </ul>
Week	<b>Second Wave Immigration</b>	<b>Racial Identity and the Melting Pot</b>

7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Free, Indentured, Enslaved” – An up-close focus on Chinese prostitutes in California</li> <li>• Roots Paper Presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sui Sin Far, “In the Land of the Free”</li> <li>• Abraham Cahan, “A Sweat-Shop Romance”</li> <li>• Kate Chopin, “Désirée’s Baby”</li> </ul>
Week 8	<b>Midterm Week and Focus Group</b>	<b>Midterm Week and Focus Group</b>
Week 9	<b>Women’s Rights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest Speaker: Dorothy O’Helly</li> <li>• Woman Rights: Progressive Era to WWII</li> <li>• Human Rights and the Progressive Era</li> </ul>	<b>Ideals of Womanhood</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wall-paper,”</li> <li>• H.D., “Helen”</li> <li>• Mary Wilkins Freeman, “A New England Nun”</li> </ul>
Week 10	<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>
Week 11	<b>Native American Experience /Class Divisions in US Society</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Native American Experience 1865-1945</li> <li>• PBS Video: <i>People Like Us</i></li> <li>• Introduce Socialization Paper</li> </ul>	<b>Tradition and Modernity in Native American Identity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Louise Erdrich , “Dear John Wayne,” and “I Was Sleeping Where the Black Oaks Move”</li> <li>• N. Scott Momaday <i>The Way to Rainy Mountain</i> selections</li> </ul>
Week 12	<b>Processes of Discrimination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Nativism and Racism”</li> <li>• Chinese Immigration</li> <li>• Readings on <i>Ethnicity and Race</i></li> </ul>	<b>Migrant Workers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tomás Rivera, <i>And the Earth Did Not Devour Him</i></li> </ul>
Week 13	<b>Civil Rights Movement: Black Nationalism vs. Cultural Assimilation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Black Americans: Marching Towards Justice”</li> </ul>	<b>The Struggle for Civil Rights: Invisibility and Bitter Fruit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zora Neale Hurston, “How It Feels to be Colored Me”</li> <li>• Ralph Ellison, <i>Invisible Man</i> selections</li> <li>• Sterling Brown, “Bitter Fruit of the Tree”</li> <li>• Langston Hughes poems</li> </ul>
Week 14	<b>Chicano Civil Rights Movement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Mexican Americans: Endurance and Dignity”</li> <li>• “Mexican American Resistance”</li> <li>• “Intercultural Tensions”</li> <li>• “Mexican Americans: Building Strength”</li> </ul>	<b>La Lloronas/Weeping Women</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Albert Ríos “Madre Sofía,” “Wet Camp,” and “Advice to a First Cousin”</li> <li>• Sandra Cisneros, “Woman Hollering Creek”</li> <li>• Maxine Hong Kingston, “No Name Woman”</li> </ul>
Week 15	<b>Feminism and Gay Rights Movements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “American Women: Stepping Forward”</li> <li>• “Gay and Lesbian Americans: Coming Out”</li> </ul>	<b>Sex, Gender, and Identity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gloria Anzaldúa “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”</li> <li>• <i>Angels in America</i></li> </ul>
Week 16	<b>Final Exam Prep</b>	<b>Sex, Gender, and Identity, continued</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue <i>Angels in America</i></li> </ul>

<i>Week</i> 17	<b>Final Exam and Focus Group</b>	<b>Final Exam and Focus Group</b>
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