

ENG 330 – Multicultural Literature

North Central College ::: Winter 2018

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Texts:

Baldwin, <i>Notes of a Native Son</i>	Coates, <i>Black Panther</i>
Guzman, <i>Black Writing from Chicago</i>	Cisneros, <i>Woman Hollering Creek</i>
Eisner, <i>Contract with God</i>	Barreca, <i>Don't Tell Mama</i>
Tadros, <i>River Jordan</i>	Lahiri, <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i>
Corsino, <i>The Neighborhood Outfit</i>	...plus Films and Online Readings

Course Goals:

ENG 330 presents an extraordinarily small sample of the rich multicultural literatures of the United States in order to:

- give students a small sample of classic and new texts from writers working in various traditions,
- gain an understanding of the construction of race and ethnicity, and the operation and consequences of racism and prejudice,
- practice reading texts closely in the light of these constructions and the semiotics of race/ethnicity studies.

Tentative Schedule:

Note: These readings may be supplemented by more online readings. Changes, additions, deletions, etc.—these will usually come to you in emails via the college's **Merlin mass email system**. Please watch for them.

March 26	Intro
28	Barreca: Selections <i>beginning</i> pp. 15, 18, 109, 208, 428, 514
30	Barreca: ... <i>beginning</i> pp. 89, 119, 361
April 2	Corsino: p. ix (Preface) – 82. Barreca: tba
4	Corsino: pp. 83 – 112. Read Patricia Williams in <u>Supplements</u> section of my website, plus my piece on Trayvon Martin .
6	Corsino: pp. 113 – 127. Special guest: Prof. Lou Corsino
9	Read “Three from the <i>Invention of Ethnicity</i> ” in the <u>Supplements</u> .
11	Guzman: Selections <i>beginning</i> pp. xi (Foreword), xv (my Intro), 1, 14, 17, 42, 52, 60, 110, 208, 226, and 269, <i>plus</i> from my website my articles on Berry , Wells , Jones , and Charles Johnson .
13	Guzman: ... <i>beginning</i> pp. 29, 106, 133, 138, 175, 185, 238, 250, <i>plus</i> from my website my article on Hansberry .

- 16 Guzman: ...*beginning* p. 295, plus the poets beginning pp. 48, 129, 191, 195, 198, 203, 215, 245, 264, 277, 289,
- 18 Baldwin: “Autobiographical Notes,” “Everybody’s Protest Novel,” “Carmen Jones”
- 20 No Class.
- 23 No Class
- 25 Baldwin: “Many Thousands Gone,” “Stranger in the Village”
- 27 Finish Baldwin. Read Angela Nagel in Supplements.
- 30 Cisneros: stories beginning on pp. 3, 6, 14. Read Octavio Paz in Supplements.
- May 2 Cisneros: stories beginning on pp. 43, 68
- 4 Cisneros: stories beginning on pp. 85, 137.
- 7 Lahiri, stories beginning on pp. 1, 43. Read James Alan McPherson in Supplements.
- 9 Lahiri, stories beginning on pp. 83, 111
- 11 Lahiri, stories beginning on pp. 158, 173
- 14 Coates: first half. Read John Kouwenhoven in Supplements.
- 15 **Honors Day – Attendance Required**
- 16 Coates: second half
- 18 Tadros, first half
- 21 Tadros, second half
- 23 Eisner, first half
- 25 Eisner, second half
- 28 No class.
- 30 Sharing “Commentaries and Reviews” and “Hybrid Paper” – Part 1
- June 1 Sharing “Commentaries and Reviews” and “Hybrid Paper” – Part 2

Grades will be based on...

- 1) **Class participation.** *Being in class* and sharing insights, comments, questions. (75 points).
- 2) **“Godfather” project.** As an extension of our reading of Barreca’s and Corsino’s books, plus our in-class visit with Prof. Corsino, please watch Coppola’s *The Godfather* on your own. Before or after you watch it, go to the Teaching page on my website, scroll down to the Online Projects and Exercises section, and under the Culture category click on “The Godfather Project.” Answer the questions briefly, but with depth. Also, read my review of the film: “[Fate and Style in The Godfather.](#)” (50 pts.) DUE April 23rd.
- 3) **Short papers.** Papers of one page—or *less*—usually reacting to our readings. These will be assigned as needed, and one of these will be a short paper about the college’s annual Honors Day, May 15th. Attend at least one event, describe and react to it. DUE May 18th. (250 words or less—**assuming 250 words a page, double spaced**. 5 to 10 pts. each).

4) Review or commentary. Choose a film, book, piece of music, current event, subject area, etc. and write a short review *with research* and focused around one or two complementary ideas about race/ethnicity/diversity/multiculturalism. It should do a *close reading* whatever you are reviewing, paying particular attention to the structure, language, images and themes of your subject. (1250-1500 words. 100 pts.) DUE May 2nd.

5) Hybrid paper. Paper combining personal story—yours or someone else’s—and *research* on the general theme “race/ethnicity/diversity...and me.” Like the review or commentary pieces, the paper should revolve around one or two ideas or concepts about race/ethnicity/diversity/ multiculturalism. (1500-2000 words. 150 pts.) DUE May 30th.

Statement on Plagiarism

Do your own work and when you use other peoples’ words and ideas cite them.
Consequences for plagiarism are severe, including failing the class,
and even possible dismissal from the college.

□ ON WRITING:

Writing is very important to the college, which requires that at least 30% of the grade for every assignment be given for writing quality.

Besides being grammatically correct, good writing style requires that your work contains a VARIED sentence structure, as well as lean and smoothly flowing—not awkward—prose.

Rules of thumb:

□ **Lean Prose:** Eliminate as much as possible—you can’t always—the following three kinds of words:

1. **TO BE verbs**—*is, was, were* ...
2. **PREPOSITIONS**—*in, of, from, out*...
3. **RELATIVE PRONOUNS**—*that, which, who* ...

This will eliminate an astonishing 70% of your wordiness and awkwardness. For example, revise these sentences.

- This movie **is** very honest **in** the way it portrays how the Jewish people **were** treated **by** the Nazis, **which was** quite awful.
- The characters **in** the film **are** so similar **to** us **that** as an audience we connect and relate easily **to** them **on** a personal level.

- The movie *Hardball*, directed by Brian Robbins, highlights the hardships faced by young boys living in the inner city in a story of a man with terrible habits and a large amount of debt who agrees to coach Little League in the projects for a loan.
- This documentary is very effective in connecting with the audience.

Consider revising any sentence having more than three words like these.

❑ **Structure/Length:** Don't write any more than three sentences in a row that have roughly the same structure or length. You don't want to write like this:

The Wizard of Oz is a movie that I enjoyed very much. It is a movie that many think of as a "classic." The plot that the director uses is one which is full of suspense. We are rooting for Dorothy and Toto almost from the very beginning. The "wizard" is not capable of returning them to where they came from.

Roughly 50% of your sentences should be medium length (1 to 1 1/2 lines long), 30% long (2 or 3+ lines), and 20% short (under 1 line).

Also consider using more unusual patterns involving, for example: balanced sentences, sentences with key rhythmic repetitions, participial and absolute phrases, and sentences with significant interruptions set off by dashes.

You may read more about these revision techniques in Dr. Guzman's book *Writing Well Wherever You Work*, available in its *first draft* form at <http://richardrguzman.com>

A short bibliography of background books on race/ethnicity/diversity

Books on race and ethnicity pour off the presses. Here are a *very* few examples.

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New Press, 2012) [Note: See Coates essay in a recent *Atlantic Monthly*.]

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* (Roman-Littlefield, 2009).

Caliendo, Stephen. *Inequality in America: Race, Poverty, and Fulfilling Democracy's Promise* (Westview, 2018).

Cheu, Johnson. *Diversity in Disney Films: Critical Essays on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality and Disability* (McFarland, 2013).

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me* (Spiegel-Grau, 2015)

Earley, Christopher P., and Soon Ang. *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures* (Stanford, 2003).

Farrington, Neil, et al. *Race, Racism and Sports Journalism* (Routledge, 2012)

Hoberman, John. *Darwin's Athletes: How Sport Has Damaged Black America and Preserved the Myth of Race* (Houghton-Mifflin, 1997).

Hughes, Charles. *Country Soul: Making Music and Making Race in the American South* (North Carolina, 2015).

Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White* (Routledge, 1995).

Khabir, Su'ad Abdul. *Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States* (NYU, 2016).

Katznelson, Ira. *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in 20th Century America* (Norton, 2006).

Kun, Josh. *Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America* (California, 2005).

Marchetti, Gina. *Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fictions* (California, 1994).

McIllwain, Charlton, and Stephen M. Caliendo. *Race Appeal: How Candidates Invoke Race in U.S. Political Campaigns* (Temple, 2011).

Plummer, Deborah. *Racing Across the Lines: Changing Race Relations Through Friendship* (Pilgrim, 2004). ♦ Read my review [HERE](#).

Roberts, Dorothy. *Fatal Inventions: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Recreate Race in the 21st Century* (New Press, 2012).

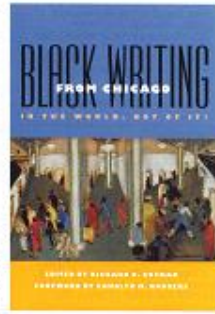
Roediger, David R. *Working Towards Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (Basic Books, 2006).

Seshadri-Crooks, K. *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race* (Routledge, 2000).

Shipler, David. *A Country of Strangers: Blacks and Whites in America* (Vintage, 1997).

Singh, Nihil Pal. *Race and America's Long War* (California, 2017).

Solinger, Rickie. *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race Before Roe v. Wade* (Routledge, 2000).



Native Sons & Daughters



Chicago's black lit history gets its due in a new anthology.

By Jonathan Messinger

Richard Guzman's new collection of African-American writing from Chicago is a heady mix of old-school agitprop and literary wonderment, a testimony not only to the multitude of great black writers who were born or passed through here, but to the myriad forms literature may take.

In his introduction, Guzman addresses the dearth of anthologies collecting African-American literature. The late Gwendolyn Brooks published *Jump Bad* in 1971, and the Organization of Black American Culture published *Nommo: A Literary Legacy of Black Chicago (1967-1987)* in 1987. Guzman's *Black Writing from Chicago: In the World, Not of It?* (Southern Illinois University Press, \$19.95) is the first academic attempt to gather the disparate, and, arguably diasporic, literature of Black Chicago from the 19th century to the 21st.

Guzman uses author's birth dates to organize the collection chronologically. At first glance, this approach seems to eschew intellectual heft in favor of an easy way out, allowing Guzman to avoid making thematic connections. But *Black Writing* has an elliptical resonance: There are echoes of Ida B. Wells and W.E.B. DuBois, both included at the beginning of the anthology, in the excerpt from Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father*, included toward the end.

Guzman has approached his task like a curator. He's chosen work from such luminaries as Brooks and Richard Wright, that identifies their idiosyncratic styles, even if they're not quintessential selections. Similarly, he's included pieces that would otherwise now be inaccessible to contemporary readers. Take, for example, two selections published in the *Chicago Defender* during the newspaper's early years. In an editorial from 1917 headlined "Keep Your Mouth Shut, Please!" the editors exhort new residents to keep their voices down on city buses and trains. The editorial reads: "Cut this out, dear reader, and whenever you see one talking loudly hand it to them." It's a tasty bit of old-school newspaper belly-aching, but it's also an extension of the *Defender's* leading role as a voice of the "Great Black Migration," when the paper circulated nationwide and

printed train schedules to facilitate the movement of blacks from the South to the North. A few pages later, though separated by nearly 30 years in the paper's history, Langston Hughes satirizes a similar social problem in one of his popular "Simple Stories" columns, featuring the comic character Jesse B. Semple. Jesse is perturbed at the amount of grease people put in their hair: "...there ought to be a law against people with greasy heads going around leaning them up against people's walls and spotting them all up."

It's to Guzman's credit that he included both of these. Though they seem to address frivolous topics, they also encapsulate the different ways literature can speak to

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social concerns in the space of the same newspaper.

The anthology includes important contemporary figures as well. The latter years are necessarily focused on poetry, given spoken word and slam's dominance in the last 15 years. Guzman reprints poet and performer Marvin Tate's gorgeous "The Ebony Mannequin in the Marshall Fields State Street Store Window" and Tyehimba Jess's fiery poem "We Live."

Though diverse in style and voice, subject matter and perspective, enough charged current runs through the anthology that, by the end, you can almost hear the contemporary writers talking to their forebears.

Time Out Chicago, June 8-15, 2006: 73

"A work of great importance, and a sheer delight to read."

Carolyn Rodgers,
Poet, National Book Award Nominee

"...an important contribution that will be greatly appreciated by scholars and by much of the general public."

Lonnie G. Bunch,
Founding Director, National Museum of African American History

"A tremendous resource for anyone interested in the literature of Chicago...At the same time each selection has a national significance."

Lisa Woolley,
Author, *American Voices of the Chicago Renaissance*

"...impressive...fascinating..." Chicago Tribune

* Hear an NPR radio interview:
<http://richardguzman.com/wbez-interviews-richard-guzman-black-writing-chicago/>

Note from Dr. Guzman: My youngest son, Bryan Emmanuel Guzman, helped a lot with *Black Writing from Chicago*, but it was one of our final projects together. Soon after its publication, he died in an accident in Chicago shortly after his 21st birthday. Among the many memorials to him are Emmanuel House and Bryan House. Read more about them here: <http://richardguzman.com/emmanuel-house-2/>