

Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S.

ENGL 399-02 | Spring 2021

CLASS DETAILS

MWF 11:45-12:35 PM

Class will meet via Zoom. Mondays and Fridays will be full-class discussion. Many (though not every) Wednesday will be working in groups and/or asynchronously.

Instructor

Dr. Hayley Stefan (she/her/hers)

Feel free to refer to me Dr. Stefan or Professor Stefan.

hstefan@holycross.edu

I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours. If you don't hear back from me after 48 hours, please feel free to send me a nudge/follow-up email.

Office Hours

Office hours held via Zoom on Mondays & Wednesdays 3:30–5:00 PM; Tuesdays 10–11 AM; and by appointment. If my standing hours don't work for you, please email me if you'd like to meet & we can find a time that works for you.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course centers literature by writers whose identities have marked them as historically “other” to a predominantly white European body of works, including African American, Asian American, Indigenous, and Latinx authors, among others. Through our reading, discussion, and student research, our class will consider how literature influences and responds to complex conversations about race, ethnicity, nationality, and identity. Together we will ask what brings together “multi-ethnic literature” as a field, as well as how variations across authors, content, and form resist easy categorization. Alongside discussion of major and lesser-known works of multi-ethnic literature, we will contextualize our reading with the crucial role of activism in the development of this field and of ethnic studies programs. Our class will bridge the field's history and contemporary moment through multi-ethnic U.S. writers' reflections of their roles in education and publishing today via trends like #OwnVoices and the We Need Diverse Books organization. We will examine these concepts through and with attention to various forms, including but not limited to comics, creative nonfiction, novels, poetry, and short stories, from multiple genres.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this course, I hope that you will

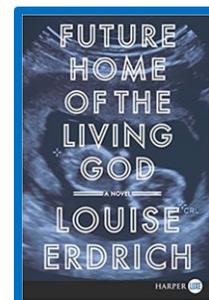
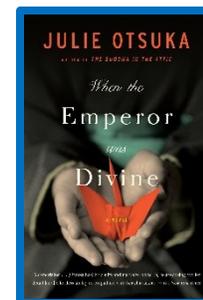
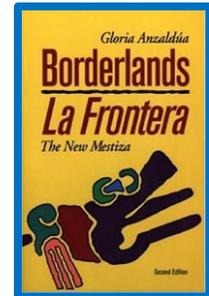
- Learn about the creation & development of Ethnic Studies as a discipline;
- Think critically about how education, arts, & activism relate to each other;
- Practice archival & scholarly research;
- Strengthen your critical comprehension & close reading skills;
- Contribute to scholarly & public conversations about multi-ethnic literature;
- Engage with literature intersectionally, examining texts in conversation with multiple identity categories, including race, gender, sexuality, disability, & class;
- Reflect on the role of literary form as it shapes meaning; and
- Enjoy reading & engaging with multi-ethnic literature.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Octavia Butler, *Kindred*
2. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*
3. Julie Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine*
4. Louise Erdrich, *Future Home of the Living God*

You can use any publisher or edition of these texts. You're also welcome to engage with our texts in whatever format works best for you (e.g., audiobook, paperback, eBook, etc.), so long as you actively question as you read and are prepared to discuss how its format influences the way you read it.

If you are unable to afford course materials, please [reach out to Financial Aid](#) or request books via [the Holy Cross Lending Library](#), where they may be able to help. Books can be purchased through the [Holy Cross Bookstore](#) or other retailers. Pro tip: You can search for books on [bookfinder.com](#) to see the varied prices and places you can buy copies. You can also borrow books through your local library via [the OverDrive app](#).



MUTUAL RESPECT

This class is founded on the basis of mutual respect & shared humanity. In line with respecting others, we will use the names and pronouns that members of this class ask us to use. [If these change across the semester, please also share with me and/or the class (as you feel comfortable) the name & pronouns you would like for us to use for you.]

Over the semester, we will read texts that introduce complex, multiply diverse, and occasionally controversial subjects. I want this class to be a space in which we all feel safe sharing our thoughts, ideas, and opinions—even when these conversations are uncomfortable. We will practice thinking about what it means to sit with this discomfort as we engage ideas that stretch our experience or knowledge.

BASIC NEEDS

We will be learning a lot this semester, but your wellbeing remains the most important. If you are having difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or if you lack a safe and stable place to live, please talk with me (if you are comfortable doing so), so that I can put you in touch with resources to help you.

Regardless of how you approach class content, please know at all times that your thoughts and ideas as writers and scholars are important and valuable. One of the goals of college is to challenge us to apply pressure about what we know (and all that we don't know). I will never ask you to change your mind, but I will expect it will remain open in this course.

That being said, dehumanizing others is antithetical to learning, and students who make implicitly violent or dehumanizing remarks will be asked to leave immediately & will forego engagement credit for that day's work.

ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMMODATIONS

I know that we each learn through diverse methods, and my goal is to make our course as accessible as possible. This means we will work with methods and documents that prioritize how we process information, following the guidelines of the Universal Design for Learning. I know that our daily life directly affects how we engage in our education. This past year has shown us how true this is. **Please do email or meet with me, as you feel comfortable, to discuss possible adjustments or alternative arrangements, as needed for homework, exams, or class.**

Students may also request formal academic accommodations, housing and dining accommodations, modifications to College policies, procedures, and rules; environmental adjustments, and auxiliary aids and services through Holy Cross. Additional policies and procedures regarding accommodations can be found on the [Office of Accessibility Services webpages](#).

RESOURCES, POLICIES, & OTHER INFORMATION

Academic Integrity

Developing your ideas is the basis of our class. Make sure that your work authentically represents your ideas and credits others for theirs. Submitting others' ideas as your own without crediting them is plagiarism, even if it is unintentional. All work in our class should be formatted and cited according to MLA's 8th edition guidelines. The Purdue Online Writing Lab has a [guided overview of MLA](#) formatting & citation requirements here. You can view the Holy Cross English Department's [statement on "Academic Honesty" here](#).



TECHNOLOGY

Our classes will be held via Zoom. You can participate in class using your microphone, video, or the chat function. You are not required to use your camera (though I will ask you to create a short "intro" video out of class during our first week). Class announcements and major communications from me will be sent via your Holy Cross email and, when appropriate, posted on Canvas.

Homework will be listed & submitted on Canvas. To prepare for class or to review a class you miss, check the Weekly Modules available on our Canvas class shell. Each week will have an overview of the activities for each class and will list any homework due or upcoming.

Student Attendance & Excused Absence Policy

Our class will largely run synchronously via Zoom and other platforms, and your presence in class is crucial to learning and engaging with your classmates' ideas. Your classmates and I will depend on you to be in class. If you are unable to attend a session for any reason, please send me an email to let me know and reach out to your classmates to get a sense of what you missed. [See Holy Cross's policies here](#).

Resources for Students

Holy Cross offers a variety of resources to help you learn and

Students can access academic support, guides, and various learning workshops through [Academic Services & Learning Resources](#).

Any student can meet with writing consultants at the Writer's Workshop for support at any stage of the writing process—whether brainstorming, building ideas, revising, or otherwise. You can [make an appointment with a Writer's Workshop consultant here](#).

Self-care is critical, especially during this global pandemic. Please familiarize yourself with the [support offered by the Counseling Center](#) and know that they are there to support you.

ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW

1. Participation – 20 %

Our course will take place entirely online, so we will be trying new ways to stay engaged and discuss reading and writing together. I will ask you to participate in class and small group discussions via video and chat, annotate texts together, and actively read and question course texts. We will read a lot in this class, so I encourage you to take active notes while reading, preview texts before beginning them, and come to class with ideas and questions. We will practice these skills together, too.

2. Reading Quizzes – 10 %

We will have regular brief quizzes that will offer examples of productive questions to ask while you are reading, meant to help you reflect on the texts and challenge your ideas.

3. Leading One Class Discussion – 15 %

You will each be in charge of generating discussing topics and questions for one class session. This will involve analyzing a specific portion of the text from our class & guiding discussion through questions about the text & bringing in a current event, historical references, critical resource, or popular artifact that contextualizes our class discussion. You will share these questions/topics with the class and separating submit a short paper to me outlining what you hope you & your classmates might take away from this class session and how you have brought ideas and information together. We will schedule these in the first two weeks of class so that they are set for you in the future. Please do feel free to meet with me to discuss any questions you might have as you prepare these.

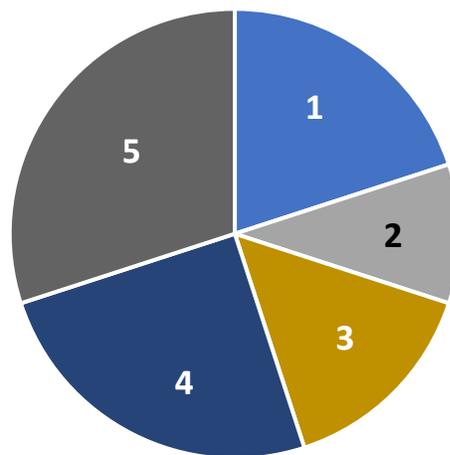
4. Keywords for Multi-Ethnic Literature Entry – 25 %

You will each choose one critical term or methodology, research it, and write an entry for a class encyclopedia, offering information on the history and use of the term, significant or current writers in the field, and where your classmates might go to find more information about. We will build up to the encyclopedia entry with research practice, reviews, and drafts that help you synthesizing information & carefully sculpt an overview of these terms that is both accessible to others and informative.

5. Creative Engagement Assignments – 30 % (2 x 15%)

Twice over the semester you will complete a project that asks you to critically & imaginatively engage with a piece of multi-ethnic literature in a way that differs from the conventional college essay. These will revolve around your Short Story Circles, which we'll hold twice during the semester. In both instances, you will choose one of five potential ways of engaging with that text: creating an educational unit or lesson plan; reviewing the text via book vlog, podcast, or written review; curating a library display or web exhibit; remixing or adapting the text's story; or mapping the text in relation to other works of literature.

GRADE BREAKDOWN



A	96
A-	92
B+	89
B	86
B-	82
C+	79
C	76
C-	72
D+	69

SCHEDULE

Below is a tentative weekly outline of what we will be focusing on in each class. I will notify you in advance of any minor changes. The most accurate daily assignments/reading will be on Canvas.

Week 1

Mon., Feb. 1: Overview of the semester.

Wed., Feb. 3: Defining Multi-Ethnic Literature & Ethnic Studies.

Fri., Feb. 5: Toshio Mori's "Tomorrow Is Coming, Children."

Week 2

Mon., Feb. 8: Toshio Mori's "Tomorrow Is Coming, Children."

Wed., Feb. 10: The creation of Ethnic Studies programs.

Fri., Feb. 12: Short story circles.

Week 3

Mon., Feb. 15: Short story circles.

Wed., Feb. 17: Beginning Octavia E. Butler's *Kindred*.

Fri., Feb. 19: *Kindred*.

Week 4

Mon., Feb. 22: *Kindred*.

Wed., Feb. 24: *Kindred*; Combahee River Collective Statement.

Fri., Feb. 26: *Kindred*.

Week 5

Mon., Mar. 1: *Kindred*.

Wed., Mar. 3: Graphic medicine; narratives of disability & chronic illness.

Fri., Mar. 5: Graphic medicine; narratives of disability & chronic illness.

Week 6

Mon., Mar. 8: Beginning Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

Wed., Mar. 10: *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

Fri., Mar. 12: *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

Week 7

Mon., Mar. 15: *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

Wed., Mar. 17: *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

Fri., Mar. 19: *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

Week 8

Mon., Mar. 22: Toni Morrison's "Recitatif."

Wed., Mar. 24: Canon wars.

Fri., Mar. 26: Short story circles.

Week 9

Mon., Mar. 29: Short story circles.

Wed., Mar. 31: Beginning Julie Otsuka's *When the Emperor Was Divine*.

Fri., Apr. 2: No class. Enjoy!

Week 10

Mon., Apr. 5: No class. Enjoy!

Wed., Apr. 7: *When the Emperor Was Divine*.

Fri., Apr. 9: *When the Emperor Was Divine*.

Week 11

Mon., Apr. 12: *When the Emperor Was Divine*.

Wed., Apr. 14: *When the Emperor Was Divine*.

Fri., Apr. 16: Publishing multi-ethnic & young adult literature

Week 12

Mon., Apr. 19: Writing workshop.

Wed., Apr. 21: Beginning Louise Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God*.

Fri., Apr. 23: *Future Home of the Living God*.

Week 13

Mon., Apr. 26: *Future Home of the Living God*.

Wed., Apr. 28: *Future Home of the Living God*.

Fri., Apr. 30: *Future Home of the Living God*.

Week 14

Mon., May. 3: Poetry.

Wed., May. 5: Writing workshop.

Fri., May. 7: Review of the semester.



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