

American Immigrant Narratives

ENGL 356-01 | Spring 2022

Class Details

MWF 9:00-9:50am

Class will meet via Zoom at first and in Stein 118C, once it is safe.

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

Mon. & Wed. 1:30-2:30pm in Fenwick 220; Thurs., 10-11 AM via Zoom, and other times by appointment.

Office hours are designated weekly times for you to come chat about class, your work, or any questions you might have. 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

American Immigrant Narratives traces the development of the genre across the 20th and 21st centuries. While outlining and theorizing the tropes, settings, and expectations of this genre, we will keep an eye towards how particular authors make use of the genre to respond to or explore U.S. racial and social discourses concerning immigration, migration, and refugee asylum. Through our course texts, we will question ideas about the “good immigrant,” national belonging, and language as they are shaped across literature. We will review work across multiple forms, including short fiction, novels, poetry, memoir, and graphic narrative.

LEARNING GOALS

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

- Strengthen your critical comprehension & close reading skills
- Practice historicizing and contextualizing literature
- Examine how legislation tells a story about belonging in the U.S.
- Think critically about the relationship between immigration & settler colonization
- Play with creative analyses of literature
- Identify the structures and tropes of different American immigrant narratives, and
- Enjoy reading & engaging with literature.

MEETING YOUR 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. We are still in the middle of a pandemic, so let's extend care to one another when we can.

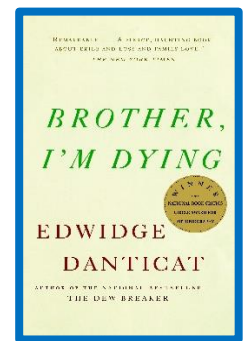
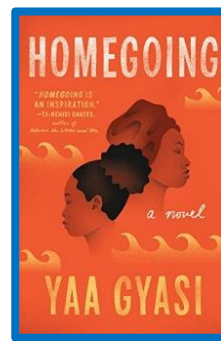
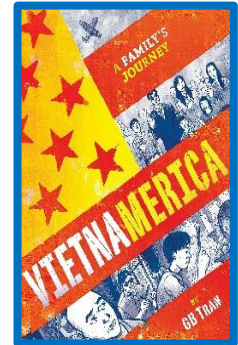
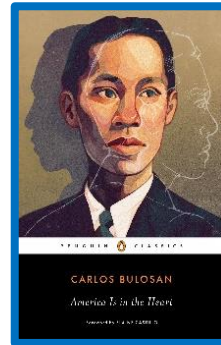
REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Carlos Bulosan, *American Is in the Heart*
2. GB Tran, *Vietnamerica: A Family's Journey*
3. Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing*
4. Edwidge Danticat, *Brother, I'm Dying*

I will provide additional texts for you online via Canvas.

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.

Regardless of how you approach class content, your thoughts and ideas as developing 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 said, dehumanizing others stops us all from 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.

TECHNOLOGY

In our class, we will use a variety of technology. Many of our course texts will be available online via Canvas. I ask that you bring access to whatever texts we're discussing each day with you to class. That means bringing either a printed hard copy of the text or a laptop or digital device. If you need hard copies but cannot access them, please let me know in advance and I can provide some for you.



Email

Major announcements from me will be sent via your Holy Cross email. I recommend checking your email in the morning before class, just in case there are any changes or cancellations.

Hypothesis

We will use the browser extension Hypothesis to analyze & annotate texts together. It works best with Google Chrome, but there are options for other browsers. Make sure you make an account here: <https://web.hypothes.is/start/>.

Zoom

Our classes will be held via Zoom in the beginning of the semester. You can use the microphone or chat to participate, but you will never be required to have your camera on.

Canvas

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

If homework is scheduled to be submitted on a day when we have class, please submit it on Canvas by class time. If homework is scheduled to be submitted on a day when we do not have class, please submit it on Canvas by the "end of the day," which Canvas considers 11:59 PM.

Submitting work

If you need to hand in something after its planned due date, that is okay. *I do not give penalties or deduct "points" for late work.* Each assignment is designed for you to practice or learn new ideas, not to measure how busy you are or how to "manage time." If you're planning to submit your work one day or so beyond the due date, please consider your extension already granted. *If you need an extended due date beyond two days after the due date, please email me.* I'll have us meet to set up a plan of action and coordinate a new date for you to submit the assignment. I want to make sure that we both have a copy of these plans of action so that you have a clear sense of what you need to accomplish and so I know best how I can help you and when to expect the work.

POLICIES & RESOURCES

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 9th edition guidelines. Please review Holy Cross's Academic Integrity Policy [here](#). You can also view the Holy Cross English Department's statement on "Academic Honesty" [here](#).

Attendance & Absences

Our class will largely run synchronously via Zoom and in person when it's safe. 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 [here](#). 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.

There are also multiple spaces here at Holy Cross where you can find support for all of life that intersects with our learning. These include the many clubs and organizations at Holy Cross, specific support for first-generation students [here](#), the LGBTQIA+ communities [here](#), and international students [here](#), among others. At any point, you can find support from [the Counseling Center](#), which also offers guidance on how to practice self-care and learn new ways to manage life. The [Office of Student Wellness Education](#) and [Chaplains' Office](#) can also offer resources for your health. And if there's ever anything I can do to help, I'm more than happy to listen.

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 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](#).

ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW

1. Course Engagement – 20 %

Our course prioritizes discussion, built around mini lectures, writing, group work, and other interactive analyses. I will ask you to participate in class and small group discussions, 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. Leading Class Discussion – 20 %

You will each be in charge of generating discussing topics and questions for one class session. This will involve analyzing a specific portion of a text for that day’s materials & guiding discussion through questions about the text & by bringing in a resource about a current event, historical references, critical response, or popular artifact that contextualizes our class discussion. You will share the questions and supplemental resource with the class and separately 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.

3. Researching U.S. Immigration – 20 %

For this assignment, you will gather research on immigration in the U.S., with the goal of developing a solid historical and political context from which to analyze a piece of fiction for your Narrative Analysis Essay.

4. Narrative Analysis Essay – 20 %

You will each write an essay examining the narrative structure of one immigrant story that we have not discussed in class. We will build up to the essay with practice reading literature & critical scholarship, an essay proposal, and draft workshops that help you synthesize information & put forth your own ideas.

5. Creative Project – 20 %

This project asks you to critically & imaginatively engage with a story about immigration in the U.S. in a way that differs from the conventional college essay.

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: What is the American Immigrant Narrative?

Wed., Jan. 26: Overview of the semester.

Fri., Jan. 28: Tropes and themes of the traditional immigrant narrative.

Week 2: Early Immigrant Narratives I — “Discovery” Narratives to 19th-Century Tales

Mon., Jan. 31: “Discovery” Narratives & Settlers Stories

Wed., Feb. 2: José Martí, “Nuestra America [Our America.]”

Fri., Feb. 4: Sui Sin Far, from *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*.

Week 3: Early Immigrant Narratives II — Early 20th-Century Stories

Mon., Feb. 7: Mary Antin, from *The Promised Land*.

Wed., Feb. 9: Short stories by Anzia Yezierska.

Fri., Feb. 11: Angel Island poetry.

Week 4: Bulosan I

Mon., Feb. 14: Carlos Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*.

Wed., Feb. 16: *America Is in the Heart*.

Fri., Feb. 18: *America Is in the Heart*.

Week 5: Bulosan II

Mon., Feb. 21: *America Is in the Heart*.

Wed., Feb. 23: *America Is in the Heart*.

Fri., Feb. 25: *America In in the Heart*.

Week 6: “The Border Crossed Us”

Mon., Feb. 28: Excerpt from Gloria E. Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera*

Wed., Mar. 2: Corky González’s “Yo soy Joaquin”

Fri., Mar. 4: In-class work on Researching U.S. Immigration Project.

Week 7

Mon., Mar. 7 - Fri., Mar. 11: Spring Break!

Week 8: Tran I — The 1.5 Generation

Mon., Mar. 14: GB Tran’s *Vietnamerica: A Family’s Journey*.

Wed., Mar. 16: *Vietnamerica: A Family’s Journey*.

Fri., Mar. 18: *Vietnamerica: A Family’s Journey*.

Week 9: Tran I — Refugee Narratives

Mon., Mar. 21: *Vietnamerica: A Family’s Journey*.

Wed., Mar. 23: *Vietnamerica: A Family’s Journey*.

Fri., Mar. 25: *Vietnamerica: A Family’s Journey*.

Week 10: Danticat I — “The Literature of New Arrival”

Mon., Mar. 28: Edwidge Danticat, *Brother, I’m Dying*.

Wed., Mar. 30: *Brother, I’m Dying*.

Fri., Apr. 1: *Brother, I’m Dying*.

Week 11: Danticat II

Mon., Apr. 4: *Brother, I’m Dying*.

Wed., Apr. 6: *Brother, I’m Dying*.

Fri., Apr. 8: *Brother, I’m Dying*.

Week 12: Second-Generation Narratives

Mon., Apr. 11: Second-generation narratives.

Wed., Apr. 13: Second-generation narratives.

Fri., Apr. 15: No class!

Week 13: Gyasi I — Legacies of Forced Migration & Enslavement

Mon., Apr. 18: No class!

Wed., Apr. 20: Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing*.

Fri., Apr. 22: *Homegoing*.

Week 14: Gyasi II

Mon., Apr. 25: *Homegoing*.

Wed., Apr. 27: Academic conference – no class!

Fri., Apr. 29: *Homegoing*.

Week 15: Changing the Narrative

Mon., May 2: Rhetorics of decolonization & anti-immigration in Hawai’i.

Wed., May 4: The immigrant narrative as musical.

Fri., May 6: Working on final projects in class.

Week 16

Mon., May 9: Semester wrap-up.



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