

Course Syllabus: EngL 3350, Women Writers/Voices from the Gaps
Summer Session I, 2003
9:05am-11:35am MWTh
Room 13, Rapson Hall

Instructor Information:

Name: Kelly Hulander

Office: Room 26, Lind Hall (in the basement)

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 11:40 a.m. – 12:40 p.m.

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Course Description:

This course will provide students with opportunities to explore the life histories and writings of selected American women writers of color, and to think and talk critically—and with open minds—about interactions and relationships between, and (mis)perceptions of, dominant and marginalized cultures in the U.S.

Many of our readings for this course were written during the 1990s, a relative boom time for the publication and popularity of works by American women writers of color. As more “primary” works of fiction, poetry, and drama by American minority women writers were appearing both on the market and on academic syllabi, more “secondary” or critical/theoretical works by women writers of color were also being written, published and anthologized. This summer, we will read works that might be placed in either, traditional category, along with works that may challenge us to rethink and redefine such generic categories, especially when considering works by women writers of color. We will also have opportunities to explore the larger, discursive contexts in which these works were written and performed by looking at how branches of the mainstream, U.S. media represented certain cultures and moments of crisis during the 1990s.

Students in this course will participate in three, main projects:

1. Individually, students will write a book review on a recent work by an American woman writer of color for the *Voices from the Gaps* on-line literary journal, *ReSound*.
2. Working in small groups, students will research, write, revise and submit an author entry for *Voices from the Gaps*, a literary web site of information about American women writers of color. These author entries will include visual materials, biographical and bibliographical information, critical analysis, and on-line links to related web sites about selected authors. During the last week of the course, each small group will also give a brief, class presentation about their author.
3. As a large group, we will read, view and discuss a variety of materials created by American women writers of color. How do these authors and artists represent, perform and analyze interconnections between our country’s dominant and marginalized cultures? How do we, as readers and critics working in the setting of an American university, interact with and respond to their work?

Roles and Expectations:

The student's role:

1. To help create a respectful classroom environment.
2. To participate effectively in small group and workshop activities.
3. To read and consider assigned materials and come to class prepared to engage in lively discussion.
4. To submit written assignments when due.
5. To contact the instructor should any questions or concerns arise about the process of the course and/or your ability to meet the course requirements.

The instructor's role:

1. To help create a respectful classroom environment.
2. To provide timely feedback on assignments requiring revision and to grade and return final drafts promptly.
3. To come to class prepared to help facilitate and stimulate lively discussion.
4. To try to answer student questions and address student concerns about course content and process.
5. To provide opportunities for students to successfully meet course requirements.

Required Texts (all students will read the following):

Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*.

Anna Deveare Smith, *Fires in the Mirror*.

Course Packet. (At Paradigm Copy Center in the Dinkydome.)

Texts for Author Entries (each small group will choose one author's texts):

Michelle Cliff:

Abeng

No Telephone to Heaven

Judith Ortiz Cofer:

The Latin Deli: Prose and Poetry

Woman in Front of the Sun: On Becoming a Writer

Delphine Red Shirt:

Bead on an Anthill: A Lakota Childhood

Turtle Lung Woman's Granddaughter

Anna Deveare Smith:

Talk to Me: Travels in Media and Politics

Twilight, Los Angeles, 1992

Grading Breakdown:

Completed author entry: 50%

Book review for ReSound: 20%

Individual, in-class participation, short response papers, and attendance: 15%

Group activities, peer reviews, group progress report: 15%

Note on Attendance and Participation: Since this course requires you to work effectively on a group research project and to participate actively in class discussions, your attendance to course meetings and cooperation with your small group are extremely important. CLA policy requires instructors to fail students who miss the equivalent of two weeks of class—which would be six class meetings, for this course. However, since a large percentage of your grade hinges on the instructor's evaluation of your class participation and on peer evaluations of your group work, your grade will probably suffer if you miss even a few class meetings. We'll be covering a lot of **great material**—try to be here!

Class Schedule (may be subject to change):***Week One Getting Started, Exploring Frameworks*****Monday, June 16th:**

--Introductions

--Visit "Voices From the Gaps" website: <http://voices.cla.umn.edu>

--Discuss criteria for a successful author entry.

--Choose author for research project/author entry and organize small groups.

--Purchase books.

Assignments: Read first two essays in Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark*.
Look at "Voices" author entry on Morrison.

Wednesday, June 18th:

--**Research Workshop at Wilson Library:** meet at 9:05 a.m. inside the Main Entrance to Wilson—by the Information Desk.

--Group and individual time to gather resources, look for web-links.

Assignments: Read final Morrison essay.
Write two-page response to Morrison.

Thursday, June 19th:

--Discuss Morrison essays.

--Read and discuss brief excerpts from Tompkins and Ledger. (handouts)

--Brainstorm criteria for successful Resound Review; sign up for ReSound Review.

Assignments: Read text for ReSound review.
Read one short story cited in Morrison.

Week Two Finding, and Using, the Words

Monday, June 23rd:

- Discuss Morrison's readings of selected short stories.
- Read and discuss bell hooks' "Talking Back" and Walker piece on genre. (handouts)

Assignments: Read Cofer and Anzaldua. (course pack)
Write two-page response to readings.

Wednesday, June 25th:

- Discuss Cofer and Anzaldua.
- Meet with small groups to strategize for author entry projects

Assignments: Write first draft of ReSound book review; make four copies for Thursday's class meeting.

Thursday, June 26th:

- Guest speaker.
- Peer editing of ReSound book review drafts.

Due: First draft of ReSound book review.

Assignments: Read all introductory materials and pages 1 – 63 of Anna Deavere Smith, *Fires in the Mirror*.
Write two-page response to Smith.

Week Three Voicing Conflict/Conflicting Stories

Monday, June 30th:

- Discussion of first half of Smith.
- Meet with small groups to discuss author entry projects.

Assignments: Finish reading Smith.

Wednesday, July 2nd:

- Discuss second half of Smith.
- Read and discuss newspaper/magazine clippings on Crown Heights incidents. (handouts)

Assignments: Revise ReSound Review.

Thursday, July 3rd:

- Watch and discuss video: Smith's *Twilight: Los Angeles*.

Due: Final draft of ReSound Review.

Assignments: Read Kadi and hooks ("Eating the Other") essays.
Write two-page response to readings.

Week Four Examining Interactions, Seeking Connections

Monday, July 7:

- Discuss Kadi and hooks ("Eating the Other") essays.
- Meet with small groups to discuss Progress Reports on author pages.

Wednesday, July 9:

- Small-group work-day: meet at Main Entrance to Wilson Library at 9:05 a.m.

Assignments: Read Burnham essay.
Write one-page response to reading.

Thursday, July 10:

- Present Progress Reports on author pages.**
- Discuss Burnham essay.

Assignments: Write first draft of author pages.
Read Son's play and Moraga essay.

Week Five Getting the Word Out: Love Speak/Writes Its Name; Poets Perform

Monday, July 14:

- Discuss Son's play and Moraga essay.
- Small-group discussion of Audre Lorde's "Uses of the Erotic: the Erotic as Power" (handout)

Due: First Draft of Author Entry.

Assignments: Read Harjo's poems.
Write two-page response to Harjo.

Wednesday, July 16:

- Discuss Harjo's poems.
- Watch *Slam*.

Assignments: Write one-page response to *Slam*.

Thursday, July 17th:

- Discuss responses to *Slam*.
- Small-group work session: discuss revisions to author entries, prepare presentations.

Assignments: Read Jaimes/Halsey and Day essays.
Write one-page response to readings.
Revise/polish your section of the author entry.

Week Six Voices from Home: Local Issues, Local Authors

Monday, July 21st:

--Discuss Jaimes/Halsey and Day essays.

--Guest Speaker

Assignments: Prepare for group presentations, put finishing touches on author entries.

Wednesday, July 23rd:

--Group Presentations.

Thursday, July 24th:

--Final thoughts

--Peer and instructor evaluations

--Good-byes

Due: Final draft of author entries.