

## HUM 3252-0001: CONTEMPORARY HUMANITIES

T&TH: 10:30–11:45AM

Location: ENG1 0435

Spring 2017

Instructor: Dr. Christian Ravela

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-2:30PM

### COURSE DESCRIPTION: IMAGINING IMMIGRATION, IMMIGRATING IMAGINATIONS

For this contemporary humanities course, we will explore both how cultural production imagines the experience of immigration and how immigration shapes and transforms imaginations of place, identity, and belonging in the US during the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some of the questions that we will be exploring in the class will be the following:

- How do different forms of immigration (i.e. upper-elite class immigration, working class immigration, asylum seekers, refugees, etc) get imagined? How do these different forms engage with, challenge, and/or buttress the foundational national myth of America as a nation of immigrants?
- How do questions of identity and difference around race, nation, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc shape immigration?
- How do different experiences of immigration complicate notions of identity and difference and their relation to space/place, time, and belonging?
- How are imaginations of immigration tied to more than just the nation but to also histories of labor and global capitalism, histories of colonialism and its postcolonial aftermath, and histories of dictatorship and war?

To explore these questions and others, we will, in the beginning, read some scholarship on the social history of immigration law and culture in the US and scholarship on cultural theory of immigration. Afterwards, the majority of the course will be devoted to reading, watching, discussing, and writing on a variety of cultural objects from immigrant writers and directors of color in a US context.

### STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Interpret and analyze the meanings of an artwork, performance, or text in diverse aesthetic, historical and cultural contexts.
- Identify and deepen appreciation of common themes and formal features in cultural representations of immigration
- To demonstrate knowledge of the chronology and significance of major events in the history of US immigration
- Learn to position yourself vis-à-vis this study of culture and values.
- Learn to think critically (and philosophically) about this information.
- Evaluate the differences and similarities between different representations of immigration and their aesthetic, historical, sociological, and political reason

## REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS:

- Course Readings (online)
  - Mae M. Ngai – selection from *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*
  - Lisa Lowe – “Immigration, Citizenship, Racialization: Asian American Critique”
- Junot Diaz – *A Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*
- Lê Thi Diem Thúy – *The Gangster We Are All Looking For*
- Jamaica Kincaid – *A Small Place*
- Jamaica Kincaid – *Lucy*
- Karen Tei Yamashita – *Tropic of Orange*
- R. Zamora Linmark – *Rolling the R's*
- Alex Rivera – *Sleep Dealer* (film)
- Deann Borshay Liem – *First Person Plural* (film)
- Stephanie Black – *H-2 Worker* (film)

\* I ordered Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* and Chang Rae-Lee's *Native Speaker* in the bookstore. Please do not purchase them or return them if you bought them already. We will not be reading them for the class. Of course, they are a great books and I welcome you to read them on your own.

## REQUIRED WORK & GRADING

### University Required Work – (0%)

- **Syllabus Quiz:** In order to make sure that financial aid is distributed in a timely manner, UCF requires documentation of student engagement in the first week of class. This syllabus quiz serves as that documentation. This quiz will not be graded instead you will just need to complete the quiz on time to receive credit.

### Participation – (15%)

Participation consists of several factors:

- **Engagement:** At the most basic level, you should be present in class in order to participate. Not being present means that you cannot engage with the texts, lectures, discussions, group activities, free-writes, and workshops. But showing up every day is certainly not enough; you must be contributing to the overall productive dynamic of the classroom. What this means then is:
  - When we have group work days, I will be observing and walking around to see how your general involvement with that activity is while you are working, and what contributions you make in the ensuing discussion or group presentation.
  - When we have class discussions, you actively engage in the ensuing discussion. This means that you bring up topics to discuss, attentively listen to others, and thoughtfully respond to other people's comments.
- **In-class Free-Write:** When we have free-writes, you use the allotted time to thoroughly engage with the writing prompt whether it asks you to jot initial impressions of a text or develop a discussion question for the class. Afterwards, I expect you to share your insights to begin a class discussion.

You will need to keep these free-writes with you at all times. Throughout the semester, I will randomly collect these free-write for assessment. Also, on the day of the final, I will collect all of these free-writes for a final assessment.

### **Student Group Course Leadership – (10%)**

Students will sign up for a group to lead seminar. These will close out discussion of each major cultural text, serving as a student led opportunity to discuss themes and ideas that may not have been fully fleshed out. By leading seminar, I **DO NOT** mean a formal presentation but rather a guided conversation that raises insights and questions about the cultural text that allows the rest of the class to participate. In other words, I neither expect nor want your group to lecture the class but rather direct and contribute in a conversation.

With that said, I do have some expectations about these student led seminars:

- As part of your mandate to guide the discussion, I expect the group to have a number of passages, scenes, or general formal features of the cultural text marked for discussion. Your group will need to contextualize these elements to the class in terms of what your group found interesting about them and the questions that they raise for you about the cultural text.
- Before entire class discussions, I expect that the group create break out activities that allows the class to process questions and ideas. Thinking deeply and thoroughly about complex ideas in a cultural text is hard by itself but it becomes even more difficult with the social pressures of a classroom discussion. Processing time is necessary to gather one's thoughts and open one's self to others thoughtfully.
- I expect some sort of note-taking activity. This can be done by the group itself or incorporated as a classroom activity itself. This is necessary so that the insights from discussion do not disappear once everyone leaves the classroom.

***Written portion:*** On the day of the seminar, the group will provide a hand out to the class. This handout should contain your group's discussion questions about the cultural text as whole and specific passages, scene, and/or formal structural features. At minimum, I expect two questions from each member of the group. Remember two questions is a minimum and thus grades will also reflect such minimal effort.

### **Summary of Immigrant Acts – (10%)**

For this first writing assignment, you are asked to write a summary of Lisa Lowe's "Immigration, Citizenship, Racialization: Asian American Critique". In particular, I would like you focus on the following questions: According to Lisa Lowe, what is the relation immigration, citizenship, and racialization? And what is the relationship between those processes and immigrant literature? At minimum, this brief essay must be at least 600 words and use only the texts from the class.

### **Short Analysis Essay – (20%)**

For this short analysis essays, you will need to analyze a cultural object of your choice. Your analysis essay will address one of the following questions:

- What does the text's narrative tell us about immigration?
- What does the text's representation of the way power operates tell us about immigration?
- What does the text's use of language(s) tell us about immigration?

This essay must be, at minimum, 750 words. You will have an opportunity to complete this analysis essays after we complete reading and discussing a text. A prompt will be provided, which will detail more thoroughly my expectations and guidelines.

### **Final Long Analytical and Comparative Essay – (30%)**

For the final essay, you will need to analyze and compare two different cultural objects. Your comparative analysis will need to focus on one of the following questions:

- What does the narrative of each text tell us about immigration? How do they compare to one another?
- What does the representation of the way power operates in each text tell us about immigration? How do they compare to one another?
- What does the use of language(s) in each text tell us about immigration? How do they compare to one another?

Of course, I expect you to draw substantially from your prior short analysis essay. However, it must be revised in light of the uniqueness of the prompt. At minimum, the essay must be 1900 words. A prompt will be provided, which will detail more thoroughly my expectations and guidelines.

Also, in preparation for the final long analytical and comparative essay, you will need to submit an initial draft for peer review. The peer review will be guided and will require you to write a letter to your peer about their draft. This letter will be both submitted to me on webcourses and emailed directly to your peer. You must complete this task for me to accept the final draft of the long analytical and comparative essay.

### **In-Class Cumulative Final Exam – (15%)**

This final will be held in-class during our finals schedule and cover course material from the entire semester. The final will most likely be composed of multiple choice questions, identifications, short answer responses, and longer in-class essays. You will be given a study guide for preparation.

### **GRADING SCALE**

A	100-90%	C	76-70%
B+	89-87%	D+	69-67%
B	86-80%	D	66-60%
C+	79-77%	F	59-0%

\* This grading scale does not apply if I round up your grade. In this circumstance, you will receive a minus grade rather than a non-minus grade. For example, if you receive a final score of 79.6%, then, after I round up the score to 80%, you will be assigned a B- rather than a B.

### **ASSIGNMENT POLICIES**

#### **Paper Format:**

All submitted papers must be written in a .docx or .pdf format. The body of the papers must be double-spaced and in Times New Roman, Size 12 font. Place your name, my name, the date, and the assignment type (e.g. short analysis essay) in the upper right-hand corner of the first page (single spaced, please).

#### **Late Work Policy:**

All late assignments will be docked a full letter grade for every day it is late. Furthermore, after the fifth day (including weekends) that an assignment is late, I will no longer accept it. Also, all late assignments will not be given any feedback. However, you may come to my office hours for feedback.

#### **Revision Policy:**

For this class, you are given the option to revise your short papers (e.g. Short Analysis Paper). These

revised papers may be submitted to me at any time until the final day of instruction (04/20). If you do not submit a revised short paper(s) at that point, you forfeit your right to do so. With that said, if you submit a revised paper, you are not guaranteed a higher grade. In fact, if all you do is make superficial grammatical or diction editing, you run the risk of receiving a lower grade.

In order to submit a revised paper, you will also need to perform two other tasks on top of revisions. First, your revised draft must highlight all parts of the paper that have been changed from the previous one. Thus, you will also need to include the unrevised paper as well. Second, and most important, you will also need to draft a letter addressed to me that both identifies the revisions that you have made and explains how these revisions address the issues that I raise in my comments to your original paper. Without accomplishing these other tasks, I will not accept any revised submissions.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct (<http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu>) for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule (<http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu>) for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Many incidents of plagiarism result from students' lack of understanding about what constitutes plagiarism. However, you are expected to familiarize yourself with UCF's policy on plagiarism. All work you submit must be your own scholarly and creative efforts. UCF's Golden Rule defines plagiarism as follows: "whereby another's work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own."

### **Turnitin:**

In this course we will utilize [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com), an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you will be expected to submit all assignments in electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as an instructor I receive a report from [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process, visit [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com).

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Communication:**

In this class, our official mode of communication is through email. Please include the course and section number in the subject line of all email communications. All communication between student and instructor and between student and student should be respectful and professional. At minimum, this means that you need some sort of salutation with my name (e.g. Dear Dr. Ravela) and a valediction with your name (e.g. Sincerely, Dr. Ravela). As of 2009, Knightsmail is the only official student email at UCF. Class rosters list Knightsmail addresses rather than external email addresses, and all official class communications will be sent only to the Knightsmail addresses. Students are responsible for checking their Knightsmail accounts regularly

### **Email:**

I check my email only once a day and I do not check my email on the weekend. Thus, depending on when

you email me, I may take up to two to four days to respond. If you have a question that needs to be addressed immediately, I recommend that you speak to me during office hours or right before or after class.

### **Being Prepared for Class:**

You need to have the assigned readings done before class so that you are prepared to participate in discussions and activities. Also, you need to bring your textbook and other assigned readings to class with you every day.

### **Punctuality and Attendance:**

Even though I do not take attendance, I do believe it is essential to your success in the course, especially in processing the information from each chapter. It may not directly impact your participation grade but it does so indirectly as a necessary prerequisite to both class engagement and completing the in-class Free-Write journal. Along the same lines, punctuality will be equally important to your success. I understand that arriving on time can be difficult with such a large campus and short break in-between each session. Therefore, I provide a 10 minute grace period after the class has begun. However, if you arrive after this grace period, I will politely ask you to leave the class for that day.

### **Cell Phones and the Use of Other Technologies:**

You MUST turn off your cell phone BEFORE you enter the classroom. Failing to turn off your cell phone is a sign of disrespect to your fellow students and myself. Other signs of disrespect include: text-messaging, wearing headphones, or using any type of electronic devices, including laptops, during class time. This policy is enforced at all times unless I instruct otherwise. If you continually text or sleep or talk inappropriately, etc. it will negatively impact your participation in the class.

### **Classroom Culture:**

I want all of you to feel welcomed *and* challenged in this class – by me and by each other. This necessitates that you enter the classroom with an understanding that all of us bring something different to discussion (backgrounds, viewpoints, experiences and identities) and that those “somethings” can potentially rub other people the wrong way. While I encourage academic debate, it can only occur productively in an environment that not only puts respect for all viewpoints first and foremost rather than relying on rudeness or antagonism. We are here to learn from each other. As I have iterated elsewhere in this syllabus, open communication will be an important part of this class and if at any time you feel uncomfortable, I encourage you to speak to me about it so that the issue can be addressed appropriately.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS, RESOURCES, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Accommodations,** Ferrell Commons 185, 407-823-2371

It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation letter) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our discussion, I may suggest the possibility/necessity of your contacting SAS (Ferrell Commons 185; 407-823-2371; sas@ucf.edu) to talk about academic accommodations. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.

### **University Writing Center,** Colbourn Hall 105, 407-823-2197

The University Writing Center (UWC) offers writing support to students from first-year to graduate in every discipline. Tutors provide help at every stage of the writing process, including understanding assignments, researching, drafting, revising, incorporating sources, and learning to proofread and edit. The

UWC's purpose is not merely to fix or edit papers, but to teach writing strategies that can be applied to any writing situation. Consultations are available for individuals and small groups. You may schedule a 45-minute appointment by clicking the *Success Resources* tab on Webcourses, calling the UWC at 407-823-2197, or through <http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/>.

The UWC seeks graduate and undergraduate tutors from all majors. To learn more about becoming a writing tutor, please contact us.

**Student Academic Resource Center**, Howard Phillips Hall 113, 407-823-5130

Our mission is to strengthen comprehensive learning, enhance retention, and promote student success by providing academic support services to University of Central Florida (UCF) students.

We offer free programs and services to UCF students such as peer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction (SI), workshops and seminars, learning skills consultations, and first-year transition programs. Many of our services are offered across campus, and peer tutoring is conveniently located at three facilities, including Howard Phillips Hall, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, and the Veterans Academic Resource Center. Our services are delivered in a variety of formats, including peer-led group tutoring and study sessions, workshops, and individual consultations. Additionally, SARC Online is available on demand to offer a variety of tools, resources, and materials designed to help students be successful, whether they are taking online classes or simply seeking online academic support.

Additionally, SARC is proud to be part of the Knights Academic Resource Services (KARS) coalition. KARS provides a virtual one-stop shop to connect students with up-to-date information about resources and helpful academic services available at the University of Central Florida.

## CALENDAR

\* This calendar is subject to revisions, additions, and removal at my discretion, which is based on my assessment of the class throughout the semester.

Date	Reading & Work Due
Tuesday – 01/10	Introductions & Syllabus
<b>Unit 1: Social History and Cultural Theory of US Immigration</b>	
Thursday – 01/12	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mae M. Ngai – selection from <i>Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America</i></li> <li>• Lisa Lowe – “Immigration, Citizenship, Racialization: Asian American Critique”</li> </ul>
Tuesday – 01/17	Continue Discussion
Thursday – 01/19	Complete Discussion
<b>Unit 2: Imagining Immigration, Immigrating Imaginations</b>	
Tuesday – 01/24	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jamaica Kincaid – <i>Lucy</i></li> </ul>
Thursday – 01/26	Continue Discussion
Friday – 01/27	<b>Submit Summary of Immigrant Acts onto Webcourses by 11:59pm</b>
Tuesday – 01/31	Student Leadership #1: <i>Lucy</i>
Thursday – 02/02	Read & Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jamaica Kincaid – <i>A Small Place</i></li> </ul>
Friday – 02/03	<b>Optional Submission of <i>Lucy</i> Analysis Paper onto Webcourses by 11:59pm</b>

Tuesday – 02/07	Student Leadership #2: <i>A Small Place</i>
Thursday – 02/09	Watch and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stephanie Black – <i>H-2 Worker</i> (film)</li> </ul>
Friday – 02/10	<b>Optional Submission of <i>A Small Place</i> Analysis Paper onto Webcourses by 11:59pm</b>
Tuesday – 02/14	Complete Discussion
Thursday – 02/16	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>R. Zamora Linmark – <i>Rolling the R's</i></li> </ul>
Tuesday – 02/21	Continue Discussion
Thursday – 02/23	Student Leadership #3: <i>Rolling the R's</i>
Tuesday – 02/28	Watch and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deann Borshay Liem – <i>First Person Plural</i> (film)</li> </ul>
Thursday – 03/02	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Junot Diaz – <i>A Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i></li> </ul>
Friday – 03/03	<b>Optional Submission of <i>Rolling the R's</i> Analysis Paper onto Webcourses by 11:59pm</b>
Tuesday – 03/07	Continue Discussion
Thursday – 03/09	Continue Discussion
Tuesday – 03/14	<b>Spring Break – No Class</b>
Thursday – 03/16	<b>Spring Break – No Class</b>
Tuesday – 03/21	Student Leadership #4: <i>A Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i>
Thursday – 03/23	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lê Thi Diem Thúy – <i>The Gangster We Are All Looking For</i></li> </ul>
Tuesday – 03/28	Continue Discussion
Thursday – 03/30	Student Leadership #5: <i>The Gangster We Are All Looking For</i>
Friday – 03/31	<b>Optional Submission of <i>A Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i> Analysis Paper onto Webcourses by 11:59pm</b>
Tuesday – 04/04	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Karen Tei Yamashita – <i>Tropic of Orange</i></li> </ul>
Thursday – 04/06	Continue Discussion
Friday – 04/07	<b>Optional Submission of <i>The Gangster We Are All Looking For</i> Analysis Paper onto Webcourses by 11:59pm</b>
Tuesday – 04/11	Continue Discussion
Thursday – 04/13	Student Leadership #6: <i>Tropic of Orange</i>
Tuesday – 04/18	Watch and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alex Rivera – <i>Sleep Dealer</i> (film)</li> </ul>
Thursday – 04/20	Complete Watching and Discuss Reflect on Course
Friday – 04/21	<b>Optional Submission of <i>Tropic of Orange</i> Analysis Paper onto Webcourses by 11:59pm</b> <b>*At this point, if you have not submitted an analysis paper, you must complete this one.*</b>
Friday – 04/28	<b>Submit Rough Draft of Long Evaluative and Analytical Essay to Webcourses by 11:59pm</b>
Monday – 05/01	<b>Submit Peer Review of Draft of Long Evaluative and Analytical Essay to Webcourses by 11:59pm</b>
Tuesday – 05/02	<b>Final Exam from 10:00am-12:50pm</b>
Friday – 05/05	<b>Submit Final Draft of Long Evaluative and Analytical Essay to</b>

	<b>Webcourses by 11:59pm</b>
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