

American Authors since 1900: Southwestern Literature
English 333
Fall 2007
MWF 12:30-1:45
And. 24

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TEXTS:

Nash Candelaria, *Not by the Sword*
John Nichols, *The Milagro Beanfield War*
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
Luci Tapahonso, *Blue Horses Rush In*
Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*
Scott Slovic, ed., *Getting over the Color Green*
Pat Mora, *House of Houses* (NOTE, this book is out of print, and so not available in our bookstore. But many copies are available via Amazon.com and other online booksellers. Order your copy that way. We won't be reading this book until November, but don't wait until the last minute to order it.)

This course is designed to introduce students to some of the important literary works and writers, both male and female, from the various cultures (Native, Chicano, Anglo) of the Southwestern United States. The region we refer to as the "Southwest" is among the most culturally and naturally diverse regions of the United States, with a distinctive history and cultural mix, and possessing an important literary heritage. We will both utilize and question the concept of the "Southwest" and consider the ways the various works do, or perhaps do not, express a Southwestern mythology, aesthetics, politics, and sensibility. Using works of fiction, creative non-fiction, and poetry, we will explore how literature can contribute to a sense of the Southwest as an historical, cultural, and natural region. Students will develop the skills to discuss and analyze literary works from place-conscious, ecocritical, and multi-ethnic perspectives.

READING LOAD: This is a literature class. There is a lot of reading. Furthermore, some of the books were written by authors from cultural and ethnic backgrounds different from you own. Therefore, some of the readings may seem very distant and "foreign." I think this is a good thing--it broadens your horizons, which is the whole point of getting an education--but if you only like to read literature you can easily "relate to," this class may not be for you.

If you choose to stay, I expect you to keep up with the reading schedule and to be prepared to discuss the readings during class. I will feel free to call on you to ask your opinions about what we've read, and I'll expect an informed answer.

REQUIREMENTS: Students will be expected to participate in class discussions, maintain regular reading-response journals, take an objective (short IDs) mid-term and final exam, and do either a take-home final essay exam or a research paper. English majors in particular are encouraged (but not required) to choose the research paper option.

APPROXIMATE GRADING PERCENTAGES
(subject to change)

Attendance and participation: 20%
Reading response journals: 40%
Objective mid-term exam: 10%
Objective final exam: 10%
Final Exam/Research paper: 20%

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: The English Department policy statement on class attendance reads as follows: “Students who miss more than 20% of the scheduled class meetings of a course (for us that would be 6 classes) will ordinarily fail the course for that reason alone, except that (1) if the absences occur before the Withdrawal Passing period ends, the student may receive a “W” grade, and (2) if the absences are excused by the instructor or approved UNL policy and a large majority of them occur after the work of the course has been substantially completed, the student may receive an Incomplete (“I”) grade.”

I expect you to attend all classes, to arrive on time, to be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, and to stay for the entire class period. More than 3 absences will result in a proportional grade penalty. If you stop coming to class, you must also officially drop it. This is YOUR responsibility. If you do not drop the class, you will receive an “F.”

Bring your books to class; we will refer to them frequently. If I suspect students are not keeping up with the readings, I will give pop quizzes. Like the rest of your life, this class will be as interesting, or as boring, as you are. Take charge of your own education.

READING-RESPONSES: You will maintain an informal (but graded) journal of responses to the readings. These should not be summaries of the works or of class lectures but should reveal your own informed responses to and engagement with the readings.

In your responses, respond to some, but not necessarily all, of the following questions.

--In what ways does this work seem “Southwestern”? What distinctive characteristics of the Southwest does the work illustrate?

--In what ways does the Southwest as portrayed in the work seem similar to, and different from, the Great Plains or other regions you are familiar with?

--Does the work's portrayal of the Southwest fit with your own ideas of and experiences with the region? If not, how does it deviate? What might account for that deviation?

--Does the work help you see the Southwest or some aspect of it, differently? Explain.

--How does the work compare and contrast with other works we have read in this class?

--Feel free to comment on anything else you wish to regarding the work.

Be as specific as possible in your responses and back them up with details from the readings. Journal entries need not be typed, but should be legible. A loose-leaf binder is a good place to maintain the journal. Each entry should be about 300-500 words. Due dates for journals are on the schedule. Since this assignment is partly designed to keep you current on the readings, late journals will not be accepted without prior approval. We will occasionally read from journal

entries in small groups in class and then discuss them with the larger group. So write them with the whole class as the intended audience.

OBJECTIVE MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAMS: We will have short mid-term and final exams that will consist of brief identifications.

FINAL ESSAY EXAM / RESEARCH PAPER: You can choose to do either a take-home final exam, or a research paper. The final exam will consist of a series of essay questions. The research paper, of 5-7 pages, can cover any writer and/or topic you like that fits the context of the class. I will provide more details on this option later.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

CELL PHONES: This may be a surprise to some of you, but, believe it or not, phones do not belong in the classroom. If you are unable to liberate yourself from the tentacles of the telecommunications industry, and feel compelled to carry a phone to class, be sure to turn it off. If your phone regularly interrupts class, I will drop you from the course as a disruptive influence.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism means representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. This includes quoting or paraphrasing from published sources (yes, including the internet) without acknowledging/citing the source of your information, or presenting quoted materials as your own words. You must be very clear about attribution of sources and you must know how to cite sources in a paper. Students who are unfamiliar with how to cite sources should purchase a style manual such as the MLA (Modern Language Association) Handbook (or find similar material on the internet). Neither ignorance nor extenuating circumstances justify plagiarism. (That is, I don't want to hear any excuses; tears will avail you not.) I will be glad to discuss any citation concerns you may have. I will, and nearly every semester I do, fail students for plagiarism. In such cases, appeals from parents will not be considered.

If you find yourself falling behind in your work due to extenuating circumstances, and feel tempted to plagiarize, DON'T. Instead, talk to me about your difficulties. We can arrange for projects to be turned in late, and, if circumstances warrant, we can even arrange for an incomplete grade in the class.

DEADLINES: Unless arranged otherwise, assignments are due at the time listed on the schedule. Late assignments will be accepted, but will suffer a proportional grade penalty. No assignment will be accepted more than 2 weeks after the due date.

DISABILITIES:

SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

Aug.	27	Introduction
	29	Defining the Southwest: Read Richard Francaviglia's "Elusive Land: Changing Geographic Images of the Southwest." Posted on Blackboard as pdf file.
	31	Re-Defining the Southwest: Read Michael J. Riley's "Constituting the Southwest, Contesting the Southwest, Re-Inventing the Southwest." Posted on Blackboard as pdf file.
Sept.	3	LABOR DAY, NO CLASS

5 The nature of the place: Read introduction by Slovic in *Getting over the Color Green*.
7 NO CLASS Scott Slovic presentation, 10-12 Bailey Library, attend if possible.

10 Nash Candelaria, *Not by the Sword*
12 Candelaria
14 Candelaria

17 Candelaria
19 READING RESPONSES DUE, CANDELARIA
21 John Nichols, *Milagro Beanfield War*

24 Nichols
26 Nichols
28 Nichols

Oct. 1 Nichols
3 Nichols
5 READING RESPONSES DUE, NICHOLS

8 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
10 Silko
12 Silko

15 Silko
17 READING RESPONSES DUE, SILKO
19 VIDEO: "The Desert is No Lady."

22 FALL BREAK, NO CLASS
24 MID-TERM EXAM, SHORT IDS
26 Luci Tapahonso, *Blue Horses Rush In*

29 Tapahonso
31 Tapahonso

No v. 2 READING RESPONSES DUE, TAPAHONSO

5 Pat Mora, *House of Houses*
7 Mora
9 Mora

12 Mora
14 Mora
16 READING RESPONSES DUE, MORA [LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW]

19 Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*
21-23 GIVE THANKS FOR NO CLASS THESE DAYS

26 Abbey
28 Abbey (Video)
30 READING RESPONSES DUE, ABBEY

Dec. 3 In Slovic: Read essays by Alcock, p. 3; Darlington, p. 19; Lamberton, p. 40; and
Zwinger,

p. 88.

5 In Slovic: Read essays by Bowers, p. 98; Kingsolver, p. 128; Ronald, p. 131; and Russell, p. 135.

7 In Slovic: Read essays by Bodio. p. 207; Nelson, p. 227; and Saenz, p. 249.

10 In Slovic: Read essays by Anaya, p. 275; and Bowden, p. 284.

12 READING RESPONSES DUE, SLOVIC

Review

14 FINAL EXAM, SHORT IDs

ESSAY EXAM OR RESEARCH PAPER DUE