

166AC: Special Topics in American Cultures

Race and Revision in Early America

Fall 2009
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 – 12:30
110 Barrows

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Office Hours: 440 Wheeler Hall
Wednesdays, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
or by appointment

Course Description

In this course, we will read both historical and literary texts to explore how racial categories came into being in New World cultures and how these categories were tested, inhabited, and re-imagined by the human actors they sought to define. Our study will be organized around four early American sites: Landfall in the North Atlantic, the fort at Jamestown, Witchcraft at Salem, and Jefferson's Virginia. These sites will function as interpretive nodes, connecting narratives that span from Anglo-Indian warfare on the Wabanaki frontier to slave resistance on West Indian plantations. In each place concepts of racial difference were created and concretized as African, Native, and European ways of making meaning collided. The effect, of course, was never total, and we will study how that slippage and excess de-stabilized this history, which is still being revised.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

Midterm Exams: Each midterm exam will pertain to materials covered in the preceding two units. These exams will include three types of questions: *keyword definitions* (present a concise definition of key term and provide an example of its use in our study); *quotation identifications* (identify author and work, comment upon significance of passage, and develop a connection between passage and larger themes of the course); and *close readings* of either a primary source or visual image. Each midterm will account for 20% of your grade.

Final Exam: One part of the final exam will pertain only to material covered in the last two units, as in the midterms above. That section will account for 20% of your grade. The remainder of the final exam will be cumulative, asking you to integrate and synthesize material from the entire semester. I will pose several *essay questions* and you will answer two. Your essays should be substantial, based on original arguments, and should offer several detailed examples from our readings to support your claims. The essay section will

account for 25% of your course grade. Thus, the final exam in its entirety will represent 45% of your grade.

Homework: From time to time, I will ask you to complete and submit short assignments; these will take the form of one-page reading responses, location of resources, questions for discussion, or short reviews of websites. I'll assign homework in response to our progress as a class, and will direct these assignments toward especially compelling topics or knotty problems. Assessment of your homework will be included in your participation grade.

Participation: I take a broad view of participation, including attendance, completed reading assignments, thoughtful contributions, ongoing intellectual engagement, generosity toward your fellow students, and the ability to undertake self-assessment. This grade will also include completion of homework assignments, as above. Your participation in the work of our semester's study will account for 15% of your grade.

Grade Distribution Summary:

Midterm 1	20%
Midterm 2	20%
Final Exam	45 %
Participation	15%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

Attendance Policy

Attendance includes more than your physical presence in the room. I expect all students to complete the readings before class, to bring the day's text to class for ready reference, and to be ready to ask and answer questions. Obviously, cell-phone and internet use is prohibited during class time. Although this is a lecture course, my teaching methods will be responsive to our weekly progress as a group. This means that in addition to scheduled activities, periodic debates, short written responses, and small-group discussions will be integral to our work together. These, too, are required elements of the course and cannot be made up after the class period. Please provide advance notice if you are unable to attend one of our sessions.

Required Texts

Brown, *Clotel* (Bedford)

Cesaire, *A Tempest* (TCG Transations)

Conde, *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* (Ballantine)

Custalow and Daniel, *The True Story of Pocahontas* (Consortium)

Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Bedford)

Morrison, *A Mercy* (Knopf)

Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Bedford)

A course reader will be available at CopyGrafik
228 Fulton Street
(Between Bancroft and Kitteredge)

Schedule of Readings

Event, History, Memory

Week One

Thursday 8/27

COURSE INTRODUCTION

At the Gateway: Two Snakes Entwined

Week Two

Tuesday 9/1

Toni Morrison, *A Mercy* (1-99)

Thursday 9/3

Toni Morrison, *A Mercy* (99-167)

Landfall and Possession: A Still-Vexed Tempest

Week Three

Tuesday 9/8

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Thursday 9/10

William Strachey, *True Reportory of the Wrack* [Graff/Phelan ed., 122-124]

Jordan Sylvester, *A Discovery of the Barmudas* [G/P, 124-125]

The Debate: Graff/Phelan, Will, Greenblatt [G/P, 91-115]

Ronald Takaki, "The Tempest in the Wilderness" [G/P, 180-212]

Week Four

Tuesday 9/15

Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest*

Thursday 9/17

Roberto Fernandez Retamar, "Caliban" *

George Lamming, "A Monster, A Child, A Slave" from *The Pleasures of Exile* *

Week Five

Tuesday 9/22

MIDTERM ONE

Indian Princess

Thursday 9/24

John Smith, *A True Relation*, and *The Generall History* [excerpts] *

John Rolfe, "Letter to Dale" *

Ralph Hamor, *A True Discourse* [excerpts] *

Week Six

Tuesday 9/29

Kathleen Brown, "The Anglo-Indian Gender Frontier" from *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs* *

Karen Robertson, "Pocahontas at the Masque" *

Dr. Linwood "Little Bear" Custalow and Angela L. Daniel "Silver Star," *The True Story of Pocahontas*

Thursday 10/1

NO CLASS

Clips from *Pocahontas*, *The New World* [bSpace]

Week Seven

Tuesday 10/6

Samson Occom, "A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul" *

William Apess, *Experiences of Five Christian Indians* *

Dane-zaa Stories and Songs [weblink on bSpace]

Thursday 10/8

Documents: Indian Removal Policy *

Including: Andrew Jackson, "Second Annual Message;" Lewis Cass, "Removal of the Indians;" Speckled Snake's Response to Andrew Jackson; Cherokee Letter

Protesting the Treaty of Echota; petitions of The Beloved Women of the Cherokee Nation.

Week Eight

Tuesday 10/13

Catherine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* [excerpts] *
Lydia Child, *Hobomok* [excerpts] *

Thursday 10/15

Laura Wexler, "Tender Violence" from *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* *

Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin), "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "School Days of an Indian Girl," "Why I am a Pagan" *

Vachel Lindsay, "Our Mother, Pocahontas" *

The Invisible World: Race, Magic, and Affliction at Salem

Week Nine

Tuesday 10/20

John Demos, from *The Enemy Within* [157-215] *

Mary Beth Norton, from *In the Devil's Snare* [3-13, 44-81] *

Anne Kibbey "Mutations of the Supernatural" *

Thursday 10/22

Selected Examinations and Confessions from the Salem Witchcraft Trials [weblink on bSpace]

Cotton Mather, *Wonders of the Invisible World* [excerpts] and "A Brand Pluck'd out of the Burning" *

Week Ten

Tuesday 10/27

Janice Knight, "Telling It Slant: The Testimony of Mercy Short" *

Elaine Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession" *

Thursday 10/29

Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown" *

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Giles Cory of Salem Farm" *

19th C. images of the Witch Trails [bSpace]

Week Eleven

Tuesday 11/3

Charles W. Chesnutt, "Mars Jeems's Nightmare" *

Jerome S. Handler, "Slave Medicine and Obeah in Barbados" *

Thursday 11/5

Maryse Conde, *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*

Week 12

Tuesday 11/10
MIDTERM TWO

Thursday 11/12
NO CLASS

Jefferson's Inalienable Rights

Week 13

Tuesday 11/17
The Declaration of Independence
Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* [selections]

Thursday 11/19
John Neal, *Logan, A Family History* [excerpts]
Gordon Sayre, "Logan" from *The Indian Chief as a Tragic Hero* (162-203)

Week 14

Tuesday 11/24
Annette Gordon-Read, from *The Hemingses of Monticello* (264-375)

Thursday 11/26
NO CLASS

Week 15

Tuesday 12/1
William Wells Brown, *Clotel, or the President's Daughter* (81-158)

Thursday 12/3
William Wells Brown, *Clotel, or the President's Daughter* (159-227)

Week 16

Tuesday 12/8
Thursday 12/10

The Vice Provost's Office has recently converted the final week of the semester to a Reading, Review, and Recitation Period. There will be no new material introduced this week. As a group, we will decide how best to use these sessions to conclude our course, and to prepare for the final exam.