Course Description: This class is designed to provide an overview of American literature from World War II to the present day. The class is predominately organized in terms of a chronological framework, but since many weeks of class are organized around a specific theme we will not hold steadfast to this chronological approach. We will occasionally move forward and back in time to create historical connections between different works.

Since literature involves more than reading texts, but involves history, the environment, culture, gender, and politics, we will take the time to explore the larger context of many of the works we will be reading. In other words, we will explore the various ideas, historical occurrences, and political changes that help to inform the production of the material we explore in class. To this end, the exams and assignments will be more than just “reading tests,” but will include questions about a work’s context, seeking to place a text in a larger flow of ideas and historical changes.

Required Texts:

Cofer, Judith Ortiz. The Line of the Sun.
Lauter, Paul, ed. The Heath Anthology of American Literature (Volume E)
Moore, Alan. The Watchmen
Otsuka, Julie. When the Emperor Was Divine

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- integrate research into an analysis of texts
- respond critically to literary works

Course Evaluation:

1. Attendance and Class Participation: 10 points
2. Midterm and Final: 50 points each
3. Short Analytical Essays (2): 15 points each
4. Creative Essay: 15 points
5. Collaborative Teaching Activity: 20 points
6. Class Work and Quizzes: 25 points

1. Attendance: Much of this class will be conducted as a mixture of discussion and lecture, so you should come to class every day and be prepared to talk about the assigned readings. You may miss two classes without penalty. After that, two points will be deducted from your final grade for every class you miss.
2. Analytical Essays: There will be two short analytical essays due during the semesters. The essays should be 2-3 pages in length and should only make minor reference to secondary materials (if any). No late papers accepted. MLA format is required for all analytical essays.

3. Research Essay: Due near the end of the semester, this analytic essay can either develop the ideas raised in one of the shorter essay assignments or respond to a different prompt. Secondary sources are required.

4. Collaborative Teaching Activity: Working with one other student in the class, you both will spend a total of 15-20 minutes discussing/analyzing an assigned work of literature. Your presentation should make clear the historical context of the work, as well as explain or identify important terms, themes or ideas. Please do not read from a prepared essay or from a power point presentation (though power point can be used). You should encourage class involvement by asking questions, providing handouts etc. Please feel free to meet with me before your presentation.

5. Class Work: There will be occasional in-class assignments that will be handed in for a grade. The assignments cannot be made up, but there will be opportunities in class for extra credit.

Grades:

The total number of points you can earn is 200. Your grade will be determined based on the following scale:

- 179-200: A
- 159-178: B
- 139-158: C
- 119-138: D
- 118 and below: F

Reminder to English Majors:

As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should keep a copy of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

Academic Advising:

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

Grade Appeal Process:

As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the
University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Notice to Students with Disabilities:

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in CCH 116 and 119, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

Syllabus

*I will give you advanced notice of any slight changes that might be made to the readings during the semester.

**The readings listed below are required. Occasionally, we may not cover one of the readings listed in class; even so, these readings will still appear on the midterm or final.

Week 1: (January 12)
Course Overview; Introductions

Week 2: Narratives of the Nation (January 17/19)

Week 3: Politics and Urban Space (January 24/26)
Readings: Saul Bellow “Looking for Mr. Green” (2127-2141) and James Baldwin “Sonny’s Blues” (2194-2215)

Week 4: Internment Experience (January 31/February 2)
Readings: Lawson Fusao Inada “Instructions to All Persons” (2603-2605), John Okada No-No Boy (2183-2192), Julie Otsuka When the Emperor Was Divine

Week 5: Contemporary Exile (February 7/9)
Readings: When the Emperor Was Divine con’t. and Hisaye Yamamoto “Seventeen Syllables (2164-2172)

Analytical Essay #1 due February 9

Week 6: Private/Public (February 14-16)
Readings: Theodore Roethke “My Papa’s Waltz” (1916), Gwendolyn Brooks “The Mother” (2147) and “We Real Cool” (2148), Sylvia Plath “Daddy” (2332-2334) and “Lady Lazarus” (2334-2336), and Paule Marshall “To Da-Duh, in Memoriam” (2314-2321)

Week 7: Southern Fiction (February 21-23)
Readings: Flannery O’Connor “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (2217-2288), Eudora Welty “The Wide Net” (1919-1933)

Week 8: The Postmodern Age (February 28/March 1)
Readings: 2345-2354, Donald Barthelme “At the End of the Mechanical Age” (2433-2437) and John Updike “Trust Me” 2453-2457

Midterm: March 6
Spring Break: March 13/15

Week 10: De-centering Identity (March 20/22)
Readings: John Ashbery “The Instruction Manual” (2291-2293), Michael Herr Dispatches (2383-2390) and Audre Lorde “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (2496-2498), and Joy Harjo “The Woman Hanging from the Thirteenth Floor Window” (2951-53). Start reading The Watchmen

Week 11: The Post-Post Modern? (March 27/29)
Readings: The Watchmen

Week 12: Writing, Storytelling and Place (April 3/5)
Readings: Judith Ortiz Cofer, The Line of the Sun

Creative Essay due April 5

Week 13: Writing, Storytelling and Place con’t. (April 10/12)
Readings: The Line of the Sun con’t

Week 14: New Communities, New Identities (April 17-19)
Readings: The Line of the Sun con’t. Bharati Mukherjee “A Wife’s Story” (2694-2703), Alice Walker “Elethia” (handout), and James Welch Winter in the Blood (2681-2692)

Analytical Essay #2 due April 19

Week 15: America Today (April 24-26)
Readings: Tato Laviera, “AmeRícan” (2962-2964), Gish Jen “In the American Society” (3036-3046), Allan Ginsberg “America” (2240-43), and Helena Maria Viramontes “The Cariboo Café” (3017-3026)
Final Exam: May 1