Course Description: Many of the texts we will read this semester have a historical focus, with authors struggling to come to terms with a familial past or identity that remains underrepresented or unrecognized by the mainstream. This struggle takes on many different forms, from Clare Kendry’s efforts to deflect attention from her familial past in *Passing*, to Marisol’s desire to re-tell her past as a fiction in *The Line of the Sun*. Both *Ruins* and *The Line of the Sun* also help to sensitize one to how the past can be manipulated, and how those on the social margin struggle for a sense of presence within the historical narratives of the nation. Ultimately, the majority of the texts we will read seek to present alternative histories, ones that will run counter to a dominant history that looks to marginalize otherness. We will look closely at these alternative histories and examine how (or if) they provide better pathways towards participation in the US.

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 are 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 worksheets will be more than “reading tests,” but will also include questions about a work’s context, seeking to place a text in a larger flow of ideas and historical changes.

Required Texts:
- Acosta, Oscar Zeta. *Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo*
- Cofer, Judith Ortiz. *The Line of the Sun*
- King, Thomas, *Truth and Bright Water*
- Larsen, Nella. *Passing*
- Obejas, Achy. *Ruins*

Major Course Requirements:

- Class Participation: 10 Points (5%)  
- Midterm and Final Exam: 50 points each (50%)  
- Collaborative Teaching Activity: 20 points (10%)  
- Creative Essay: 10 points (5%)  
- Analytical Essays: 30 points (20%)  
- In-Class Writing (including quizzes and homework): 30 points (15%)

1. Participation and Attendance Policy: 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 can miss two classes without penalty. After that three points will be deducted for each missed class.
2. Midterm and Final Exam: The exams will include essay questions and identifications of quotes and terms taken from the readings and class discussions. The final exam will not be cumulative but will include an essay question that addresses some of the readings throughout the semester.

3. Collaborative Teaching Activity: Working with other students in class, your group will spend a total of 10-15 minutes discussing/analyzing the assigned topic in front of the class. Your presentation should make clear the historical context of the topic as well as explain or identify important terms, themes or ideas. Please do not read from a prepared essay or from a PowerPoint presentation (though PowerPoint may be used). You should encourage class involvement by asking questions, providing handouts etc. Please feel free to meet with me before your presentation. Every student will be required to provide an evaluation of the other group members.

4. Creative Essay: In this assignment you will be asked to write an essay presenting, in an imaginative manner, what remains unsaid by any one of the female characters in The Revolt of the Cockroach People.

5. Analytical Essays: There will be three short analytical essays that will be due this semester. Each essay will be worth ten points and will be graded based on how well you organize your ideas around a specific argument; your careful analysis of evidence from the text; and the clarity of your prose. No late papers will be accepted.

6. In-class Writing: There will be frequent in-class writing and occasionally some of these writings will be collected and graded. Quizzes are listed on the syllabus. In-class writing and quizzes cannot be made up if you are absent.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1) Recognize the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts;
2) Respond critically to literary works.

Course Evaluation:

180-200: A
160-179: B
140-159: C
120-139: D
119 and below: F

*One or more of your assignments for this course may be selected for program assessment purposes.

Academic Advising: It is imperative that all students visit regularly with an academic adviser. Each college within the university has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisers to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. To find out how to contact the right adviser, go to: [http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php)

Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information, go to: [http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac](http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac)

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: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom, or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance.

Course Schedule

*Small changes might be made to the syllabus during the course of the semester.

Unit 1: “Passing” as Another: Violence, Repression and Expression

Week 1: Introductions and Class Overview (January 24)

Week 2: Violence and Expression (January 29-January 31)
*Readings: Charles Chesnutt “The Wife of His Youth” and “Po’ Sandy” (handouts), Claude McKay, “If We Must Die” and Alice Walker, “Elethia” (handouts). Start reading Nella Larsen’s Passing.

Week 3: Passing and the Harlem Renaissance (February 5-7)
*Readings: Passing

Week 4: African-American Modernism (February 12-14)
Quiz #1: February 14
1st Analytical Essay due: February 14

Unit 2: Gender and Familial/National Boundaries

Week 5: La Llorona Myth (February 19-21)

Week 6: Patriarchy and the Chicano Movement (February 26-28)

Week 7: Patriarchy con’t. (March 5-March 7)
Creative Essay due: March 5
Midterm: March 7

Spring Break March 12/14
Unit 3: Imaginary Crossings

Week 8: Identity and Belonging in Puerto Rican Literature (March 19-21)
Readings: Judith Ortiz Cofer, “The Myth of a Latin Woman” and The Line of the Sun

Week 9: Manifest Destiny (March 26-28)
*Readings: Continue reading Judith Ortiz Cofer’s The Line of the Sun

Week 10: Puerto Rican Literature (April 2-4)
*Readings: Continue reading The Line of the Sun
Quiz #2: April 4
2nd Analytical Essay due April 4

Unit 4: (Re)Writing on the Margins

Week 11 Cuban Literature (April 9-11)
*Readings: Begin reading Achy Obejas’ Ruins

Week 12 con’t: The Cuban Revolution (April 16-18)
*Readings: Continue reading Achy Obejas’ Ruins
Quiz #3: April 18

Unit 5: Storytelling along the Border

Week 13: Native American Literature (April 23-25)
*Readings: Begin reading Truth and Bright Water
3rd Analytical Essay due: April 25

Week 14: Native American Literature (April 30-May 2)
*Readings: “Borders” (handout) and continue reading Thomas King’s Truth and Bright Water.

Week 15: Final Exam: May 7
English 2335.001: Collaborative Teaching Activity Schedule

February 5: The Harlem Renaissance: ________________________________
                                           ________________________________
                                           ________________________________

February 5: Nella Larsen (Biography): ________________________________
                                           ________________________________
                                           ________________________________

February 7: Brazil and Racial Equality in the early 20th Century (connect to Brian’s wanting to move to Brazil in the novel):
                                           ________________________________
                                           ________________________________
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February 7: The Rhinelander Case and Passing: ________________________________
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                                           ________________________________

February 12: Naturalism and “The Booklist”: ________________________________
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February 12: Richard Wright (Biography): ________________________________
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                                           ________________________________

February 19: La Llorona: ________________________________
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February 21: Viramontes (biography) and “The Cariboo Café”: ________________________________
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February 26: Oscar Zeta Acosta and the Chicano Movement: ________________________________
                                           ________________________________
                                           ________________________________
February 26: St. Basil’s 1969: _______________________________

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February 28: César Chávez: _________________________________

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February 28: Dolores Huerta: ________________________________

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March 5: Rúben Salazar: _________________________________

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March 5: Rudolfo “Corky” Gonzales: ___________________

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March 19: Puerto Rican History, Spanish-American War and the Jones Act:

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March 19: Judith Ortiz Cofer (biography) and “The Myth of a Latin Woman”:

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March 21: Santeria, Spiritism and The Line of the Sun: ____________________________

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April 9: US-Cuban History, the Bay of Pigs, and Cuba Today:
April 9: Special Period of Peace: ______________________________

April 9: Ruins: ______________________________

April 23: Border Patrol and US-Mexico Border/ Canada-US Border:

April 23: Tecumseh and Truth and Bright Water:_______________________________

April 30: “Borders” (handout): ______________________________

April 30: Truth and Bright Water ______________________________