Course Description: While this class is designed to provide an overview of American literature from World War II to the present day, we will also look at literature longitudinally, across the spaces of “America.” As a consequence, we will read texts which traditionally are marginalized because they are believed outside the American experience. While this might mean looking at works written about or by individuals from outside the US, it also means looking at works which centralize race, gender and sexuality in ways that counter normative assumptions about American identity.

We will also complicate how we define the other half of an “American literature,” by exploring how literature itself is defined in the postmodern era. To this end we will look at texts that may not be considered by some as literature, like the graphic novel *The Watchmen*.

Required Texts:

Cofer, Judith Ortiz. *The Line of the Sun*
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): 20 points each
4. Creative Research Essay: 25 points
5. Collaborative Teaching Activity: 15 points
6. Class Work and Quizzes: 10 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. Midterm and Final Exams: The two exams will each be divided into three parts. Part 1 will be a short answer section which can includes terms and ideas raised in class discussion or questions from the readings. Part 2 will ask you to explain and identify quotes from the readings and Part 3 will be an essay question.
3. Short Analytical Essays: There will be two short analytical essays due during the semesters. The essays should be 3-4 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.
4. Creative Research Essay: In this assignment, you will choose a historical event or occurrence and create a story about it.
5. 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.
6. 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.

Technology in the Classroom:

You may use computers and e-readers in this class. If their use becomes disruptive to others in the class, however, you may be asked to turn them off.

Late Assignments:
Please contact me by e-mail or telephone if an emergency arises and you cannot attend class. I will not accept late assignments unless you have made previous arrangements. An “Incomplete” will be given at my discretion only and must involve exceptional circumstances. To qualify for consideration, you must have satisfactorily completed two-thirds of the course requirements.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism (plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work). In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade.

**Dropping a Class:**

I hope you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation will not automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

**Classroom/professional behavior:**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**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 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](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost.

**Disabilities Accommodations:**

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.

Statement of Academic Continuity

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e. emails, web sites and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

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 at (361) 825-5816.

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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit System. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

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 21)
Course Overview; Introductions

Week 2: Narratives of the Nation (January 26/28)

Week 3: Politics and Urban Space (February 2/4)
Readings: Saul Bellow “Looking for Mr. Green” (2747--2763) and James Baldwin “Sonny’s Blues” (2891-2914)

Week 4: Internment Experience (February 9/11)
Readings: Benedict Anderson, “The Origin of National Consciousness,” (handout), Lawson Fusao Inada “Instructions to All Persons” (3801-3802), and Julie Otsuka When the Emperor Was Divine

Week 5: Contemporary Exile (February 16/18)
Readings: *When the Emperor Was Divine* con’t. and Hisaye Yamamoto “Seventeen Syllables (2689-2699)

**Analytical Essay #1 due February 18**

**Week 6: Private/Public (February 23/25)**
Readings: Theodore Roethke “My Papa’s Waltz” (2711), Gwendolyn Brooks “The Mother” (2877) and “We Real Cool” (2878), Sylvia Plath “Daddy” (3053-3055) and “Lady Lazarus” (3055-3057), Paule Marshall “To Da-Duh, in Memoriam” (3227-3235) and Raymond Carver, “What We Talk about When We talk about Love” (3455-3464)

**Week 7: Questioning Ethics (March 1/3)**
Readings: Flannery O’Connor “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (2775-2787), Luis Valdez “Los Vendidos” (3135-3144)

**Week 8: The Postmodern Age (March 8/March 10)**
Readings: Donald Barthelme “At the End of the Mechanical Age” (3366-3371) and Ishmael Reed “Badman of the Guest Professor” (3342-3346)

**Midterm: March 10**
**Spring Break: March 15/17**

**Week 10: De-centering Identity (March 22/24)**
Readings: John Ashbery “The Instruction Manual” (3065-3068), Michael Herr *Dispatches* (3165-3173), Audre Lorde “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (3376-3378), Joy Harjo “The Woman Hanging from the Thirteenth Floor Window” (3676-3678), and David Foster Wallace, “The Devil is a Busy Man” Start reading *The Watchmen*

**Week 11: The Post-Post Modern? (March 29/31)**
Readings: *The Watchmen*

**Week 12: Writing, Storytelling and Place (April 5/7)**
Readings: Judith Ortiz Cofer, *The Line of the Sun*

**Creative Essay due April 7**

**Week 13: Writing, Storytelling and Place con’t. (April 12/14)**
Readings: *The Line of the Sun* con’t

**Week 14: New Communities, New Identities (April 19-21)**
Readings: *The Line of the Sun* con’t. Bharati Mukherjee “A Wife’s Story” (3713-3723), Alice Walker “Elethia” (handout), and Maxine Hong Kingston “No Name Woman” (3349-3358)

**Analytical Essay #2 due April 21**

**Week 15: The Americas (April 26/28)**
Readings: Tato Laviera, “AmeRícan” (3641-3642), Gish Jen “In the American Society” (3781-3792), Allan Ginsberg “A Supermarket in California” (2962-63), and Helena María Viramontes “The Cariboo Café” (3566-3576)

**May 3: Review**
May 10: Final Exam (11:00-1:30)