**English 6323**

**CRN 20476**

**The Literature of the Americas for Teachers**

**Spring 2015**

**W 6:00-9:00, Irby 312**

**Instructor: Conrad Shumaker**

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**Office Hours: MWF 8:00-9:00, 1:00-2:00; TTh 8:00-9:00, 12:30-1:30, and by appointment.**

**Bulletin description:** Serves as an elective for students in the MA program in English. A study of Native, Hispanic, and Latin American literatures within their cultural contexts, with an emphasis on teaching those traditions.

**Course Description and Outline**: This course is designed to expand your perspective as a student and a teacher on “America” and American Literature by introducing you to the diverse literatures that have developed outside the mainstream of what we think of as American literature and culture. These literatures include works by American Indian, Hispanic American, and Latin American writers, and they reflect the ways in which the European cultures that came to North and South America after the “discovery” of the continents in the 15th century have interacted with the land and the indigenous cultures. We will read and discuss important works by each of the three groups and gain an understanding of the way in which those works have emerged in the “New World” through conflict and cross-fertilization. We will also discuss and explore ways of presenting this kind of literature and its cultural context to students who are encountering these traditions for the first time.

The course will begin with American Indian works in order to present the “indigenous” view of the world as it has been represented by contemporary writers such as Leslie Marmon Silko, Thomas King, Sherman Alexie, and others whose roots are in American Indian traditions. Then the focus will shift to the Hispanic American tradition, examining the ways in which the Spanish presence in the Southwest and the Caribbean contributed to a rich tradition of culture and literature. Alberto Rios and Judith Ortiz Cofer will represent this tradition. Finally the course will present a sampling of the literature from Latin America that first gained the world’s attention in the “boom” of the 1960's. Works by such writers as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jorge Luis Borges, Isabel Allende, and Pablo Neruda will serve as examples of this tradition.

**Course Goals**: Students in this course should gain the following: (1) An awareness of the presence and vitality of literary traditions outside the “American” (i.e., United States) mainstream; 2) an understanding of the way in which those traditions have developed in relation to the dominant European cultural presence, both through conflict and through more positive cultural influence; 3) an ability to read and then to teach the works produced by these traditions with an understanding of the way they relate to the cultures and their histories; and 4) a deeper understanding of how to read and teach literature in general by seeing it within its cultural and historical context.

***Texts*:**

King, Thomas, *The Truth about Stories*

Silko, Leslie Marmon, *Ceremony*

Alexie, Sherman, *Flight*

Rios, Alberto, *The Smallest Muscle in the Human Body*

Cofer, Judith Ortiz, *Latin Deli*

Borges, Jorge Luis, *Collected Fictions*

Garcia Marquez, Gabriel, *Collected Stories*

Neruda, Pablo, *I Explain a Few Things: Collected Poems*

Allende, Isabel, *The House of the Spirits*

***Assignments*:** A final exam will test your understanding of the larger picture–the way these literary traditions emerge from the contact of European traditions with indigenous cultures. In order to show your ability to read and teach the literature, you will choose a story, poem, or section from a novel and write a paper on it and then present your approach to the class, demonstrating in both the paper and presentation your ability to understand and communicate essential points about the work within its cultural milieu. In addition, you will turn in response journals in which you record your responses to the reading we do.

***Grading*:** Your grade will be based on the following percentages:

Paper 30%

Presentation 20%

Reading Journals 20%

Final Exam 20%

Participation 10% (Participation includes being in class on time with the appropriate text and contributing to group work and/or discussions in appropriate ways.)

***Attendance*** is crucial in a class like this. Discussions are an important part of the course, and

you can't participate if you aren't present. If you miss two classes without a legitimate excuse

(e.g. medical or family emergency), your final grade will be lowered one point, since you have

failed to complete the participation requirement of the course. If you have a legitimate excuse,

you can do an extra assignment to make up for what you've missed by not being in on the

discussion. If you need to miss class, please don't call the department office; call my extension,

listed at the top of this syllabus, or email me. You can call my cell phone if you need to–the

number is 205-9868.

***Academic Integrity****:* The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy. To touch on the most directly relevant issue for this course, plagiarism means presenting someone else's words or ideas as if they were your own (e.g., copying a passage from the internet, a critical work or any other source, or having someone else write a paper for you.) It's your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and to avoid it. If you plagiarize, you will fail

this course.

**Other Important Information:**

An **Emergency Procedures Summary** (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Title IX Disclosure**: If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs, and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on the specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>. *\*Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*

**Student Handbook:** Please familiarize yourselves with the policies included in the Student Handbook, especially the sections on sexual harassment and academic policies.

***Student Evaluations*:** Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom, and they aid the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking from November 13 through December 13 by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

Finally, UCA adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need accommodation under this act due to a disability, contact the Office of Disability Support Services at 450-3135.

***Course Outline***

8/26 Introduction: Culture and literature; the “American Indian” world; American Indian poetry (handouts); video–*The Native Americans*

9/2 King, *The Truth About Stories*

9/9 Silko, *Ceremony*

9/16 Silko, *Ceremony,* continued

9/23 Alexie, *Flight*

9/30 Ríos, *The Smallest Muscle*, selected poems

10/7 Cofer, Selections from *The Latin Deli*

10/14 TBA

10/21 Jorge Luis Borges, “Man on Pink Corner,” 45; “The Story from Rosendo Juarez,” 358; “The Garden of Forking Paths,” 119; “The South,” 174; “Emma Zunz,” 215; “The Writing of the God,” 250; “On Exactitude in Science,” 325; “The Book of Sand,” 480.

10/28 Pablo Neruda, Selected Poems

11/4 Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Selected Stories

11/11 Marquez, continued

11/18 Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits*

11/25 No Class--Thanksgiving

12/2 Allende, continued

12/9 Final Exam