Course Overview

• What are the possibilities for choices for an American Literature course?

• What is multicultural education about and why does it concern me, an English teacher?

• What is my own reading history? What are my reading interests?

• What has my education, both in school and out, taught me about American literature?

• Who are my students? How do I make connections between the literature I teach and my students’ needs for a rich and developing literacy?

• What are the layers of a classroom that need to be addressed to reflect diversity and difference both in literature and in the students?

Required texts
• To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee, HarperCollins, March 2002
• Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain
• Black Boy, Richard Wright, HarperPerrenial, 1998
• Talking Race in the Classroom, Jane Bolgatz, Teachers College Press, 2005.
• The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities, Sonia Nieto, 10th Anniversary Ed., Teachers College Press, 2010,
• Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination, Toni Morrison, Vintage, 1993

You will choose two of the following:
• Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Mildred D. Taylor, Puffin Books, 1976, ISBN 01400384510 (wait for class discussion about this and the following three texts)

You will choose one of the following:
• Diversity and the New Teachers: learning from experience in urban schools, Catherine Cornbleth, Teachers College, 2008.
• English Journal, January 2005 (class blackboard)
• Interactive Phases of Curricular and Person Re-Vision with Regard to Race, Peggy McIntosh, Working Paper No. 219, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, 1990. (class blackboard)
• Additional Essays on Class Blackboard

Recommended Texts for Further Study
• The Skin That We Speak: Thoughts on Language and Culture in the Classroom, Lisa Delpit, The New Press, 2002
• Rethinking American Literature, eds. Lil Brannon and Brenda M. Greene, NCTE, 1997.
• From Totems to Hip-Hop, ed. Ishmael Reed, Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2003
• Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Harriet Beecher Stowe
• Native Son, Richard Wright
• Notes of a Native Son, James Baldwin
• Go Tell It on the Mountain, James Baldwin
• Paper Clips (dvd)
• 4 Little Girls (dvd), Spike Lee
• Un-Standardizing Curriculum: Multicultural Teaching in the Standards-Based Classroom, Christine E. Sleeter, Teachers College Press, 2005
• True to the Language Game: African American Discourse, Cultural Politics, and Pedagogy, Keith Gilyard, Routledge, 2011.

Processes/Expectations for the Course
• You will need to attend every class. On time. If that is not possible, you should notify me before. We build a learning community, and your absence does not just affect you but your small and large group members. Everyone counts.
• Timely handing in of written work is necessary. Learning is organized to build on your knowledge from the first class.
• Read-alouds: to be discussed in class, choices taken from Unsettling America
• Reading assignments: all reading assignments should be done with the following questions in mind: do I have questions about the content of the text from either a comprehension or ideological point of view? does the text challenge beliefs that I hold? If so, is it possible for me to locate and name the belief(s) and/or what I feel challenged about?
• Written work
  All written work that is handed in must be typed and double-spaced. Pages numbered after the first page. Traditional academic requirements apply. Questions? Ask me and/or consult the MLA or other style sheet.
  Writing for the class blackboard begins after the first class. Required every week which includes both a contribution and a response to another class member's posting.
• Projects
  There will also be two projects in addition to individual papers and postings on the class blackboard. They will be discussed in class.
•Assessment

Everyone in the class should be capable of B+ or better work. A work is exceptional and displays effort and thought beyond the fulfilling of the assignment. At midterm I will notify anyone whose work is below B+. You are always welcome to make an appointment to discuss the quality of your work as well as any issues pertaining to teaching and learning in this course.

Course Schedule

Monday, September 10, 2012

Introductions: Who are we?
What knowledge do we need to have about our self and our students in order to teach and learn with them?
Letting Walt Whitman and Langston Hughes set the stage.
Looking to the past and the ideas we inherit and looking to our future as teachers in our own classroom.

Assignment: Reading: 1. half of To Kill a Mockingbird (if you can stop reading)

4. Writing to be handed in: I suggest you read the second and third reading assignments BEFORE beginning the writing assignment.
   1. Introduce yourself in all your own multicultural diversity. What are all the social markers that mark you as a person: gender, what we refer to as “race,” ethnicity, age, class, and as many other social markers as you care to explore.
   2. If you were asked to talked without preparation about American Literature, what are some of the authors, the texts, the ideas that would come to mind.
   3. What does multicultural education mean to you, if anything?
   4. What literature do you remember reading in middle or high school? What literature do you remember reading in college?
   5. Any texts or teachers or classes stand out in your memory as important to your thinking about literature

5. Blackboard posting: this first week you will find a Discussion Board for To Kill a Mockingbird. Before you begin reading the novel, please post if you have read this text before. What do you recall about reading it, in school or out, memories of what you thought about the text. If you have never read it before, then start reading it and post some of your responses as you read. For the first few weeks please sign all your postings with your full name. As we come to know each other, your first name will be sufficient.

Monday, September 17, 2012

(religious holiday for some; to be discussed)
Ongoing thinking and talking about such terms as “cultural literacy,” “multiculturalism,” “multicultural education.”
Developing ideas of multicultural education
Talking about race
Class guidelines: how shall we learn with each other? What is the role of talk and listening in classrooms?
To Kill A Mockingbird

Assignment: Readings: *Finish TKAM
•The Light in Their Eyes, Prologue to 10th Anniversary Edition and Chapter 1
•Talking Race in the Classroom, First paragraph of “Acknowledgements,” Chapters 1-2
•“Culture, Not Race, Explains Human Diversity,” Mark Nathan Cohen, Course Documents, Class Blackboard
Monday, September 24, 2012
Inherited beliefs
Reading and responding: what English teachers help students to do
Talking about TKAM with all the layers
Developing ideas of multicultural education; what do our readings make us think about?
Assignment: Reading: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Chapters 1-18 (to be discussed in class)
Reading and writing: as you read Huck Finn, keep a list both of your responses to parts of the book that leap out at you to be discussed as a reader and then as a teacher, what issues might you anticipate that you would want to be prepared to help your students discuss.

Monday, October 1, 2012
Talking about race in Huckleberry Finn
Teaching controversial texts, this one being one of the most contested.
Assignment: Huckleberry Finn, rest of text (to be discussed)
Talking Race in the Classroom, Chapters 3-4
Assignment: Rickman and Ebonics, “Suite For Ebony and Phonics,” Class Blackboard
Writing assignment to be discussed in class
Go on NCTE web site for ideas about the teaching of controversial literature.

Monday, October 8, 2012
Continue discussion of Huck Finn
What is a dialect?
Language diversity as another aspect of diversity.
How do we create classrooms to talk about difficult topics?
Assignment: Their Eyes Were Watching God
Talking Race…, Chapters 5 and 6

October 16: no class/fall break

Monday, October 22, 2012
Discussion of Their Eyes Were Watching God
Midterm projects
Talking Race in the Classroom, Chapter 7

Monday, October 29, 2012
Presentation of class projects. Hand in the written portions.
How are our understandings of multicultural literacy developing?
Assignment: Chapters 1-5 of Part One of Black Boy
The Light in their Eyes, Chapters 4 and 5

Monday, November 5, 2012
Language, literacy and power
Discussion of Black Boy
Assignment: Finish Part One of Black Boy Light in their Eyes. Chapters 6,7,Epilogue
Choose either Diversity…or We Can’t Teach…
Amount of reading in each text to be discussed in class.

Monday, November 12, 2012
Black Boy
Assignment: Read Playing in the Dark.
What strategies do you have for reading challenging texts?

Monday, November 19, 2012
Playing in the Dark
Assignment: Re-read Playing in the Dark
Peggy McIntosh's Curriculum Re-Vision (Course documents)
More reading of Diversity…and We Can't Teach...
Writing to be handed in next week: topic to be discussed in class

Monday, November 26, 2012
Playing in the Dark
McIntosh and Morrison have a conversation
What happens when you re-read?
What is curriculum? What is the canon?
Assignment: Reading choices (to be discussed in class):
Choice: two or more: The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry
Kindred
Chains
Finish (if we have not already) Diversity and We Can't Teach...

Monday, December 3, 2012
Book discussions
Assignment: Paper Clips or 4 Little Girls
Additional readings to be discussed

Monday, December 10, 2012
Class Projects
Additional readings to be discussed

Monday, December 17, 2012 Final Exam
Class Projects and Celebrate Our Learning

Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is deaf of hard of hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980, 240 Greene Street, www.nyu.edu/csd