

GENA 2292: American Themes Through Creative Expression

Fall 2017 | Friday 1:30-3:15pm | T.C. Cheng 208

Instructors

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Overview and Objectives

This course investigates themes across contemporary United States culture from a variety of perspectives, with an emphasis on different forms of creative expression, including visual arts, film, literature, and performance art. Over the course of the semester, we hope to explore and complicate our understanding of United States society.

We hope that by the end of this course, you will (1) have a foundational understanding of the United States, (2) a framework with which to interpret, analyze and respond to representations of the United States, and (3) feel comfortable discussing United States history and current events. Additionally, by actively participating in class discussions and activities and completing homework that synthesizes the information you have learned, you will polish both your oral, written and presentation skills.

Expectations

Participation – We will hold at least one discussion relating to the homework or previous week's lecture each class. These discussions will also expose you to multiple views on a given topic and help you review the course content. To receive full participation marks, you should share your ideas, even when they are not fully developed, frequently and constructively. You must also be prepared for every class.

Attendance and punctuality – Attendance and punctuality are an important part of participation; if you are not present, you cannot participate. Absences and tardiness will be excused only if you have a doctor's note or a legitimate excuse with documentation.

Homework – You can expect to complete between 1.5 and 2 hours of homework on an average week. You should spend approximately one third of your homework time reviewing for the weekly quiz, and the remainder on completing the weekly assignment.

Course Structure – Each week, our class will be divided into two sections—discussion and lecture. For the first hour, we will discuss the previous week's material, focusing on the work of art that you wrote on for your weekly homework assignment (for more information, see the "Weekly Homework Assignments" below). For the second hour, we will lecture on the topic outlined in the syllabus.

Evaluation

Weekly Homework Assignments – Each week, you will be given a homework assignment. Assignments will typically require you to write a one-page (double-spaced) response analyzing a piece of art related to the lecture from that week. Types of art we will explore in this class include poetry, visual and performance art, film, and music. All assignments will help you prepare for the cumulative test. You will receive a ✓ for a satisfactorily completed assignment, a ✓+ for an outstanding assignment, and a ✓- for an inadequately completed assignment.

Quizzes – We will hold weekly multiple choice quizzes based on the content covered in lectures, and/or discussions. Quizzes are administered at the beginning of each class, and can only be taken at the beginning of class; if you arrive late, you can only complete whatever you can in the time before the quiz is over.

In the past, the most successful students have studied for these by reviewing their lecture notes and discussion questions. All lecture slides will be made available after class on Blackboard.

Cumulative Final Exam – You will complete one hour long cumulative test at the end of the semester. The test will assess your understanding of all the class material we have covered and will be composed of two parts—multiple choice and free response short answer.

Feedback – If you have any comments or suggestions for the course, please feel free to email us or come talk to us in person. We are always interested in hearing what you think and want to help you get the most out of your experience in this course.

Grading:

Participation, Attendance and Punctuality	20%
Quizzes	20%
Homework Assignments	35%
Cumulative Final Exam	25%

Syllabus

WEEK	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1: September 8 Symba	Indigenous Experience: Native Americans, Colonialism and Manifest Destiny, (Modern day connection: DAPL, Keystone XL)	Weekly art analysis Study for quiz
Week 2: September 15 Sarah	Introduction and Basics: Separation of Powers, the Constitution, (Applications of constitutional law to Trump presidency)	Weekly art analysis; Study for quiz
Week 3: September 22 Symba	Black American Experience: Slavery, Civil Rights, Black Lives Matter	Weekly art analysis Study for quiz
Week 4: September 29 Sarah	Civil War, American Regionalism (Modern Application: Charlottesville)	Weekly art analysis; Study for quiz
Week 5: October 6 Symba	Latinx American Experience: Indigenous communities and the relationship between South America and the United States	Weekly art analysis; Study for quiz
Week 6: October 13 Sarah	Asian American Experience: Chinese immigration, Japanese internment, etc.	Weekly art analysis; Study for quiz
Week 7: October 20 Symba	Women’s Rights	Weekly art analysis Study for quiz
Week 8: October 27 Sarah	The American Melting Pot (The mixed race experience, immigration, etc.)	Weekly art analysis Study for quiz
Week 9: November 3 Symba	LGBTQ Experience	Weekly art analysis Study for quiz
Week 10: November 10 Sarah	The 2016 Election	Weekly art analysis; Study for quiz
Week 11: November 17 Symba	Looking forward: The American Landscape from Present to Future	Study for quiz Begin studying for final

Week 12: November 24	Review Session	Study for final
Week 13: December 1 Sarah and Symba	Final Exam	