

# GENA 2292: American Themes Through Creative Expression

Spring 2019 | 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 literature, visual arts, and performing arts. 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 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 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 be prepared for every class. NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

\*A note on your English fluency: it doesn't matter, just do your best and participate!

**Excellent (A/A-):** Participates frequently, volunteering relevant comments and listening attentively. This student fosters a positive work environment, encourages the flow of the class, and maintains a respectful attitude during discussions with peers. Contributes original ideas or brings in outside info to discussion.

**Good (B+/B):** Volunteers comments sometimes, responds to cold calling, asks clarifying questions. Demonstrates active listening in class and a respectful attitude towards others; engages in group discussion.

**Fair (B-/C+):** Only participates when called on, doesn't contribute original ideas during class discussion. Occasionally distracted during class.

**Poor (C and below):** Does not contribute to class discussion, or refuses to answer when called on. Frequently not paying attention, unprepared for discussion, or distracts peers.

*Note: This class has a zero tolerance policy for disrespect.*

**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.

**Emails** – All email communications regarding this course must be sent to both instructors. Email subject lines should be in the following format when submitting assignments:

**Assignment-GENA 2292-Your Name**  
ex.: Week 1 Response-GENA 2292-Anne Zlatow

**Course Structure** – Each week, our class will be divided into two sections—discussion and lecture. For the first half, we will discuss the previous week’s material, focusing on the material that you wrote about for your weekly homework assignment (for more information, see the “Weekly Homework Assignments” below). For the latter half, 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 poetry, music, film, or other art related to the lecture from that week. 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.

**Cumulative Final Exam** – You will complete a 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: Jan 11<br>Anne + Sarah                  | Intro.<br>The American Melting Pot<br><br>The Fundamentals of Gov. Part 1  | Week 1 Response--<br>Poetry analysis:<br>Poem 1 <a href="#">link here</a><br>Poem 2 <a href="#">link here</a><br><br>Study for quiz |
| Week 2: Jan 18<br>Sarah                         | The Fundamentals Part 2: Separation of Powers, the Constitution<br><br>Indigenous Experience: Native Americans, Colonialism and Manifest Destiny | W2 Response--<br><i>Pocahontas</i><br>Controversy analysis:<br><a href="#">article link here</a><br><br>Study for quiz              |
| Week 3: Jan 25<br>Sarah                         | Civil War, American Regionalism  | W3 Response--<br><br>Study for quiz   |
| Week 4: Feb 1<br>Sarah                          | Black American Experience: Slavery, Civil Rights, Black Lives Matter   | W4 Response--   |
| Week 5: Lunar New Year Holiday, <i>no class</i> | <b>新年快樂！</b>   |   |
| Week 6: Feb 15<br>Anne                          | Latinx American Experience   | W6 Response--<br><i>Selena</i><br><br>Submit questions for next week's guest panelists<br><br>Study for quiz                        |
| Week 7: Feb 22<br>Anne                          | Asian American Experience: Chinese immigration, Japanese internment, etc.<br><br><b>On the Asian-American Experience: Guest Panel Discussion</b> | W7 Response--<br><a href="#">"The Paper Menagerie"</a><br><br>Study for quiz  |
| Week 8: March 1<br>Anne                         | Women's Rights   | W8 Response--<br><br>Study for quiz   |
| Week 9: March 8<br>Sarah                        | LGBTQ Experience   | W9 Response--<br><br>Study for quiz   |
| Week 10: March 15<br>Anne                       | Performing Arts through the Decades<br><br>Social Media & Consumerism in American Culture  | Study for quiz<br><br>Begin studying for final  |
| Week 11: March 22<br>Sarah & Anne               | Looking forward: The American Landscape from Present to Future   | Study for Final   |

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|---|---|--|
|   | Concluding Thoughts (survey)<br><b>Review for Final</b> |  |
| Week 12: March 29<br>Anne + Sarah               | <b>Final Exam</b>                                       |  |
| Week 13: Ching Ming<br>Holiday, <i>no class</i> |   |  |
| Week 14: April 12 <i>no class</i>               | <b>暑假快樂！</b>  |  |