

Ethnicity in American Literature

ENGL 169

Fall 2025 Section 01 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/18/2025

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Colton Saylor

Email: colton.saylor@sjsu.edu

Please give me 24 hours to respond to an email. If I do not respond within that window, please feel free to message again

Office Hours

Tuesday, Thursday, 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM, Office Hours Link: <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/8767305039?pwd=VWdZNGhFWitEazVfVit0aHhwZVp4UT09>

All Office Hours will be on Zoom; Waiting Room will be activated, meaning I will let students in one at a time

Course Description and Requisites

Study of expressions of ethnic and racial identity in American literature, with close attention to strategies of representation and resistance. Selected texts primarily arise out of the lived experiences of people of color, including Native Americans, Black Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinx Americans.

GE Area: S

Prerequisite(s): Completion of Core General Education and upper division standing are prerequisites to all SJSU studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

Extension Policy

I will grant extensions (no questions asked) for the following assignments. Extensions can be requested at any point **EXCEPT** not on the day that the assignment is due:

Essay # 1 (Close Reading)

Proposal/Annotated Bibliography

Essay # 2 (Final Paper)

All other assignments must be submitted by the times listed on this syllabus and Canvas.

Late papers for Major Essays will be docked -2.5 per each day they are late.

Late papers for credit/half credit/no credit assignments (all responses, activities, etc.) will receive half credit if submitted late.

Absence Policy

You do NOT need to excuse absences with me over email. I do not take attendance, meaning I do not require notification about when you miss class.

If you are absent, please note that I DO NOT review what was missed over email. Instead, you can catch up with what you missed via any of the following options:

- email another person in the class
- schedule an office hours appointment with me

AI Policy

In this class, we are working together to become better writers, readers, and thinkers. In that spirit, no use of any artificial intelligence will be allowed on any of your assignments. I know some of you use programs like Grammarly or Quill to check your assignments before submitting, but as these are also examples of AI, they are also not permitted in this class. I do not deduct points specifically for grammar mistakes, and I am more concerned with you writing in your own original voice. Despite their marketing, these programs damage that voice rather than enhancing it.

I will be using turnitin.com (SJSU's approved plagiarism detector) to help me check assignments for any use of AI. As I know turnitin is not perfect, I'll also be using my own knowledge of our course, our texts, and common sense.

Any usage of AI in any capacity to complete an assignment will be treated as plagiarism.

Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of

study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

Goal 1: To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

Goal 2: To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

Goal 3: To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website](#).

English Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.

4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: english@sjsu.edu (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area S: Self, Society, and Equality in the U.S.

SJSU Studies courses -- Areas R, S, and V -- help students integrate knowledge between and among disciplines. In Area S courses, students study the interrelationships of individuals, racial groups, and cultural groups to understand and appreciate issues of diversity, inclusion, inequalities, and justice in the United States.

GE Area S Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area S course, students should be able to:

1. describe how identities are shaped by cultural and societal influences within contexts of equality and inequality. Examples include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, disability status, age, generation, regional origin, national identity, language, and intersectionalities;
2. analyze historical, economic, political, or social processes that shape diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S. and reflect on one's own identities and positions within these structures;
3. evaluate social actions which have or have not led to greater equality and social justice in the U.S.; and
4. engage in constructive interactions about social issues in the U.S. within the framework of equality and inequalities.

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 3000 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

Course Materials

Required Texts

Available for Purchase through Canvas page

Mapping the Interior, Stephen Graham Jones ISBN-10: 076539510X

ISBN-13: 978-0765395108

Passing, Nella Larsen ISBN-10: 0593437845

ISBN-13: 978-0593437841

Other required readings/films can be found either linked in the syllabus or as PDFs in Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

ENGL 169 Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, you are expected to spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on.

All assignments due to Canvas unless otherwise instructed.

Assignment Word Count and Assignment GELO

Assignment	Word Count	Learning Goals	Final Grade %
Essay # 1 (Close Reading)*	500-750	GE 1, 2, 3, 4; E 1, 2, 3	15
Essay # 2 (Final Paper)*	1,250-1,500	GE 1, 2, 3, 4; E 1, 2, 3, 4	20
<i>Legends From Camp</i> Group Presentations	-	GE 1, 2, 3, 4; E 1, 2, 3, 4	10
Forum Posts (5 required posts/replies)	150-200 (for each post, not counting reply)	GE 1, 2, 3, 4; E 1, 2, 3, 4	25 (5% for each post)
Proposal/Annotated Bibliography	500	GE 1; E 1, 2, 3, 4	10
Final Exam	-	GE 1, 2, 3, 4; E 1, 2, 3, 4	20

* - assignment requires rough draft and final draft

Bolded – letter-grade assignments

All other assignments are Credit/Half Credit/No Credit

Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography: Your proposal should describe the question you hope to answer, listing five library resources (academic books or journal articles) in an annotated bibliography.

Forum Posts: You will be required to post 5 times to our Canvas Forum throughout the semester. The due dates for these posts are listed on our Course Schedule below. Along with each post, you must reply to one other colleague's post. Not replying to another post will result in receiving half credit. Each response should describe what your reaction to that particular reading (including any evidence from the text that supports your reading), complete with ways you think the reading contributes to course themes or other on-going class discussions.

The Close Reading, Group Presentation, and Final Paper prompts will be discussed in class.

✓ Grading Information

We will have two different kinds of assignments in this class: **letter-graded** and **credit/half-credit/no credit**.

A **credit/half-credit/no credit** assignment is meant to help you practice and/or reflect on a concept from our class. In general, I will grade these assignments based on the following criteria (**note: certain assignments will have unique criteria which I will go over in class**)

Full Credit: the assignment is completed on-time, hits the required word count, and follows the instructions on the assignment description

Half-Credit: the assignment is submitted late OR the assignment does not meet word count OR the assignment does not follow the description's instructions (could be a combination of any of these three)

No Credit: the assignment is not submitted OR the assignment is submitted using AI in any capacity

We will have two **letter-graded** essays. In class, I will discuss specific requirements that each genre of essay demands, but in general, I grade essays based on the following three areas:

Thesis - a strong thesis has a clear and (in our case) argumentative stance and detailed supporting reasons that forecast the essay's general content and structure. A paper with a strong thesis makes it easy to identify what you're arguing and gives your reader a clear picture of how your essay will specifically and uniquely make that case

Argumentation - strong argumentation means both the inclusion of effective evidence to support your claim as well as clear and logical discussion of that evidence. In a strongly argued paper, each example/point you include to support your thesis feels unique in how it builds up your stance but still cohesive with the rest of your essay.

Structure - a paper with a strong sense of structure excels at two levels: the global (the essay as a whole) and the local (each paragraph). At a global level, strong structure means logical arrangement of paragraphs (intro, body, rebuttal, conclusion) in a way that clearly guides the reader from one section to the next (by use of strong topic sentences and, when appropriate, transitions). At a local level, strong structure means arranging each sentence in your paragraph in such a way that each new idea builds logically from

the previous ones. In a body paragraph, for example, this means using topic sentences, inclusion of evidence/examples, analysis and/or discussion of those examples, and finally the lead-out of that paragraph.

Your grades for these papers will be out of 100 in 2.5% increments

An A range paper (90-100) is strong in all three of these areas (how high or low in the range depends on how strong or weak these areas are).

A B range paper (80-87.5) is strong in two of these areas, but weak in the third (here again, how or low in the range depends on the strength and/or weaknesses in all three areas)

A C range paper (70-77.5) is strong in one of these areas but weak in the other two (same note as above regarding where in the range the grade falls)

A D range paper (60-67.5) is weak in all three areas

An F grade (0-57.5) will only be given to a non-submitted assignment, a paper guilty of plagiarism (such as AI-use), or a paper submitted so late that the penalties take it to under a 60%.

Final Course Grade Breakdown (I round up or down to the nearest tenth of a decimal point)

A (93-100); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62); F (<60)

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/20	In Class: Introduction On Canvas: Explore Canvas, Review Syllabus

2	8/25	<u>Unit 1: Formulating Subjectivity.</u> Read before Class: "Of Our Spiritual Strivings." (https://faculty.gordonstate.edu/lsanders-senu/The%20Souls%20of%20Black%20Folk.pdf). W.E.B. Du Bois In Class: Discuss reading
2	8/27	Read before Class: "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian." (https://cwi.pressbooks.pub/americanliterature/chapter/sui-sin-far-edith-maude-eaton/). Sui Sin Far In Class: Discuss reading
3	9/1	LABOR DAY - NO CLASS
3	9/3	<u>Unit 2: Abolition and Empathy.</u> Read before Class: The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian (https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/prince/prince.html) <i>Slave</i>, (https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/prince/prince.html) Mary Prince In Class: Discuss reading On Canvas: Forum Post #1 + 1 Reply Due 9/5, 11:59PM
4	9/8	In Class: Close Reading Workshop
4	9/10	<u>Unit 3: Troubling the Color Line</u> Read before Class: Part 1 of <i>Passing</i>, Nella Larsen In Class: Discuss reading
5	9/15	Read before Class: Part 2 of <i>Passing</i>, Nella Larsen In Class: Discuss reading

5	9/17	Read before Class: Part 3 of <i>Passing</i>, Nella Larsen In Class: finishing discussing <i>Passing</i>, review finding close reading passages On Canvas: Forum Post #2 + 1 Reply Due 9/19, 11:59PM
6	9/22	In Class: Peer Review Workshop #1 On Canvas: Close Reading Paper due 9/26, 11:59PM
6	9/24	<u>Unit 4: Navigating Difference</u> Read before Class: "Desiree's Baby," Kate Chopin (https://www.katechopin.org/pdfs/desirees-baby.pdf) (PDF in Files Section)
7	9/29	Read before Class: "Everything that Rises Must Converge," Flannery O'Connor (Reading under Files Folder) In Class: Discuss Reading
7	10/1	Read before Class: "Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature," David Foster Wallace (PDF in Files Section) In Class: Discuss reading On Canvas: Forum Post #3 + 1 Reply Due 10/3, 11:59PM
8	10/6	<u>Unit 5: Translating History</u> In Class: Discuss Historical Monuments
8	10/8	Read before Class: Legends From Camp Excerpts, Lawson Fusao Inada In Class: Discuss Japanese American Internment; Discuss Inada
9	10/13	In Class: Assign Legends Group Presentation
9	10/15	In Class: Group Presentation Work Day

10	10/20	In Class: Group Presentations, Day 1 (Groups 1-4)
10	10/22	In Class: Group Presentations, Day 2 (Groups 5-7)
11	10/27	In Class: Close Reading Review; Final Paper Prep
11	10/29	<u>Unit 6: Indigenous Identities</u> Read before Class: "Introduction" from <i>Playing Indian</i>, (https://is.cuni.cz/studium/predmety/index.php?do=download&did=76206&kod=JMM654), Philip J. Deloria In Class: Discuss reading
12	11/3	Read before Class: <i>Mapping the Interior</i>, Stephen Graham Jones (pp. 1-55) In Class: Discuss reading
12	11/5	Read: <i>Mapping the Interior</i>, Stephen Graham Jones (pp. 56-112) In Class: Discuss reading On Canvas: Forum Post #4 + 1 Reply Due 11/7, 11:59PM
13	11/10	In Class: Proposal/JSTOR Workshop On Canvas: Proposal/Annotated Bibliography due 11/18, 11:59PM
13	11/12	<u>Unit 7: Race, Sexuality, and Gender</u> In Class: Discuss Race, Sexuality, and Gender
14	11/17	In Class: Watch <i>Moonlight</i>
14	11/19	In Class: Finish watching <i>Moonlight</i>; discuss film On Canvas: Forum Post #5 + 1 Reply Due 11/21, 11:59PM
15	11/24	In Class: Finish discussing <i>Moonlight</i>

15	11/26	THANKSGIVING BREAK - NO CLASS
16	12/1	In Class: Peer Review Workshop #2 On Canvas: Final Paper due 12/12, 11:59PM
16	12/3	In Class: Final Exam Review
17	12/8	In Class: Optional in-class office hours
	12/10	Final Exam due on Canvas 12/10, 3:00PM