Course Description
This course offers an overview of 20th Century American literature with selections from major poets, fiction writers and dramatists. We will pay specific attention to international and transnational elements of literature written in the U.S. As we read primary texts we will also be addressing recent developments in the study of American Literature that have been grouped together as the transnational turn in American Studies. These critical materials will help us address the question of what it means to an “American” writer in a century characterized by large-scale immigration, globalization, and neo-imperialism. As writers and texts circulate more and more rapidly around the globe, does it even make sense to speak in terms of national literatures?

Over the course of the semester we will track the changing demographics of the U.S. and the changing face of American literature. In the process we will discuss major aesthetic movements in the century including modernism, multiculturalism, and postmodernism. Works considered will include plays by David Henry Hwang and Tennessee Williams; fiction by Nella Larsen, Leslie Marmon Silko, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, and Salman Rushdie and poetry by Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and T.S. Eliot.

Assignments:
Discussion Facilitation: 15%
Position Paper: 15%
Abstract: 5%
Revised Abstract and Annotated Bibliography: 10%
Participation: 15%
Final Project: 40%

Required Texts:
F. Scott Fitzgerald, Tender is the Night
Tennessee Williams, Streetcar Named Desire
T. S. Eliot, The Waste Land and Other Writings
Nella Larsen, Quicksand
Theresa Hak Jyung Cha, Dictee
David Henry Hwang, M. Butterfly
Leslie Marmon Silko, Garden in the Dunes
Salman Rushdie, Fury
Additional readings available on RamCT

Schedule of Readings

**Unit I: The Transnational Turn**

8/22 Introduction
The Transnational Turn in American Studies Part 1: Foundations

8/24 The Transnational Turn in American Studies Part 2: Current Headings

8/26 The Transnational Turn in American Studies Part 3: Discussion

8/29 F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Lonely is the Night*

8/31 Continue *Lonely is the Night*

9/2 Conclude *Lonely is the Night* Discussion

9/5 Labor Day

9/7 Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

9/9 Continue *A Streetcar Named Desire*

9/12 Conclude *A Streetcar Named Desire* Discussion

**Unit II: Transnational Poetics**

Begin T. S. Eliot “The Waste Land”

**Position Paper Due**

9/16 Continue T. S. Eliot “The Waste Land”

9/19 Conclude “The Waste Land” Discussion

9/21 Claude McKay *Harlem Shadows* (on RamCT)

9/23 Conclude *Harlem Shadows* Discussion

**Unit III: Diaspora**

9/28 Langston Hughes, *The Weary Blues* (on RamCT)

9/30 Langston Hughes, *The Weary Blues*

10/3 *The Weary Blues*
Discussion

10/5 Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*

10/7 **English Department Reading Days No Class**

10/10 Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*

10/12 Conclude *Quicksand*
Discussion
**Abstract Due**

**Unit IV: The Planetary Turn**


10/17 Gertrude Stein, from *The Making of Americans* (on RamCT)

10/19 Gertrude Stein, from *The Making of Americans* (on RamCT)

10/21 **No Class**

10/24 Conclude *The Making of Americans*
Discussion

10/26 David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly*

10/28 Conclude *M. Butterfly*
Discussion

10/31 Leslie Marmon Silko, *The Garden in the Dunes*

11/2 Leslie Marmon Silko, *The Garden in the Dunes*

11/4 Leslie Marmon Silko, *The Garden in the Dunes*
**Revised Abstract and Annotated Bibliography Due**

11/7 Conclude *The Garden in the Dunes*
Discussion
Unit V: Traveling Literature


11/11  Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee*

11/14  Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee*

11/16  Conclude *Dictee*
     Discussion

11/18  Salman Rushdie, *Fury*

**Fall Break 11/21-25**

11/28  Salman Rushdie, *Fury*

11/30  Conclude *Fury*
     Discussion

12/2  Presentations of Final Projects

12/5  Presentations of Final Projects

12/7  Presentations of Final Projects

12/9  Presentations of Final Projects
     **Final Projects Due**
Academic Policies

Course Structure: This course will be a modified seminar and each of our meetings will revolve around group discussion. We will discuss the optimal course structure on the first day of class.

Participation: Since we will be relying heavily on discussion your participation is a crucial component of the course.

Assignments

Discussion Facilitation: Each student will sign up to facilitate discussion. Discussion facilitators are required to post discussion questions to RamCT by 5:00 PM on the day of the class meeting before they are to facilitate discussion (if you are facilitating discussion on a Friday then your questions must be posted by 5:00 on that Wednesday). Facilitators are required to meet with me. Successful questions will: (1) situate the text under discussion in the larger context of the class, making references to relevant critical and literary works we have already covered, (2) identify key passages for us to work with and (3) provide some background from your own research on the text or author.

Position Paper: A position paper of no more than 1500 words is due on 9/14. This paper will draw from the theoretical readings with which the class began to present an argument for reading either A Streetcar Named Desire or Tender Is the Night as a transnational text. One of the goals of this exercise is for you to begin to see what you think the value of a transnational approach might be. While you will not have the space for an extensive reading of either text you should point to specific examples that support your claims.

Abstract: You are required to write an abstract for a critical presentation on the materials for this course. This abstract may become the topic of your final project.

Revised Abstract and Annotated Bibliography: About a month before the final project is due you will turn in a revised abstract and an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources that you have consulted in preparing to write your project. These may include additional theoretical readings, relevant literary texts, or criticism. The annotations should be brief statements that both identify key claims or points of interest and that can serve as reminders of how you might use these sources.

Final Project: The final project for this course will be a 15-20 page analytical essay on a topic of your choosing.