English 660-32963

RACE, CITIZENSHIP & BELONGING: THE POLITICS OF FORM IN THE ETHNIC AMERICAN BILDUNGSROMAN

Professor Kirby Brown
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Office Hours: W: 1-2; Th 11-1, and by appointment
541-346-5819

Class Meetings
PLC 253
Th 2:00-4:50pm
kbrown@uoregon.edu (preferred)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Bildungsroman. Arguably one of the most widely recognized and hotly contested critical terms in literary studies, it has been read as everything from an organic, mimetic allegory of national community to an insidious instrument of social discipline. Its coincidence with the emergence of empire, nationalism, bourgeois individualism and modernity not only encourages interrogation of its normative representations of social order and subject formation. It also demands theoretical frameworks and interdisciplinary methodologies capable of addressing intersections between race, class, nation and gender/sexuality that consistently exceed the genre’s formal impulse toward containment and closure. Contemporary explorations of the bildungsroman as a narrative form, then, will necessarily concern themselves with the politics of form itself.

Informed by extensive readings at the intersections of genre theory and race, nation, and citizenship studies, this course explores ethnic American negotiations with the American bildungsroman in three novels from the 1930s: John Joseph Mathews’ Sundown; Américo Paredes’ George Washington Gomez, and Nella Larsen’s Quicksand. Marked by post-War Anglo-nativism, intensified racial violence across the South and Southwest, drastic shifts in immigration and federal Indian policies, and the cultural/literary influences of modernity and American modernism, these writers chose the bildungsroman as the literary form through which to examine the contradictions of national subject formation for the racially-marked “citizen.”

REQUIRED TEXTS

John Joseph Mathews, Sundown
Américo Paredes, George Washington Gomez
Nella Larsen, Quicksand

Supplementary readings available on Blackboard

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

This course offers a variety of assignments by which your performance is assessed. These include participation & attendance, facilitations, weekly critical blog postings (~500-750 words) and responses (~250 words), paper proposal (2-3pp) and final conference paper (10-12pp).

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Participation & Attendance 10%
Facilitation/Presentation 15%
Weekly Critical Blog Postings & Responses 20%
Paper Proposal Conferences (Google Docs) 15%
Final Conference Paper (10-12pp) 40%
ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT
The University Student Conduct Code (conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the student’s obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

CLASS COMMUNICATION
Get in the habit of checking your UO email account regularly as this will be our primary means of communication outside of class. I highly recommend trying to contact me via email rather than telephone as I check it regularly and am thus able to respond more quickly, generally within two working days. Also be aware that I will not respond to emails sent after 5pm or on the weekend after 8am on the next weekday.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon and request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

INCLEMENT WEATHER
If inclement weather makes traveling to campus difficult, I will notify you by email and/or voice mail about whether we are holding class. If the weather is bad, check your email for a message from me, and check my voice mail (541-346-1314) if there are electrical outages around town that might prevent my emailing you. Whether or not I decide to hold class, you should use your own judgment about the safety of traveling to campus.

COURSE SCHEDULE
April 4: Theoretical Mash-up: Citizenship, Race, Nation & Genre

April 10: “2nd Annual UO Climate Change Research Symposium and Indigenous Peoples Lecture.” 6:30pm, Many Nations Longhouse. For more information about this event, contact Kathy Lynn kathy@uoregon.edu or Mark Carey carey@uoregon.edu, or visit http://ccip.uoregon.edu. Attendance encouraged.

April 11: Mapping the Bildungsroman: Early Statements & Contemporary Conundrums
Group A Blog Posts
Group B Blog Responses (3)


Facilitations:


April 18: American Indian Bildung: Race, Nation, Civilization & the Question of “Modernity” in John Joseph Mathews’ Sundown

Group B Blog Posts
Group A Blog Responses (3)

Primary Readings: Mathews, Sundown


Facilitations:

April 25: American Indian Bildung: Race, Nation, Civilization & the Question of “Modernity” in John Joseph Mathews’ Sundown

Group A Blog Posts
Group B Blog Responses (3)

Primary Texts: Mathews’ Sundown


Facilitations:

April 26th: Racial Representations: African American Literatures Since 1975 (10am-6pm, Gerlinger Lounge). Attendance is REQUIRED at the morning, afternoon, or reading panels.

May 2: American Indian Bildung: Race, Nation, Civilization & the Question of “Modernity” in John Joseph Mathews’ Sundown

Group B Blog Posts
Group A Blog Responses (3)
Primary Text: Mathews’ *Sundown*


Facilitations:

**May 9: Bildung on the Border: Americo Paredes’ *George Washington Gomez***

Group A Blog Posts
Group B Blog Responses (3)

Primary Text(s): Paredes, *George Washington Gomez*

Supporting Text(s): O’Shea, “The Ranches of Southwest Texas as They Were in the ‘80s-'90s”


Facilitations:

**May 16: Bildung on the Border: Americo Paredes’ *George Washington Gomez***

Group B Blog Posts
Group A Blog Responses (3)

Primary Text(s): Paredes, *George Washington Gomez*

Supporting Text(s): “Corridos”


Facilitations:

**May 23: Bildung on the Border: Americo Paredes’ *George Washington Gomez***

Paper Proposal Conferences (2-3pp)

Primary Text(s): Paredes’ *George Washington Gomez*

Supporting Text(s): Jovita Gonzales, “America Invades the Border Towns”

Secondary Readings: John Gonzalez, “Forging Bi-Cultural U.S. Citizenship: LULAC and the Making of

*Facilitations:*

**May 30: Mediated Subjectivities in Nella Larsen’s *Quicksand***

*Group A Blog Posts*

*Group B Blog Responses (3)*

Primary Text(s): Larsen, *Quicksand*


*Facilitations:*

**June 6: Mediated Subjectivities in Nella Larsen’s *Quicksand***

*Group B Blog Posts*

*Group A Blog Responses (3)*

Primary Text: Larsen, *Quicksand*


*Facilitations:*

**June 13: Final Papers Due @ Dinner (TBD)**