INTRODUCTION TO FICTION:
AMERICAN LITERATURE FROM THE MARGINS

“to be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body” – bell hooks

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is an introduction to the study of fiction. Going beyond summary, we will learn to analyze literature, practice the skill of close reading, and develop critical thinking skills by considering the broader relationship between each text and the world. We will read poetry, short stories, essays, and novellas written by writers whose complex identities respond to a matrix of language, race, nationality, geography, and class. While all the texts in this course are set in America, our characters hail from Cuba, Haiti, Mexico, Russia, Vietnam, and former Yugoslavia. Our final text, set in New York City, was written originally in Russian, and we will be reading the English translation. Alongside our texts, we will consider how we make our home in the world, discuss the promises and limitations of the American dream, and think about the relationship between language and nationality embedded in the very idea of American literature.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course, students will have:

-learned the vocabulary of literary analysis, the conventions of literary genre, and MLA-citation style
-developed critical thinking skills by discussing and analyzing the relationship between language, race, nationality, geography, and class in these literary texts
-improved argumentative writing skills by writing analytical essays that make a clear central argument, consider socio-historical contexts, and provide textual evidence
REQUIRED TEXTS

You must bring a *physical paper copy* of the text that is being discussed to class with you. If the cost of the course texts and printing is prohibitive, please see me during the first week of the term.

Purchase the following editions. Available at the DuckStore and widely online.


Print the following. Available in Files on our course Canvas site.


COURSE POLICIES

Underline Honesty:
All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. In cases where academic misconduct has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is the standard practice. This course does not require outside research. Please avoid online
sources; focus on the course slides and textual analysis. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Access: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Ethical Participation: We will treat each other with consideration and respect and communicate in a manner that is thoughtful, constructively critical, and helpful. I expect you to take the work and opinions of your peers seriously, and I will also take your work, suggestions, discussions and contributions seriously. Please let me know if any issues arise.

Attendance: You can be absent twice without penalty, and I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. Please reserve any absences for emergencies. Each absence after the second will lower your course grade one third of a letter grade. Using your cell phone in class will count as an absence. Arriving to class late or leaving class early will be considered half an absence. Please inform me of any emergencies; we will try to make possible your full participation.

Late Work: All assigned work is due to Canvas by the times listed. Late work will not be accepted. Requests for extensions must be made 48 hours in advance of the assignment due date.

Tech: Please do not use your laptop or cell phone in class unless required for access reasons.

Contact: I am available each week in office hours as well as by appointment. Please go to office hours to ask for help, to check what you have missed, or for any questions requiring detailed responses. While I am happy to help with quick questions via email, please be mindful that many of the commonly-asked questions (office hours: time and location, assignment requirements, etc.) are answered on the syllabus, the course Canvas website, and the course slides posted to Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Reading Analysis Essays (Week 4 and Week 8) 40% - Two reading analysis essays (20% each) will need to be written in Word and submitted to Canvas prior to class on the days listed. Each essay must be a minimum of 2 pages, formatted according to the requirements listed on this syllabus, and edited for grammar and clarity. To receive a passing grade, each essay must: make a clear argument about a course text, provide evidence and quotes from the text, use MLA citation style, closely analyze the evidence using course terms when necessary, have cohesive paragraphs, and stay focused on the
text. Additional detailed information and optional prompts will be discussed in class and posted to Canvas.

Midterm Exam (Week 6) 25%-
The in-class exam will consist of quote identifications, definitions of concepts and terms, and short answer questions. A study guide will be distributed in Week 5 and more information will be provided in class.

Final Essay (11/4) 25%-
The final essay will need to be a minimum of 5 pages, written in Word, formatted according to the requirements listed on this syllabus, and edited for grammar and clarity. You will be required to make a clear argument about a course text or texts, provide evidence and quotations using MLA-style citation, have cohesive paragraphs and stay focused on the text(s). Additional detailed information and optional prompts will be discussed in class and posted to Canvas.

Participation 10%-
To earn full credit for participation, you will need to: attend class regularly with a paper copy of the day’s assigned reading, avoid consistently checking your phone, participate in small group discussion, do well on 5 reading quizzes, and visit my office hours with a question about a reading or an assignment at least once during the term.

**FORMATTING**

All assignments need to be written in Word (not Google Docs) and adhere to the requirements below. Microsoft Word is available to you free of charge. See the IT website for further information: [https://it.uoregon.edu/about-office-365](https://it.uoregon.edu/about-office-365). If you choose to write your essays in Google Docs, they will be short of the required length and points will be deducted.

- Double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1” margins
- Include the header below in the top left-hand corner of the first page
- Include page numbers

Your Name
Date
Kovalchuk, ENG 104, Fall 2018
Assignment Name (i.e. Analysis Essay)

Creative Title [do not underline, italicize or bold]

Each paragraph begins with an indent and the essay must be double-spaced with 1” margins. This example utilizes 1” margins. Please check your essay against this example.
# SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

## WEEK 1
- **TU 9/25**  
  Introduction

- **TH 9/27**  
  *Hemon, “The Lives of Others” (3-24)

## WEEK 2
- **TU 10/2**  
  *Anzaldua “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”; *Shteyngart “The Mother Tongue Between Two Slices of Rye – reading quiz #1

- **TH 10/4**  
  *Firmat Poetry, *Rodriguez Poetry

## WEEK 3
- **TU 10/9**  
  *Morrison, “Recitatif” (157-172)

- **TH 10/11**  
  *Danticat, “Caroline’s Wedding” (157-216) – reading quiz #2

## WEEK 4
- **TU 10/16**  
  *Lahiri, “Mrs. Sen’s” (111-135)

- **TH 10/18**  
  *Lahiri, “Third & Final Continent” (173-198)  
  **analysis essay #1 due to Canvas prior to class 10/18**

## WEEK 5
- **TU 10/23**  
  *Butler – “A Ghost Story” (111-123) – reading quiz #3

- **TH 10/25**  
  *Butler “Snow” (125-135)

## WEEK 6
- **TU 10/30**  
  MIDTERM EXAM – in class

- **TH 11/1**  
  Nabokov, *Pnin* (1-58)

## WEEK 7
- **TU 11/6**  
  Nabokov, *Pnin* (59-110) -reading quiz #4

- **TH 11/8**  
  Nabokov, *Pnin* (111-160)

  **11/11 Last day to withdraw or change grading option to P/NP**

## WEEK 8
- **TU 11/13**  
  Nabokov, *Pnin* (160-191)  
  **analysis essay #2 due to Canvas prior to class 11/13**

- **TH 11/15**  
  Ulitskaya, *The Funeral Party* (3-32)

## WEEK 9
- **TU 11/20**  
  Ulitskaya, *The Funeral Party* (33-50)

- **TH 11/22**  
  Thanksgiving

## WEEK 10
- **TU 11/27**  

- **TH 11/29**  
  Ulitskaya, *The Funeral Party* (100-154)

*PDF Located in Files on Canvas  **Final Essay due Tuesday, 11/4 by 11:59pm