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Chaminade University of Honolulu

2019 Chuuk Summer Session 3

EN 422: Modern Pacific Literature

Syllabus

Course Description:

This upper-division course offers an introduction to the contemporary literatures and cultures of the Pacific. We will read works from throughout the region, from Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia, focusing on those literatures written by and about the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Islands. In doing so, one of the implicit goals of the course is a re-writing and re-conceptualization of the region, its peoples and cultures, from the inside out. Whereas up until fairly recently the Pacific had been defined by outsiders, following Tongan scholar, Epeli Hau'ofa's, call to re-claim "our sea of islands" for Oceanians, we will work to interpret, understand, and celebrate Oceania from the perspectives of its indigenous inhabitants. We will consider how Oceanic writers have used their works to resist and "write back" against processes of militarization, neocolonialism, food colonialism, and climate change confronting their islands. This course will also highlight the ground-breaking contributions Micronesian writers, poets, artists, and cultural practitioners have made to Oceanic studies. If, in the past, Micronesian cultures were marginalized, Micronesian literatures and cultures are now experiencing a resurgence, critically intervening in the broader body of contemporary Oceanic literatures and cultures.

Required Texts:

- English 422 Course Reader: "Modern Pacific Literature" (each student will be provided with their own xeroxed course reader)
- Patricia Grace, *Potiki* (novel; available as class set)

Course Learning Outcomes:

- To demonstrate knowledge of Pacific Island literatures, cultures, and histories.
- To demonstrate critical reading, writing, and thinking skills.

- To understand the relationships between literature, culture, and history.
- To draft and revise an organized, coherent 4-5 page essay on a specific topic that reflects a detailed and complex understanding of the course readings.

Course Policies and Requirements:

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend class meetings and participate in the class on a regular basis. If you cannot attend a meeting due to an extenuating circumstance (illness, emergency, etc.), it is your responsibility to communicate with me via email and let me know why you won't be present. Whenever possible, please contact me *prior to* your absence from class.

Late Assignment Policy: Late assignments will be subject to grade penalties, which shall depend on the number of days an assignment is submitted after the due date. If there is a health issue, family emergency, or other extenuating circumstance that prevents you from turning in an assignment on time, it is your responsibility to communicate your situation to me ahead of time, and we can work together to try to find a solution. Please don't hesitate to contact me via email, at caitlin.yamamoto@chaminade.edu, or you may also send me a message through our teaching assistant.

Plagiarism Policy: Plagiarism is presenting the work of another as your own. It is a serious offense, and any student suspected of plagiarizing may receive a failing grade for the assignment or for the course. The guidelines for plagiarism are in the Chaminade Academic Catalog. The guidelines include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Complete or partial copying directly from a published or unpublished source without proper acknowledgment to the author. Minor changes in wording or syntax are not sufficient to avoid charges of plagiarism. Proper acknowledgment of the source of a text is always mandatory.
2. Paraphrasing the work of another without proper author acknowledgement.
3. Submitting as one's own original work, however freely given or purchased, the original exam, research paper, manuscript, report, computer file, or other assignment that has been prepared by another individual. (Chaminade Undergraduate Catalog, 2018-19).

Short Response Papers (1-2 pages): Each week, you will typically be assigned a set of readings either from the course reader or from one of the primary texts we are working on. Along with the reading assignment, you will be required to write and submit a 1-2 page response paper (250-500 words) on Canvas that responds to that week's readings. I will often provide you with specific questions/topics to help get us thinking about the texts for that week; however, since the response papers are a more informal mode of writing, I will also give you opportunities to write about whatever issues/ideas are important to you. Please do NOT treat these response papers as plot summaries (i.e. telling me what happened in the reading); rather, the primary purpose of these short papers is for you to begin to brainstorm your own ideas about what we are reading (i.e.

What do YOU think about these texts? What do you think about the ideas that are being presented?), as well as to serve as a form of communication between teacher and students.

Mid-Term Assignment: In order to get us reading, writing, and reflecting on the local literatures of Chuuk, the mid-term assignment will focus on Chuukese oral narratives. For this assignment, you will be asked to think of the various stories, chants, or songs that have been passed down to you orally, and to retell ONE of these narratives in a 2-page, double-spaced paper (500 words).

Final Essay: The final assignment will be a 4-5 page, double-spaced formal essay on ONE or more of the assigned readings of your choice.

Grading Criteria/Weighting of Assignments:

Partner Introduction/Poem: 20%

Short Response Papers (4 papers total): 40%

Mid-Term Assignment (Oral Stories from Chuuk): 20%

Final Essay: 20%

Grading Scale

- ‘A’ Outstanding scholarship and an unusual degree of intellectual initiative.
- ‘B’ Superior work done in a consistent and intellectual manner.
- ‘C’ Average grade indicating competent grasp of subject matter.
- ‘D’ Inferior work of the lowest passing grade, not satisfactory for fulfillment of prerequisite coursework.
- ‘F’ Failed to grasp minimum subject matter; no credit given.