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Course Title: ✓ English 385 Modern Pacific Literature
Term: Spring 1998 (Day Session)
Instructor: Prof. J. James (735-4711 Ext. 683)

Course Description: This course introduces students to some significant works of contemporary literature written by indigenous Pacific islanders. Works include those of writers from Aotearoa (New Zealand), Hawaii, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa. The course explores questions of themes: anti-colonialism and current problems of post-colonialism in the Pacific, Westernization/modernization and its erosive effects on traditional Pacific cultures, and current attempts to adjust and/or to reconnect to lost Pacific values and traditions. The course also explores aesthetics and techniques found in these new literatures as they are imbued and/or shaped by their respective social/historical settings. The key issue of cultural politics of identity will likewise be considered as the new Pacific writing serves to challenge earlier representations of the Pacific by outsiders and to promote emerging discourses on gender and class within the Pacific region today.

The instructor has studied and researched at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, and at the University of Hawaii (Manoa). He has also travelled fairly extensively in the South Pacific.

Required Texts: Once Were Warriors (Alan Duff)
Potiki (Patricia Grace)
Tales of the Tikongs (Epeli Hau'ofa)
Sons for the Return Home (Albert Wendt)

Additional Texts: These will be provided by the instructor. They will include the following:

- (1) Selected Pacific island folktales.
- (2) Selected short stories drawn from the following writers: Witi Ihimaera, Sitiveni Kalouniviti, Raymond Pillai, and Joseph Veramu.
- (3) One or two plays drawn from the following playwrights: Vilsoni Hereniko, Paul Simeai-Barton, and Larry Thomas.
- (4) Selected poetry drawn from the following poets: Imaikalani Kalahale, Kauraka Kauraka, Celo Kulagoe, Sano Malifa, Pio Manoa, Ruperake Petaia, Jully Sipolo, Konai Thaman, Haunani-Kay Trask, and Momoe Von Reiche.
- (5) Films: Utu, Once Were Warriors, Sons for the Return Home or Flying Fox in a Freedom Tree.

Course Objectives: See page three.

Assessment:

Attendance & participation/Contribution to small group discussions/Informal reaction responses/Short quizzes	>	30%
Journal entries or more formal reaction responses*/ Short class presentations	>	20%
Mid-term exam	>	25%
Final take-home exam or final take-home essay**	>	25%

*One assignment might include a critical review of a single work (story, play or poem) to which you would personally award a major literary prize.

**You will have your choice of doing a final take-home exam with 5 essays or of doing a critical paper (10-12 pages) on any work or works by an indigenous Pacific writer which explores and illuminates the confluence of "culture"; history, gender, and/or social class (at least 2 of these tributaries) in the contemporary Pacific.

Student Responsibilities: Regular attendance/interaction is expected in this class. It is vital to participate in small group discussions and other activities during the class time. Regular input from you in class discussion reveals how closely you have read, and it also provides you with the opportunity to practice skills of critical interpretation and dialogue, while making the class time more meaningful for everyone.

Keys to Success:

- (1) Come to class prepared and with a posture of active engagement in conversation and inquiry.
- (2) Be ready to write brief responses to questions about assigned readings.
- (3) Hand in assignments in a timely fashion.
- (4) Participate in a manner informed by respect for others, including those with views different than your own.

Attendance Policy: The Chaminade attendance policy and how it affects the final grade will be discussed the first week. You will be given a written statement on my attendance policy as well.

Extra-credit Assignments: See me for extra-credit assignment options. You may earn extra credit for work done above and beyond the course requirements. I encourage creative work (including poster displays and exhibits) and/or oral presentations, including dramatic readings, original writing and/or performance. Content should focus on some aspect (not covered in class) on a Pacific writer or his works. Extra credit, too, for attendance at a lecture or a literary reading or performance given by a Pacific writer (I'll update you periodically on Pacific writers who are scheduled to speak or perform at the University of Hawaii, Center of Hawaiian Studies, Honolulu Art Academy, Hawaii Literary Council sites, and various theatres).

Course Objectives. At the end of the course students are expected to be able to:

- (1) critically evaluate individual works of Pacific literature to determine their contribution to the understanding of Pacific culture and/or humanity
- (2) relate the texts to their general social and cultural context
- (3) identify the distinguishing features of the various genres and the literary techniques employed by individual writers.