

# Syllabus

## English 311: Diaspora, Migration, and Exile in the U.S. Multiethnic Literature

Instructor: Professor Lysa Rivera, Lysa.Rivera@wwu.edu

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This course explores the theme of bodies in motion in contemporary U.S. multiethnic literature. Working towards the broader goal of developing a comparative and intersectional approach to the study of U.S. minority literatures, we will narrow our focus a bit by paying attention to texts that are particularly attuned to experiences of alienation, displacement, and longing that often attend migration, exile, even tourism. Although rooted in different national, historical, and cultural contexts, novels like Junot Diaz's *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats* (1998), Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* (1997), Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy, a Novel* (1990), and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee* (1982) all traverse similar narrative scenarios, including resistance and adaptation to new cultures; cultural hybridity and bilingualism; meanings of nostalgia and 'home'; intergenerational conflicts between tradition and modernity; negotiating national and ethnic identities; and the cultural and psychological consequences of cultural displacement in general.

### Required Reading Material:

- Theresa Cha, *Dictee* (1982)
- Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy, a Novel* (1990)
- Karen Tei Yamashita, *Tropic of Orange* (1997)
- Ruth Ozeki, *My Year of Meats* (1998)
- Junot Diaz, *Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)

### Graded Requirements:

- Participation 10%
- Reading quizzes 10%
- Discussion questions 10%
- Zine Project 10%
- Midterm Exam 30%
- Final Exam 30%

### **Assignment Descriptions:**

- *Participation (10%)*: Students are expected to contribute regularly and earnestly to classroom discussion. If by the end of the quarter, you find that you never participated (or you did, but only once or twice), you can expect a reduced grade for this category.
- *Reading quizzes (10%)*: Students can expect weekly reading quizzes so that I can gauge your reading practices. These quizzes will be very easy if you are keeping up with the reading.
- *Discussion questions (10%)*: Students will also be responsible for producing weekly discussion questions based entirely on the reading material for that week. These questions will not require the use of outside sources -- no library research will be required.
- *Student Zine (10%)*: At the end of the quarter, students will work to put together a course zine -- even coming up with the title and content -- which I will print and showcase to the class and department. (You will also get your own copy!). Although due at the end of the quarter, you will actually have to start thinking about your contribution to the zine well before then as become more familiar with (and excited about!) the course's theme: American Multiethnic Literature (or something on par with that). I will provide more details on the nature of the zine and its goals at some point during weeks three or four.
- *Midterm exam (30%)*: The midterm exam is a take-home exam, and will be submitted electronically via Canvas. It will consist of several small essay writing prompts, and you are to choose two. These essays will not require the use of secondary sources and/or library research. They must demonstrate that you have been reading, attending class, and thinking analytically about the material.
- *Final exam (30%)*: Details coming. The final exam will also be completed at home. It will resemble the midterm exam, although its focus will be on texts read and discussed after the midterm.