English 30:
Ethnicity in America

Instructor: Paola Gemme
Office: Scott Building (on College Avenue, just before Mellon Bank)
Office Hours: MWF 2:30-3:20 (3:30 - 4:30)
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Course Description:
This course will focus on the ethnic experience in the United States from the early nineteenth century to the present. We will read a number of ethnic writers as well as contemporary theoretical discourse on race and ethnicity. We will discuss, among other issues, how ethnic writers have responded to dominant white characterizations of minority groups, but also question the notion of ethnic and racial diversity itself and analyze its historical constructedness. As we explore ethnicity in America we will also write about it, in terms of short reactions to the readings and longer essays ranging in genre from academic discourse to personal reflections.

Texts:
William Apess, A Son of the Forest (1829)
Elisabeth Keckley, Behind the Scenes (1868)
Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton, The Squatter and the Don (1885)
W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folks (1903)
John Okada, No-No Boy (1957)
Cristina Garcia, Dreaming in Cuban (1993)
Werner Sollors, Consent and Descent in American Culture (1986)

Requirements:
1. I will expect you to do the reading assignments carefully and attend class faithfully. If, for whatever reason, you have more than five absences, you run the risk of receiving a lower grade than you might have secured otherwise, or even a failing grade.
2. Because I believe that students can be teachers as well as learners, I will ask you to come to each class with your own idea of a point, character, or passage that we should discuss that day. Our classes will thus reflect your agenda as well as mine.
3. Our discussion will be based in part on your written responses to the texts. You will write short response papers (around 2-3 pages) on 6 of the 7 writers for this course. You can choose not to write a response paper for any of the books except the first one.
4. You will have a take-home mid-term and final consisting of essay questions. Both exams will be peer-reviewed and revised before they are turned in.

Grades:
The response papers will count for 40% of your grade and the exams for 20% each. The remaining 20% of your grade will depend on your participation and attendance. Moreover, although I do not penalize late papers as long as I am informed ahead of time that there is a reason why a student cannot turn in an assignment on a given date, I reserve the right to lower the final grade of anybody who is late with no excuse or puts off written work until the end of the semester.

Tentative Schedule:
Jan 14: Introduction
Jan 16: Apess 1-56
Jan 19: Sollors chap. 1
Jan 21: Apess 59-93
Jan 21: Apess 59-93
Jan 23: Apess 95-138

Jan 26: draft for response paper 1 due
Jan 28: response paper due. Sollors chap. 2
Jan 30: Sollors chap. 3

Feb 2: Sollors chap. 4 and interlude
Feb 4: Keckley to 90
Feb 6: Keckley 91-173

Feb 9: Keckley 174-266
Feb 11: Keckley 267-371
Feb 13: response paper 2 due. Sollors chap. 5

Feb 16: Burton 55-105
Feb 18: Burton 105-157
Feb 20: Burton 158-218

Feb 23: Burton 219-280
Feb 25: Burton 281-344

Mar 2: Du Bois 82-132
Mar 4: Du Bois 132-194

Mar 16: response paper 4 due. Mid-term rough-draft due
Mar 18: mid-term due. Okada 1-49
Mar 20: Okada 51-116

Mar 23: Okada 117-188
Mar 27: response paper 5 due. Sollors chap. 7

Mar 30: Garcia 3-74
Apr 1: Garcia 75-126
Apr 3: no class. I am out of town for a conference

Apr 6: Garcia 127-181
Apr 8: Garcia 181-245
Apr 10: response paper 6 due. Sollors chap. 7

Apr 13: Kincaid 3-43
Apr 15: Kincaid 47-128
Apr 17: Kincaid 131-178

Apr 20: Kincaid 181-228
Apr 22: response paper 7 due.
Apr 24: rough-draft of final due

Apr 27: final due
Apr 29: extra day to be used in case we fall behind schedule or for movies
May 1: another extra day