

Culture and Justice in Literature

Teacher: Adrianna Bayer (Email: adrianna.bayer@gmail.com)

Office Hours: Wednesday: 10-11am (Room location TBA)

Class meetings: Monday-Thursday: 9-9:50am

Location: College of the Redwoods FM 106

Course Objectives: Critically read and analyze three texts relating to ideas surrounding culture and justice. Students will express their opinions about the texts through group discussions, meditations, an essay, and other creative forms of expression. During class we will explore different ways of learning including role-playing and reading aloud. Questions that will be explored in this class include but are not limited to:

1. Who is writing?
2. Who is speaking?
3. Who is being spoken to?
4. What significance does culture, history, and setting play in the outcome of the novel?

Required Texts:

Achebe, Chinua. Things Fall Apart. New York: Anchor Books, 1994.

Pilkington, Doris. Rabbit-Proof Fence. New York: Miramax Books, 2002.

Excerpts From:

Shakespeare, William. The Merchant of Venice. Ed. A. R. Braunmuller. New York: Penguin Putnam, 2000.

Movie:

The Merchant of Venice. Dir. Michael Radford. Perf. Al Pacino, Jeremy Irons, Joseph Fiennes, and Lynn Collins. Sony Pictures Classic, 2004.

Required Assignments:

1. Daily Readings
2. Quizzes on Readings
3. Weekly Meditations- 3 out of the possible 5 (1-2 pages)
4. One essay that discusses the ideas of justice and culture amongst the three texts (5-8 pages)

Grading Policy:

Meditations: 30%

Essay: 30%

Quizzes: 20%

Class Participation: 20%

Explanation of Assignments:

Note: Missed assignments and late work will only be accepted if the extenuating circumstances are discussed during a private conference between the student and me. I will be flexible, if needed.

However, for the most part, I expect everything to be turned in on time in order to receive full credit.

Meditations: These are informal reflections on the readings and class discussions. Students must submit three or more of the possible five. Full credit will be given as long as students think critically

and reflect on class material. Students may write their meditations as long as their handwriting is legible. Meditations can be turned in every Thursday at the beginning of class.

Quizzes: These will be short, between 10-15 minutes. I will give student's a two day's notice before a quiz is to occur.

Essay: Possible essay topics and the grading rubric will be handed out Tuesday, July 18th. Students are welcome to suggest their own topics and are encouraged to meet with me during office hours to discuss their essays. Suggestions must be mentioned by Tuesday, July 25th.

Holistic Grading:

All work in the class will be judged on its quality in relation to the student's overall progression of ideas as expressed in class discussions and class meditations. It is important that I see growth in each individual student in order to grade fairly. I will create student portfolios and will maintain copies of every meditation or assignment that is turned in for credit. Portfolios will contain personal notes on the progression of students' literary and educational growths. Students are encouraged to meet with me during office hours to review my portfolio notes.

Speaking frequently in class, actively participating in class activities, and writing as many of the meditations as possible are ways in which I can gauge your overall educational progression. Here is a tentative breakdown of how I will grade each student's **individual** growth, taking into account that students will start the course with little knowledge but should end the course with new knowledge and skills:

A: Student responds to all parts of the assignments and class activities. Meditations reflect a growth in analytical skills, independent and critical thought, or originality. Any information and evidence cited in meditations and the final essay are accurately represented and supported with evidence. The focus and purpose of the student's original educational goals, written on the first day of class, are achieved by the end of the course. Student takes an active role in their education and initiates meetings during office hours to check their progress.

B: Student responds to most, but not all, parts of the assignments and class activities. Meditations reflect some growth in analytical skills, independent and critical thought, or originality. Information and evidence cited in meditations and the final essay are usually accurate but not always well supported. The focus and purpose of the original educational goals, written on the first day of class, were partially achieved by the student. Student was somewhat active in their education, but did not initiate meetings to discuss their progress.

C: Student responds to some, but not all, parts of assignments and class activities. Meditations reflect little growth in analytical skills, independent and critical thought, or originality. Information and evidence cited in meditations and the final essay are sometimes accurate, but not always well supported. Very few of the original educational goals, written on the first day of class, were achieved by the student. Student took a more passive role in their education and did not initiate meetings to discuss their progress.

D: Student responds to very little of the assignments and class activities. Meditations reflect little to no growth in analytical skills, independent and critical thought, or originality. Information and evidence cited in meditations and the final essay are usually not accurate or well supported. Hardly

any of the original educational goals, written on the first day of class, was achieved by the student. Student was passive in their education and did not initiate meetings to discuss their progress.

F: Student responds to none of the assignments and class activities. Meditations do not reflect growth in analytical skills, independent and critical thought, or originality. Information and evidence cited in meditations and the final essay are not accurate or well supported. None of the original educational goals, written on the first day of class, were achieved by the student. Student was passive and did not initiate meetings to discuss their progress.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism ranges from the use of unquoted passages from books to copying entire passages from the Internet. Any use of another's words, without citations, constitutes plagiarism. If you have questions about whether something you wrote could be constituted as plagiarism, please see me.

Class Participation and Attendance:

Students must be respectful of all classmates. If a student ever feels threatened, singled out, or uncomfortable with speaking in the classroom, that student must speak with me outside of class. If a student misses 2 or more days, without presenting an adequate reason for his or her absence, they will automatically get 0% of class participation points. Missing more than two days can also affect the quality of other assignments in the class. Also, remember to silence your cell phones, pagers, or other communication devices before entering the classroom.

Special Note:

I reserve the right to make changes to our course syllabus as appropriate. The following is a tentative schedule:

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu |
|--|---|---|--|
| Jul 10 - Intro to course - Intro <i>Rabbit-Proof Fence</i> | Jul 11 - <i>RPF</i> : Ch 1-3 (17 pgs) | Jul 12 - <i>RPF</i> : Ch 4-5 (31 pgs) | Jul 13 - <i>RPF</i> : Ch 6-7 (24 pgs) Hand-in meditation |
| Jul 17 - <i>RPF</i> : Ch 8-9 (58 pgs) | Jul 18 - <i>Things Fall Apart</i> : Ch 1-3 (25 pgs) Assign essay | Jul 19 - <i>TFA</i> : Ch 4-7 (27 pgs) | Jul 20 - <i>TFA</i> : Ch 8-9 (23 pgs) Hand-in meditation |
| Jul 24 - <i>TFA</i> : Ch 10-13 (38 pgs) | Jul 25 - <i>TFA</i> : Ch 14-17 (25 pgs) Topic suggestion deadline | Jul 26 - <i>TFA</i> : Ch 18-20 (24 pgs) | Jul 27 - <i>TFA</i> : Ch 21-23 (20 pgs) Hand-in meditation |
| Jul 31 - <i>TFA</i> : Ch 24-25 (12 pgs) | Aug 1 - Computer Lab Day | Aug 2 - Computer Lab Day | Aug 3 - <i>Merchant of Venice</i> Hand-in meditation |
| Aug 7 - <i>Merchant of Venice</i> | Aug 8 - <i>Merchant of Venice</i> Hand-in essay | | |