

## Fall 2019 Course Descriptions

**Instructor:** Vanita Reddy

**Course:** ENGL 338

**Title:** Ethnic American Literature: Literature by Women of Color

**Description:** This course understands “Literature by Women of Color” as constitutive to Ethnic American Literature, rather than as merely supplemental to a more recognizable “canon” of ethnic American literature, authored primarily by men. To that end, the chosen texts for this course are not necessarily “about women” or “women’s experiences.” Rather, they are narratives about multiple forms of social difference that should be recognized as central to—rather than peripheral to—the formation of Ethnic American Literature.

For well over a century women of color have been writing themselves into U.S. history, continuously redefining their political, cultural, and social locations within the discourses of American identity. Their refusal to remain silent observers of history has resulted in a body of work —scholarly essays, novels, short stories, drama, performance, and films — that helps us to understand the ways in which ethnic, racial, class, gender, and sexual differences shape our conceptions of “American” identity.

In this class, we will explore the narrative practices of Latina, African American, Native American, and Asian American women, paying special attention to the ways in which their writing has given voice to their differential locations within the discourses of national identity and the ways they carve out racialized identities beyond US borders. We will explore the cultural, linguistic, and familial traditions that have informed their respective approaches to gender, race, nationhood, and oppositional politics.

**Proposed Readings:** Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (novel)

Cherrie Moraga, *Giving Up the Ghost* (play)

Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* (short stories)

Zitkala Sa, *American Indian Stories* (short stories)

Mira Nair, *Mississippi Masala* (film)

Shailja Patel, *Migritude* (prose-poem)

Chitra Ganesh and Miriam Ghani, *A Warm Database* (digital media)