

**Rhode Island College**  
**English 327**  
**Ethnic American Literatures**

**Instructor:** Dr. Stephen Brown

**Course Description:** In this course, we will examine the breadth of ethnic American Literatures, exploring issues of race and identity within an historical, cultural context. Readings will provide a counterpoint between traditional views of ethnicity with issues of fluidity and hybridity. We will examine the cultural landscape by exploring the interaction among the works of African American, Asian American, Arab American, Jewish American, Latina/o, and Native American authors to address issues of collective memory and history.

**Course Objectives:**

The student will be able to:

- Articulate an understanding the historical and cultural contexts for multi-ethnic literature;
- Demonstrate a knowledge of key concepts of the field including among others: “ethnicity,” “the Other,” “marginalization,” “stereotype,” “memory,” and “discourse;”
- Analyze significant critical articles in the field;
- Reflect about his/her own ethnicity;
- Demonstrate the ability to address cultural diversity in the United States through discussing and writing about the literature;

**Course Schedule and Reading Assignments:**

January	<b>25:</b> Course overview, introductions <b>27:</b> Poetry
February	<b>1:</b> <i>The Star Quilter</i> and <i>Rez Politics</i> , plays by W.S.Yellow Robe, Jr. <b>3:</b> <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i> <b>8:</b> <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i> <b>10:</b> August Wilson <b>15:</b> <i>The Piano Lesson</i> <b>17:</b> <i>Fences</i> <b>22:</b> <i>Jitney</i> <b>24:</b> <i>Breath, Eyes, Memory</i>
March	<b>1:</b> <i>Breath, Eyes, Memory</i> <b>3:</b> <i>Dinazad's Children</i> <b>8:</b> <i>Dinazad's Children</i> <b>10:</b> Exam <b>15/17:</b> Spring Break <b>22:</b> <i>The Chosen</i> <b>24:</b> <i>The Chosen</i> <b>29:</b> <i>Middlesex</i> <b>31:</b> <i>Middlesex*</i>
April	<b>5:</b> <i>Middlesex</i> <b>7:</b> <i>The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven</i> <b>12:</b> <i>The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven</i> <b>14:</b> <i>The Bonesetter's Daughter</i> <b>19:</b> <i>The Bonesetter's Daughter</i> <b>21:</b> <i>The Bonesetter's Daughter</i> <b>26:</b> <i>The House on Mango Street*</i> <b>28:</b> <i>The Painted Drum</i>
May	<b>3:</b> <i>The Painted Drum</i> <b>5:</b> <i>The Painted Drum</i>

## 10: Exam

### **Required texts:**

William S. Yellow Robe, Jr. *The Star Quilter and Rez Politics*  
Alexie, Sherman. *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*  
Sandra Cisneros. *The House on Mango Street*  
Edwidge Danticat. *Breath, Eyes, Memory*  
Louise Erdrich. *The Painted Drum*  
Jeffrey Eugenides. *Middlesex*  
Kaldas and Mattawa, Editors. *Dinarzad's Children*  
Jhumpa Lahiri. *Interpreter of Maladies*  
Chaim Potok. *The Chosen*  
Amy Tan, *The Bonesetter's Daughter*  
August Wilson. *Fences*  
August Wilson. *The Piano lesson*  
August Wilson. *Jitney*

### **Course Requirements:**

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|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Attendance and participation | 25% |
| 2. Papers                       | 50% |
| 3. Exams                        | 25% |

All students are required to activate their RIC email accounts and to check for class communications regularly.

All deadlines must be met. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you are late for class, your paper is late. Late work will be penalized 10% a day. If you have an excused absence on the day that an assignment is due, I will expect that you email the assignment to me prior to the beginning of class. You must bring a paper copy to the next class.

**Class attendance is required.** Additionally, I expect that you will be actively and positively involved in class discussion and activities. Significant tardiness or leaving prior to the end of class will also constitute an absence. After any absence, students must contact me in my office before the next meeting. I am the **only** person who can grant an excuse for class absence. Excused absences only mean that you will have the opportunity to make up work you missed. Makeup work will be allowed only in the case of excused absences. Your grade will be lowered for absences; **three absences (excused or unexcused) may be grounds for either removal from the roster or automatic failure in this course.**

**Turn off cell phones and pagers when entering class. Phones are to be secured out of sight. Text messaging is not permitted.**

Remedial work will be required for all students who do not consistently use Standard English.