

**ENGLISH 704-01:
STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY LITERARY AND CULTURAL THEORY (3.0 CR.)**

“After” Multiculturalism

Professor Christian Moraru
Spring 2008

HHRA 2208, T 6:30-9:20 PM

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is an advanced, critical theory seminar that focuses on one of the most pressing and controversial cultural and political issues of our time, namely, multiculturalism, on what it means historically and where it may be headed at the dawn of the new millennium. Born in the aftermath of the civil rights and countercultural movements of the late 1960s, the plural concept of culture and the understanding of America—of the world at large—as “many,” non-hierarchically organized cultures and literatures have undergone a whole spectrum of adaptations and transformations and have met with various degrees of enthusiasm in the “culture wars” of the 1980s and in the related debates over postmodernism, postcolonialism, and globalization.

Our discussion begins with a fundamental text frequently in the backdrop of the multiculturalist controversy, Julien Benda’s *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, and ends with interventions that argue for a post-multicultural moment in American and world history. In our attempt to sketch out a tentative history of multiculturalism and sort out the main viewpoints engaged in the disputes over the meaning and current relevance of the concept, we will also read works by Samuel Huntington, Charles Taylor, David Hollinger, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Peter Kivisto, among others. We will use a “target” text—Chang-rae Lee’s 1999 novel *A Gesture Life*—to problematize various aspects of our critical-theoretical readings. While the course is geared toward coming to terms with the multifaceted, thorny problems featured by these materials, we will always attempt to apply our conclusions—or merely extrapolate our dilemmas—to our teaching and research interests broadly.

PEDAGOGICAL METHODOLOGY AND CLASS FORMAT: Running for almost three hours, the seminar that combines lecture, extensive discussion, student presentations, and group work. Usually, our meetings will open with a lecture by the instructor providing historical, cultural and theoretical background and placing the scheduled readings in the appropriate context. Following

this introduction, students give 15-20-minute individual presentations on specific aspects of those readings. Then, we discuss collectively the materials for the day. I will set aside time to talk about papers, final project presentations, and so forth.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES: Graduate students are encouraged to use this course to put their work in the larger, more demanding and competitive perspective of professionalism and academic performance. The class is geared toward graduate reading and writing carrying potential for publication and presentation outside UNCG. While fulfilling the course's requirements is your main goal, I urge you to take these requirements as an opportunity to think about yourselves as part of the academic community, with its standards, language, methods, tools, and venues.

Here are a few questions for us: where do I stand as a scholar, teacher, critic, and writer, and which are my goals? What is, or will be, my audience? What kind of scholarly conversation do I wish to join based on what I learn in this class about specific works, genres, styles, critical paradigms, on the one hand, and research techniques and professionalism overall, on the other hand? Where do I stand right now in terms of my preparation for intervening in the scholarly debate and, if I am not quite ready, what steps do I have to take? What are the available resources? Which are the outlets for my work? What do I have to do, for instance, to turn my seminar presentation/paper into a conference paper/journal article/dissertation chapter/writing sample? (more details in class).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Oral participation is expected.

Individual presentations on the materials for the day. Guidelines for presentations: Students sign up for their final project and oral presentations right away so that we can spread out the presentations over the course of the semester. Each student will give a brief, 15-20-min. talk on the scheduled readings. The presentations need not be written. Presentations cover a relevant aspect or material for the day. I do not expect you to fully analyze or explain the assignments or even one of these assignments. I ask you to a) briefly outline the argument or content of the readings you intent to talk about; b) identify one major element or theoretical problem in these works, which should help us open up our conversation. Feel free to consult with me before you pick your presentation topic.

Final Project Presentation: Each student will give a 10-min. presentation on his or her final paper (see syllabus, last weeks).

Papers: a midterm (10 pp. max., including notes and Works Cited) and a final paper (20 pp. min. plus notes and Works Cited). The final paper may expand the midterm if the latter has been particularly successful. Both essays must be thesis-based and incorporate research.

Attendance and Participation. Both are expected and will factor into the final grade (see below under course policies).

Conferences: Please meet with me during my regular office hours or make an appointment to discuss your specific interests, goals, or any aspect of this class. We will also talk about your plans for the final project.

COURSE POLICIES: Late Papers: No late papers—and any other kind of work for that matter—accepted. However, if you foresee any deadline-related problems, please come to see me ahead of time. We shall work together to find a solution.

Absences: You are allowed no more than 2 (two) justified absences during the semester for illnesses (which you must document afterwards), religious holidays, or emergencies preventing you from attending. No undocumented absences allowed. Should they occur, they will affect your final grade. I will subtract 5% from the latter for any undocumented absence. Since we meet once a week, attendance is particularly critical to the success of our work in this class. If you are the victim of an emergency, please stay in touch with me by e-mail or phone.

GRADING: As a general rule, no incompletes (but come to see me if you anticipate any problems). The quality of your work will be reflected in the final grade as follows:

1. Papers: 85%
2. Oral participation (includes group work and presentations): 15%

Note: I would like to discuss these percentages and all requirements in general at our first meeting.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Benda, Julien. *The Treason of the Intellectuals*. New York: Transactions, 2006. ISBN 1412806232 (or latest)

Goldberg, David Theo. *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1995. ISBN 1412806232 (or latest)

Hollinger, David A. *Cosmopolitanism and Solidarity: Studies in Ethnoracial, Religious, and Professional Affiliation in the United States*. Milwaukee, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006. ISBN 0299216608.

Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Free Press, 2002. ISBN 074323149X.

Kivisto, Peter. *Multiculturalism in a Global Society*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2002. ISBN 0631221948.

Lee, Chang-rae. *A Gesture Life*. New York: Riverhead, 1999. ISBN 1573228281 (or latest)

Moraru, Christian. "The Other, the Namesake: Cosmopolitan Onomastics in Chang-rae Lee's *A Gesture Life*." *Names* 55.1 (March 2007): 17-36 (Optional).

Phillips, Anne. *Multiculturalism without Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007. ISBN 0691129444.

Pritchard, Stephen. *An Introduction to Multiculturalism*. London: Sage, 2007. ISBN 076194186X.

Taylor, Charles. *Multiculturalism*. Ed. and introduced Amy Gutmann. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994. ISBN 0691037795.

Willet, Cynthia, ed. *Theorizing Multiculturalism: A Guide to the Current Debate*. New York: Blackwell, 1998. ISBN 0631203427.

SYLLABUS:

Week 1

Tue Jan 15 Presentation of the syllabus, readings, requirements, etc. Discussion groups.
Individual presentations sign-up
Note: Get started on Benda and Lee. We will use Lee throughout the semester (starting Jan. 29).

Week 2

Tue Jan 22 Laying out our conceptual and historical framework (I). Culture: history of the term; cultural entities, cultural pluralism, multiculturalism. Self-other, being-in-relation, and the trouble with "classical" multiculturalism
Zadie Smith, *The Autograph Man* (excerpt provided); Goldberg, in Goldberg 1-41; Berlant and Warner, in Goldberg 107-113

Week 3

Tue Jan 29 Laying out our conceptual and historical framework (II): "Monism" and after.
Parekh 1-79; 142-178

Week 4

Tue Feb 5 Culture, identity, and belonging
Benda (I)

Week 5

Tue Feb 12 Culture, identity, and belonging. Class and cultural affiliation: The role of the intellectuals
Benda (II)

Week 6

Tue Feb 19 Multiculturalism and the politics of recognition
Taylor, *Multiculturalism*, 1-75

Week 7

Tue Feb 26 Responses to Taylor
In Taylor, *Multiculturalism*, 75-163

Week 8

Tue Mar 4 Recognition and communication
Fraser and others in Willett 17-99

Week 8

Tue Mar 11 Spring Break; no class

Week 9

Tue Mar 18 Post-Cold War reassessments (I): “The clash of civilization” theory
Huntington (I)
Midterm paper due in class

Week 10

Tue Mar 25 “The clash of civilization” theory
Huntington (II)

Week 11

Tue Apr 1 Post-Cold War reassessments (II): multiculturalism and globalization
Kivisto 1-83; 186-193

Week 12

Tue Apr 8 Multiculturalism and the new cosmopolitanism (I)
Old and new solidarities
Hollinger 1-38; 120-134; 166-184

Week 13

Tue Apr 15 Culture and cosmos; a new individualism?
Phillips 1-72; 162-180

Week 14

Tue Apr 22 Final project presentations

Week 15

Tue Apr 29 Last class
Course overview

Final evaluations
Final paper due in class