

## **LTEN 178: Comparative Ethnic Literature: Literary Responses to Collective Trauma**

Tu/Thu 9:30-10:50 am WLH 2112

Lisa Lampert-Weissig, Literature Office: Literature 347 (third floor lit. bldg.)

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### **Primary Readings:**

Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Enemies, a Love Story* (1972) (*Sonim, di Geshichte fun a Liebe*, first published serially in *The Forward*/פֿאָרווערטס/*Forverts*), 1966)

Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (1979)

Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987)

August Wilson, *The Piano Lesson* (1990)

Art Spiegelman, *Maus I and II* (1991)

Louis Owens, *Bone Game* (1996)

Jonathan Safran Foer, *Everything is Illuminated* (2002)

lê thi diem thúy, *The Gangster We are All Looking For* (2003)

“Language can never 'pin down' slavery, genocide, war. Nor should it yearn for the arrogance to be able to do so. Its force, its felicity, is in its reach toward the ineffable”--  
Toni Morrison

Schedule of Readings: This is a tentative schedule. Additional secondary readings may be added to enhance discussion as needed.

### **Week One:**

Jan. 7: Introduction

Jan. 9: Readings by Morrison, Gordon and Hirsch. Link to dropbox folder on website and sent via email.

### **Week Two:**

Jan. 14: I.B. Singer: *Enemies* (you should read each work in its entirety by the first day noted on syllabus)

Jan. 16: I.B. Singer: *Enemies*

### **Week Three:**

Jan. 21: Art Spiegelman, *Maus I and II*

Jan. 23: Art Spiegelman, *Maus I and II*

### **Week Four:**

Jan. 28: J.S. Foer, *Everything is Illuminated*

Jan. 30: J.S. Foer, *Everything is Illuminated*

### **Week Five:**

Feb. 4: Octavia Butler, *Kindred*

Feb. 6: Octavia Butler, *Kindred*

### **Week Six:**

Feb. 11: Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Feb. 13: Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Week Seven:

Feb. 18: August Wilson, *The Piano Lesson*

Feb. 20: August Wilson, *The Piano Lesson*

Week Eight:

Feb. 25: Louis Owens, *Bone Game*

Feb. 27: Louis Owens, *Bone Game*

Week Nine:

Mar. 4: lê thi diem thúy, *The Gangster We are All Looking For* (2003)

Mar. 6: lê thi diem thúy, *The Gangster We are All Looking For* (2003)

Week Ten:

Mar. 11: Review

Mar. 13: Review

Final exam: Tues. 3/18/14 8-11. Final exam will be a take-home essay due by 11 am on 3/18. Questions will be distributed well in advance. Method and location to submit essay TBA.

### **Course Requirements:**

Essays: 60 %

Final exam: 30 %

Class Participation: 10%

Please note: to earn Judaic Studies credit for this course please consult with instructor.

**Attendance:** Attendance is expected. Poor attendance can lower your grade. Moreover, if you miss class repeatedly your grade will be lowered automatically. If you miss 3 or more classes then you cannot earn an A for the course; if you miss 5 or more classes then you cannot earn a B; if you miss 7 or more classes then you cannot earn a C; if you miss 9 or more classes you cannot earn a D. The “three class” policy is not a “get-out-of-class-free-card.” You are expected to attend class, and to be present for in-class essays (see below). It is neither expected nor advised to miss 3 classes or more. Coming in late, which is disruptive, may count as an absence at my discretion and can lower your course participation grade. Attendance will be taken with an attendance sheet; it is your responsibility to make sure you sign it.

**Deadlines:** *I consider being able to meet a deadline to be an important part of written assignments.* Only documented legitimate medical or personal emergencies will excuse late work. If an emergency arises, you must let me know as soon as possible and I will do my best to accommodate your needs. It is *your* responsibility to keep me informed, and, indeed, I can't help you if I don't know that there is a problem.

### **Course format:**

This course will be a little different from the average literature course. We will have assigned readings to discuss at every class meeting, and will focus our discussion around a set of questions I have distributed at the previous meeting. You should come to class

having read the assignment and having prepared some thoughts in response to the questions. Most of our class sessions, then, will consist entirely of discussion.

On three to five unannounced occasions during the quarter, I will, at the beginning of class, ask you to write a 30-35 minute essay in response to one of the questions provided for the day. This essay should be well organized, thoughtful, persuasive, and use specific examples from the reading. You may prepare as much or as little of the essay in advance of class as you like; you may even write the entire essay before class, if you wish. You may use any of the course texts, as well as your notes, when writing the essay. I will drop the essay with the lowest score from your overall essay grade.

Please bring 8 x 11 lined paper and use ink for these essays if at all possible.

If you are not present in class on a day on which I ask for an essay, there are no make-ups, although that day's essay may be counted as your 'lowest score' essay. If you turn in an essay and decide you are not happy with it, you may bring in a new version, or an essay in response to any of the other questions from the same set, to me at the beginning of next class and substitute that essay for the one you have already turned in; you may do this only once with each essay, but you may do it for as many different essays as you like over the course of the quarter. Make-up essays should be typed.

Vacation plans and extracurricular activities are never an excuse for missed or late work. Sometimes, unfortunately, legitimate medical or personal emergencies keep us from performing at work or school as we would like. If something like this comes up for you during the course of our class, please let me know as soon as you can. It's your responsibility to keep your instructors informed and, indeed, we can't help you if we don't know there is a problem.