CULTURAL DIVERSITY in the LITERATURE of the AMERICAS
HU2520 Walker 108 Tues. & Th. 12:35-1:50
Richard Blanning Office Hrs. 2-3:30 tu & th / Walker 331 and by appointment. E-mail: rbbianni@mtu.edu
TEXTBOOKS: New Worlds of Lit. Beaty & Hunter
From Totems to Hip-Hop Ishmael Reed

In this course we will read short fiction, poetry, essays, and a play or two and see two films. In class we will discuss the readings and viewings and each student will present work(s) from FROM TOTEMS TO HIP-HOP to the rest of the class. Please look these over and be prepared to pick your title(s) and date for presentation by next Tuesday, 1/23. These will be 5 to 10 min. discussions led by you.

Attendance is required. More than three unexcused absences (the 4th on...) will cost a half grade point each. Please explain absences on your first day back if you think it should be excused.

Grades will be 20% each for the mid-term paper, the final paper and the class presentation: and 40% for a project paper. A bad attitude can cost as much as a grade point and then there’s attendance to think about. On occasion I will ask a single obvious question about the assigned reading(s): missing these questions and rolling your eyes will be part of what I consider a not so hot attitude.

Wk. 1 Ch. 1. HOME: Setting (time and place of action)
1/16 Focus on the poems: Selections FROM TOTEMS
And the sound of Bessie Smith/Dinah Washington
READ pp 37 – 51 and 112 for Thursday
Thursday: discuss readings
READ pp 159-173 and 179-181 for Tuesday

Wk. 2 Ch. 2. FAMILY: Characterization (WHO, what, why?)
1/23 Focus on essay and autobiography
Plan presentations and discuss readings
Thursday: continue with readings
READ pp 190-207 and 151-154

Wk. 3 Ch.3 Heritage: Point of View (who’s voice(s) from where?)
1/30 Tuesday: 4 student presentations and discuss readings
Thursday: Discuss readings Focus on essay (OVER)
Wk. 4 4/6 4 student presentations on Tues. Nothing Thursday
Wk. 5 Ch. 4 Language: words. Readings to be selected weekly...
2/13 4 student presentations on Tuesday & discuss readings
Wk. 6 Ch. 5 Aliens: expectation and reality
2/20 4 presentations on Tues., discussion, reading, etc.
Wk. 7 Film: SMOKE SIGNALS MID-TERMS DUE Thursday
2/27 Thursday: Finish and discuss film READ pp 523-575
Wk 8 Ch. 6 Fences: Conflict & Structure Discuss “drama”
3/6 4 presentations on Tuesday Discuss Fences
3/13 & 15: SPRING BREAK
Wk. 9 Ch. 7 Crossing: Theme READINGS from all three genera
2/20 4 presentations Tuesday and discuss all three genera
Wk. 10 Ch. 8 Americans: Contexts
3/27 4 presentations and discussion of (to be) assigned reads
Wk. 11 Ch. 9 Beliefs: myth & symbol PROJECT PAPERS DUE
4/3 4 presentations Tuesday and discussions of readings
Wk. 12 Discussion of your written thoughts on diversity
4/10 3 presentations on Tuesday
Wk. 13 Film: KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN
4/17 the film and discussion FINAL PAPERS DUE Thursday
Wk. 14 Latin American lit.
4/24 Readings and discussions PAPERS BACK Thursday

ASSIGNMENTS (more specifics later)
Mid-term: a minimum of five pages (double spaced) comparing and contrasting two or three works from the text using class discussions and the Chapter titles and “Afterword(s)” as your topic and point-of-view guide. Focus on chapters 1 – 5. (These can be turned in any time before 2/29 but not after.)

Final: The same as mid-term only use chapter 6-9 and turn it in no later than Thursday, April 19.

Class presentations: Use From Totems to Hip-Hop to find one or more poems that you can present in between 5 and 10 minutes. This is a very free wheeling presentation: what to you like or dislike about the works? How does it make you feel? Is it art or not really art? Why? Etc. etc. etc.?

Project: This should probably be a personal essay on diversity in literature from your point of view and personal experience... unless you are feeling creative and would like to try it as a series of poems or short fiction. At least five pages but these need more time, thought... quality than the other papers. Due any time after the third week and before April 5th.