



ENG 261: Topics in English-Diversity -- Creolity: An Island Mix

This is a one semester course on a specific topic in English, which has been given a cultural diversity designation by the College. Topics will be announced each semester. Prerequisite: ENG 102. Three lecture hours per week. Competency met: Multicultural Perspective (5.3), Humanities (6.0) 3 credits Not offered every year. The topic for fall 2017 is "Creolity: An Island Mix." In this course, students will respond critically to a variety of texts within an historical framework as well as in the scope of modern developments. We will explore how Caribbean, Cape Verdean, Azorean, and Gullah literature illustrate creolization, a process of assimilation in which interacting cultures share certain features to form a new distinct culture. In these works of drama, fiction, and poetry, islands serve as active sites of this process. As historian John Gillis notes in *Islands of the Mind: How the Human Imagination Created the Atlantic World*, islands evoke a greater range of emotions than any other land form. We project onto them our most intense desires, but they are also the locus of our greatest fears. We feel extraordinarily free there, but also trapped. Associated with pleasure, islands also harbor pain, for they are prisons as frequently as escapes or refuges. Isles remind us of our individuality while sustaining our sense of family and community; and though they are unparalleled as places of solitude, they are also among the few places we feel cosmically connected. Islands bring out our possessive instincts, but also our most generous impulses. They are objects of our will to mastery and reminders of our powerlessness. Works of literature set in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, The Sea Islands, Cape Verde, and Azores examine these complex sentiments. We will study a variety of pieces by Michelle Cliff, Steve Carter, Julie Dash, Corsino Fortes, Joao Melo, and others.

Course Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will develop their abilities to: 1. Demonstrate an understanding of how literary works by creole writers relate to their immediate historical context and to the traditions from which they emerge. 2. Understand the theoretical concepts related to ethnicity, class, gender, and language within the context of creole literature. 3. Utilize problem-based and place-based approaches. 4. Construct literary arguments using secondary sources (in particular, discipline specific databases and archives) and use MLA style. 5. Engage in written reflection on the critical assumptions that inform their own and others' interpretations of literary works.

Credits: 3

Program: English