Syllabus

Pacific Literary and Cultural Studies
English 388 / American Culture 325
Prof. S. Najita

Meeting Days/Times: Tues., Thurs. 10-11:30
Location: 3463 Mason
Course No.: 25570/25540

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Office Hours: Thurs. 3-5 p.m.
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DESCRIPTION
This is a course for students who want to develop their abilities in critical and creative reading, thinking, and analysis. It is an interdisciplinary course that navigates film, fiction, poetry, novels and histories in order to engage with some of the critical processes at work in the modern world. From sunlit beaches, swaying palm trees, and happy tourists to tropical rainforest and menacing natives, the islands of the Pacific have been relentlessly depicted. Perhaps more than any other region of the globe, the Pacific has been “experienced” beforehand through the image-making of Hollywood, television, and advertisement. The huge success of films such as Whale Rider, The Piano, Lord of the Rings, and Once Were Warriors builds upon the early images of the region in films such as Blue Hawaii, Mutiny on the Bounty, and South Pacific. This course puts such texts into dialogue with the extensive body of historical and literary representations. What connections and contradictions emerge when we read popular culture in relation to fictional representations by authors such as Hermann Melville and James Michener, and indigenous authors such as Patricia Grace, Albert Wendt, and Keri Hulme? What other histories and experiences are obscured or misrepresented in these popular representations, including the emergence of indigenous self-determination movements, nuclear testing and U.S. military supremacy, and the multi-ethnic societies which emerged as a result of colonization? To answer these questions, we will read texts from a range of perspectives: EuroAmerican authors (Cook, Melville, and Michener), indigenous Pacific islanders (Hulme, Wendt, Grace, Ihimaera, and Hau’ofa), as well as non-natives (Murayama). Requirements include quizzes, 7-8 page paper, final exam, and presentation.
REQUIRED TEXTS
Herman Melville, *Typee* (Penguin Classics edition)
Patricia Grace, *Potiki*
Milton Murayama, *All I Asking for Is My Body*
James Michener, *Tales of the South Pacific*
Epeli Hau‘ofa, *Tales of the Tikong*
Above texts available at Shaman Drum.

Course Pak available at Ulrich’s on South U.

COURSEWORK

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 pp. Midterm Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Take-Home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-written piece/Presentation</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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Quizzes
There will be three quizzes (5% each) distributed throughout the course. They provide an opportunity for both yourselves and the instructors to gauge your understanding and comprehension of the reading and lecture material.

Journals/responses
Journals will consist of weekly entries due at the beginning of discussion on Tuesdays, or as otherwise specified. At times I will indicate the topic or set of questions I would like the journals to address. At other times, I will indicate a more open set of concerns for the journals. Journal responses are compact writing assignments intended to help focus your reading and understanding of the course material, to prepare you for lectures and discussions, and provide opportunities for you to practice and hone your critical reading and thinking skills.

Paper
This paper will be due at the half-term and will be guided by specific questions we will pose and attempt to answer during the course. It will engage in close readings across disciplinary (historical, cultural, and literary) and generic boundaries (historical texts, explorer’s journals, novels, poems, songs, and films)
from material in the first half of the course. This paper is yet another opportunity to extend the analytical skills we are developing in the journal responses to a longer, more detailed and rigorous argument.

**Final Take-Home**
The final exam will be in essay form. We see it as an opportunity to synthesize your understanding of the course material over the term, to extend, elaborate upon, and refine your thinking on the midterm paper to other texts in the second half of the term. This is a writing assignment that allows you to build and improve upon previous writing done in the course.

**Attendance & Participation**
Your attendance and participation in class discussions are highly valued contributions. Students should read the assigned material prior to the scheduled class period, bring the printed material with you to class, and be prepared to be active discussants. Because class participation and regular attendance are central requirements of this course, 5 unexcused absences constitute a failing grade for the course. Since discussion and class participation are one of the ways learning takes place in this course, the instructor may call on you. (This is no cause for alarm—just careful thought and contribution.)

**Non-written piece**
This is a collaborative piece which should fall into one of the following categories:
- Performance: music, speech, dance
- Film or other electronic media
- Creative writing
- Art

 Intellectual standards will be the same, and students will be expected to show their ability to critically engage with class materials, to think analytically and critically. One of our goals in this course is to encourage students to develop their skills at working with one another, learning from and complementing each other’s strengths and weaknesses. We take this assignment to be an opportunity for students to practice and develop these collaborative skills as well as analytical skills in media that are not traditionally recognized as obviously analytical in the disciplines of history and literature.”

Note: If you wish to mount a website for your non-written piece and would like to receive instruction, please let your instructor know early in the term so we can arrange for student groups to attend training early on at the Knowledge and Navigation lab.
## SCHEDULE OF READING

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Ethnographic Encounters: <em>First Contact</em></td>
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<td>1/12</td>
<td>R</td>
<td><em>First Contact</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1/17</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Consuming the Pacific: <em>Typee</em> and Cannibalism</td>
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| 1/19 | R   | *Typee* continued  
Rowe, John Carlos. “Melville’s *Typee*: U.S. Imperialism at Home and Abroad” |
| 1/24 | T   | U.S. Empire in Hawai‘i: *Act of War* |
| 1/26 | R   | Legal Genocide: Racializing Hawaiians in  
Holt’s *Waimea Summer*  
| 2/2  | R   | Quiz 1 |
| 2/7  | T   | Resistance and the Oral Tradition: Grace’s *Potiki* |
| 2/9  | R   | *Potiki* |
| 2/14 | T   | Pakeha Nationalism and the Legacy of Settler Colonialism:  
Jane Campion’s *The Piano* |
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| 2/16 | R   |      | The Piano
Najita, “Resemblances and Complicity: The Construction of Pakeha History in The Piano” |
| 2/21 | T   |      | Plantation Colonialism
Milton Murayama’s All I Asking for Is My Body |
| 2/23 | R   |      | Murayama continued
Murayama, “Problems of Writing in Dialect and Mixed Languages” |
|      |     |      | SPRING BREAK |
| 3/7  | T   |      | Forgetting the Cold War: Nuclear Memories and Indigeneity
Whale Rider |
| 3/9  | R   |      | Whale Rider novel and film
Quiz 2 |
| 3/14 | T   |      | Paper due.
Cold War Orientalism: The Pacific Theater in
South Pacific
Teiwa, Teresia. “Bikinis and Other S/Pacific N/Oceans.” |
| 3/16 | R   |      | Michener’s Tales of the South Pacific
Selected chapter from Kline, Cold War Orientalism |
| 3/21 | T   |      | Naturalizing Tourism: The New Plantation
Blue Hawai’i |
| 3/23 | R   |      | Blue Hawai’i |
| 3/28 | T   |      | Globalization and the Traditional: Hau’ofa’s Tales of the Tikong |
| 3/30 | R   |      | Tales of the Tikong |
| 4/4  | T   |      | Place in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction:
New Zealand and Film
Lord of the Rings, Hulme’s “Kaibutsu-San” and “Stations on the Way to Avalon”
Final Projects |
| 4/6  | R   |      | Final Projects
Quiz 3 |
<p>| 4/11 | T   |      | Final Projects |</p>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>4/18</td>
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Final Take-Home Exam due Thursday, April 20, 12 noon.