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Lit 145: American Ethnic Literature

From the idea of the melting pot at the turn of the century to contemporary debates about multiculturalism, much of the finest American literature of the twentieth century has been produced by writers who explore issues of identity, ethnicity, and personal and cultural transformation. As a nation of immigrants, we have produced many texts that thematize the struggles of newcomers to adapt to an alien culture while they are also trying to negotiate a meaningful relation to their native cultures. Through novels, essays, and an autobiography, we will discover changing perceptions of ethnicity and assimilation and consider the recent role of diversity in evaluating what is valuable in American society.

Jan 5	Introduction
Jan 10	Cahan, "The Imported Bridegroom," xerox
Jan 12	Sollers, "The Invention of Ethnicity," xerox Randolph Bourne, "Transnational America," xerox Woodrow Wilson, "Address," xerox
Jan 17	Yezierska, <i>Bread-Givers</i>
Jan 19	Yezierska
Jan 23	1000-word paper due
Jan 24	Roth, <i>Goodbye, Columbus</i>
Jan 26	Roth
Jan 31	Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i>
Feb 2	Kingston
Feb 7	Chin, <i>Donald Duk</i>
Feb 9	Chin
Feb 14	Rodriguez, <i>The Hunger for Memory</i>
Feb 16	Rodriguez

Feb 21	Mukherjee, <i>Jasmine</i>
Feb 23	Mukherjee
Feb 28	Roth, <i>American Pastoral</i>
March 1	Roth
March 6	Roth
March 8	Roth

A WORD ABOUT PAPERS: Between weeks 6 and 10 you have the option of turning in two 1500-word papers or one 3000-word paper. If you choose the former option, I must have a final draft of the second paper by the beginning of week 8 (Monday, Feb 20). All final papers are due Friday, March 16. There is no midterm or final exam for this course.

PLEASE NOTE: Attendance is mandatory. You cannot miss more than three classes.

GRADES: The breakdown for grades is:

Papers: 85%

Participation: 15%