Eng 430
Pacific Island Literature

Spring Term 2003
MWF2-1:50, EKH 111
Registration Number 10592

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Introduction

Course Description:

The history of the Pacific is complex. Colonization, migration, global commercialization, and the institutionalization of various social, economic, and political systems (such as western public education and democracy) have forever changed the face of Oceania. Racial and ethnic conflict now plague once-romanticized places as Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Fiji. Paradoxically, while nations and large corporations exploit the resources of this region, most westerners seem oblivious to the fact that Kiribati and Tuvalu are sinking due to global warming. Other atolls have been left uninhabitable by nuclear testing, some as recent as the 1990s. And in the face of the loss of land, poverty, eroding traditional values, and cultural alienation, there is controversy over what constitutes a Pacific Islands identity. Is there a common ‘Pacific’ identity that can bridge the gap between expatriates and their Island heritages? Do immigrant communities have a future in their surrogate home? And can Anglo-Americans and Europeans ever break from their burden of the past, which has labeled them “conquerors”?  

The production of literature is linked to such issues and to ongoing debates over who truly belongs in these Island Nations, what is the best way to represent these territories, and who has the authority to speak for the people who inhabit them. The purpose of this class is to critically engage the literary development of the Pacific Islands, to explore the themes and images of this region, and to ponder the motivation behind creative writing and its purposes. As you can see from the schedule, this class is designed to be intensive and very political; readings and written assignments are required on a daily basis, some of them on topics that may be quite shocking for the modern, western reader. Notwithstanding, the aim of this course is to foster a cross-cultural understanding of literature and its function in Pacific Island societies, which include Indigenous Peoples, Immigrants, Tourists, and Expatriates.
Course Objectives:

A. Undertake readings of literary texts from a cross-section of writers and historical periods.
B. Foster a cross-cultural appreciation for the production of literature.
C. Comprehend the political and social context of these works.
D. Explore the problem of colonialism from a theoretical standpoint.
E. Introduction to fundamental readings in advanced critical theory
F. Mastery of literary analysis.
G. Crafting of upper-division level papers.

Required Texts

   (due to difficulty with publisher, students will have to work with reserve copies in the library)
Teaiwa, Teresia and Vilsoni Hereniko. The Last Virgin in Paradise. Suva,, Fiji: Mana Publications, 1993. (due to difficulty with publisher, students will have to work with reserve copies in the library)
Various handouts.

Recommended Texts

A good dictionary.
A good thesaurus.
   (This text can be ordered through the UHH bookstore or Borders. You may also want to check online at Amazon.com for used copies).

Course Requirements & Policies

Successful prior completion of a 200 level literature course is required for this course. All individuals who have not met this requirement will be dropped.

Your performance in this class will depend upon attendance, participation, and the completion of assignments. Regular attendance and participation are essential. Six (6) unexcused absences will result in a hull grade deduction. Beyond six, failure is likely. However, if there is a pressing emergency or if there are other matters which require your absence, please see me and bring the proper documentation (i.e. a signed doctor’s note). Also, if you are in need of academic support
because of a documented disability (whether it be psychiatric, learning, mobility, health-related or sensory), please see me. Any student with a documented disability who would like to request accommodations should contact the University Disability Services Office at 933-0816 (V), 933-3334 (TTY), Campus Center Room 311, as early in the semester as possible.

There are 4 papers (various lengths), 6 quizzes, a group activity, and an individual research presentation.

**Papers** should be written in MLA format and TYPED with 1” margins and 12 pica font. Papers must address the books and issues discussed in class and must respond to the question assigned for that deadline—other topics will be rejected if you have not gotten the prior approval of the instructor. Furthermore, papers must be turned in at the beginning of the class on the day they are due—do not walk into class 20 minutes late and expect me to accept work. LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED BUT MARKED DOWN A FULL GRADE. Note: papers with incomprehensible grammar or oversize lettering will not be accepted. Work which does not meet the minimum length requirement will also be rejected. The grade of the paper will be determined in conjunction to: (1) proper MLA format; (2) ability to engage in literary analysis; (3) careful and accurate use of citations; and (4) coherency of argument.

For students who do not own computers, the University maintains several computer labs across campus. Contact the Computing Center (ext. 33858) for locations and hours.

Quizzes are usually in multiple choice and/or short identification format. They will be given throughout the term, so you are advised to keep up with the readings. I will drop the lowest score at the end of the term.

There is also a group project that will coincide with International Student Night. The purpose of this part of the class is to ensure that our study of the Pacific is not simply confined to the classroom, but takes us out into the communities that we read about. The class will collectively decide what they want to do for the event, which is slotted for February. A couple of ideas: decorations, ushering audience, poetry reading, cleanup.

Finally, you will be required to present an individual research project on a single author. See the syllabus (assignment for Spring Break) for details.

As far as grades are concerned:

- **Shorter Papers** 30% (10% EACH)
- **FINAL PAPER** 15%
- **Group Activity** 10%
- **Independent Research Presentation** 15%
Quizzes 20%
Attendance/participation 10%
Total 100%

DO NOT RESORT TO PLAGIARISM UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE! All work submitted in this course must be your own and must be written exclusively for this class. Papers that have been downloaded off the Internet, prepared for other classes or borrowed from third parties are not acceptable. Because this course includes research, the use of outside sources (ideas, quotes, paraphrases, etc.) must be properly documented. Failure to do so may result in an automatic failing grade for either an assignment or for the entire class.

Finally, disorderly conduct will not be tolerated. Be aware that your actions can have a detrimental effect on everyone. Hostile attitudes, threatening body language, and inconsiderate behavior (i.e. cell phones, speaking out of turn during class, sleeping, etc.) can be a real drag. So let’s all do our part to make the most of our academic endeavors.