

CES / ENGL 314
Topics in Asian American Literature:
Pacific Islands Literature and Cultures
Spring 2018
M/W/F 10:10 – 11:00
CUE 319

John Streamas

Office hours: Tuesday 2:15 – 4:15
and by appointment

118 Wilson-Short Hall
335-4791
streamas@wsu.edu

Required texts

Where We Once Belonged, by Sia Figiel, Kaya Press, 1999, \$14.95

A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land, and Sovereignty, edited by Noelani Goodyear-Kaopua, Ikaika Hussey, and Erin Kahunawaika'ala Wright, Duke University Press, 2014, \$28.90

Iet Jaltok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter, by Kathy Jetnil Kijiner, University of Arizona Press, 2017, \$14.95

The Salt Wind, by Brandy Nalani McDougall, Kuleana Oiwi Press, 2008, \$12.95

From unincorporated territory [lukao], by Craig Santos Perez, Omnidawn, 2017, \$17.95

Nuanua: Pacific Writing in English since 1980, edited by Albert Wendt, University of Hawai 'i Press, 1995, \$21

Sons for the Return Home, by Albert Wendt, University of Hawai 'i Press, 1996, \$17

A coursepack with additional readings will be required later in the semester.

Note that many of our texts have untranslated indigenous words and phrases. However, some have glossaries in back: in *Nuanua* on pp 403-05, in Figiel pp 245-47. Perez, on p 85, has a link to a Webs site on his notes and sources.

Note too that, as this is a literature course, you will need your own copies of these books. At present, the library does not own two of the books, but I have arranged to keep the others on one-day reserve. If getting the books will impose a severe financial burden on you, let me know by the end of the first week. You will be expected to read and know the assigned readings.

Course description

The course catalogue says only that CES / Engl 314 covers “[t]rends, themes, major writers.” We will cover the literature of Pacific peoples, though you need spend only a few seconds on a map of the Pacific to see that we could not possibly cover all of the vast region’s nations and colonies. Moreover, we are limited to what is published in English and is readily available.

Course rationale

In Summer 1998 I enrolled in my last class as a doctoral student, an 800-level English course called Postcolonial Literature. The professor was a diasporic South Asian woman, and she assigned mostly books by Anglophone colonial novelists, such as D. H. Lawrence’s

Quetzalcoatl, Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, but also Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*. Given such texts, a course description that stressed the theme of postcolonial culture and politics, and the very course title, I expected that the course would insist on politicized readings, but most of my classmates wanted to read the novels "for pleasure and for aesthetic enjoyment." Obviously they would not argue for reading *only* for pleasure, or else they would drop out of school and read Danielle Steel. But they wanted to read *mostly* for pleasure, and to reserve a right to reject politicized readings. This suggests, however, a binary that is misleading. Can we not read for both pleasure and insight?

The writers we will read this semester are not "household names." All work from their imaginations, which give shape and meaning to their experiences and observations. For most of us, these experiences will be new and possibly unfamiliar, and will thus require our patience.

Finally, a point must be made about the age-old debate between "form" and "content." Formal decisions—how you say what you say—are unavoidably political. Notice, for example, the language of politicians and bureaucrats: It is full of passive verbs that allow them to try to dodge responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

Course requirements

Attendance and participation: After the first week, an attendance sheet will be distributed at the beginning of many class meetings. After a third unexcused absence, each new unexcused absence will result in an automatic reduction of your course grade by one-third of a letter. In other words, if you miss six classes, you will lose a full letter grade; if you miss nine, you will lose two letters; and, if you miss twelve or more, you should drop the course.

Your participation is also required. If you read the assignments, you will be able to discuss them in class. But this also requires more than simply reading. Think about what you read: Question and challenge it. As this is not a graduate course, you are not expected to talk profoundly about literary theory. Tell us what you glean from the text, explain why you like or dislike it, and challenge it. Also be prepared to ask others why they like or dislike it. You can participate in different ways. But you need to make your participation evident to me, so that you may receive credit for it. Participation options include e-mailing me comments or questions prior to class, or posting to our Blackboard site. Your attendance and participation will count as **20 percent** of your course grade.

Text Presentation: You will lead the class in discussion of a text. This will involve your reading the assigned text, discussing an aspect of the text that you find significant (a theme, an issue, a characterization, an author's use of setting or language, etc), and raising at least two questions suggested by the text. Your presentation will count as **5 percent** of your course grade.

Reading Journal: When we have completed texts—see the schedule below—you will turn in a Reading Journal. The first will cover only our first book and should be one page long, and the other three will cover multiple texts and should be at least two pages long. Indicate whether you liked or disliked the text and explain why. Your explanation should be more detailed than just "I liked this chapter because it flowed well." In this short space, you can provide enough detail to explain yourself. These Reading Journals should be written in your best prose. I will read them as you turn them in. Turned in regularly, they will account for 20 percent of your course grade. You will lose this **20 percent** only if you fail to turn them in regularly.

Paper and Presentation: You will write one paper. Due at the end of the fourteenth week, it should fill five to seven pages and analyze an aspect of two assigned texts. The paper should be typed in a standard font, with standard margins and a title. It should have a Works Cited page, and cite sources in the MLA reference style. You will not be required to do any

outside reading or research, though, obviously, you may find helpful published interviews with our writers or articles posted on their Web sites. Your paper will count for **50 percent** of your course grade, which will include the mechanics of your writing and your adherence to rules of citation. At the end of the semester, you will present your paper before class, and this will count toward **5 percent** of your course grade.

Final Exam: There will be no final examination.

Course policies

Ideally, each class meeting will be a lively, student-directed discussion of our course material. Short of that ideal, I hope we will model a “good” community, driven by shared concerns and goals even when we disagree. To do well in this class, please note the following guidelines:

Read the assigned material when it is due. *Bring the assigned reading to class.*

Come to class on time.

Do not read newspapers, magazines, e-mail, or Web sites in class.

Turn off phones and put them away.

Do not use class time for sleeping or otherwise disengaging.

Name-calling and other signs of disrespect will result in your removal from the class.

Feel free to disagree, respectfully.

Consider others’ views. Reflect on your own social location, your privileges and power.

Learn a historically informed definition of racism, and challenge all racist discourse.

Reflect your grasp of history by deferring to each other’s experiences.

Reflect your grasp of social relations by respecting shy and quiet classmates.

Finally, understand and consider the rage of people who are victims of systematic injustice. If injustice does not fill you with rage, then perhaps you should ask yourself why.

Academic integrity: “Academic integrity is the cornerstone of higher education. As such, all members of the university community share responsibility for maintaining and promoting the principles of integrity in all activities, including academic integrity and honest scholarship. Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Students who violate WSU’s Academic Integrity Policy (identified in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 504-26-010(3) and -404) will fail the course, will not have the option to withdraw from the course pending an appeal, and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration as defined in the Standards of Conduct for Students, WAC 504-26-010(3). You need to read and understand all of the definitions of cheating: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=504-26-10>. If you have any questions about what is and is not allowed in this course, you should ask course instructors before proceeding. If you wish to appeal a faculty member’s decision relating to academic integrity, please use the form available at <conduct.wsu.edu>.”

Students With Disabilities: “Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center to schedule an appointment with an Access Adviser. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center or Disability Services. For more information contact a Disability Specialist on your home campus.” 509-335-3417, Washington Building 217; <http://accesscenter.wsu.edu/>, Access.Center@wsu.edu.

Safety and Emergency Notification: “Classroom and campus safety are of paramount importance at Washington State University, and are the shared responsibility of the entire campus population. WSU urges students to follow the “Alert, Assess, Act” protocol for all types of emergencies and the “Run, Hide, Fight” response for an active shooter incident. Remain ALERT (through direct observation or emergency notification), ASSESS your specific situation, and ACT in the most appropriate way to ensure your own safety (and the safety of others if you are able). Please sign up for emergency alerts on your account at MyWSU. For more information on this subject, campus safety, and related topics, please view the FBI’s Run, Hide, Fight video and visit the WSU safety portal.”

Schedule

Please note that the reading schedule is subject to change, and you will be responsible for knowing and keeping up with changes.

1/8: Introductions.

1/10: Introductions continued. Read Jetñil-Kijiner 2-11.

1/12: Jetñil-Kijiner 12-32.

1/15: No class.

1/17: Finish Jetñil-Kijiner.

1/19: Wendt, *Sons* 1-24. FIRST JOURNAL DUE.

1/22: Wendt, *Sons* 25-120.

1/24: Wendt, *Sons* 121-54.

1/26: Wendt, *Sons* 155-91.

1/29: Finish Wendt, *Sons*. McDougall 1-13.

1/31: McDougall 14,-62.

2/2: Finish McDougall.

2/5: Perez 7-26.

2/7: Perez 27-60.

2/9: Finish Perez. Coursepack: Trask, "Writing in Captivity."

2/12: *Nation Rising*, Introduction 1-33. SECOND JOURNAL DUE.

2/14: *Nation Rising* 36-47 and 66-77.

2/16: *Nation Rising* 137-60.

2/19: *Nuanua*, Introduction 1-8, Campbell 19-26, Syme-Buchanan 53-56, Tongia 57-59, and Webb 60-62.

2/21: *Nuanua*, Hereniko 70-72, Prakash 103-09, and Subramani 113-19.

2/23: *Nuanua*, Brash 178, Enos 179, Kouza 210, Kumbeli 211, Lahui 212-17, Lyadale 218-25.

2/26: Coursepack: from *Poetry*: Perez 373-77, Teaiwa 378, McMullin 379, Sullivan 391, Scanlan 398-401, Taitano 402.

2/28: Coursepack: Teaiwa, "bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans."

3/2: Coursepack: Diaz, "Simply Chamorro: Telling Tales of Demise and Survival in Guam."

3/5: *Nation Rising* 86-97 and 220-43.

3/7: *Nation Rising* 252-66.

3/9: *Nuanua*, Tawali 235-36, Alaelua 259-62, and Faleilemilo 263-66. THIRD JOURNAL DUE.

3/12 – 3/16: No class.

3/19: *Nuanua*, Enari 267-72.

3/21: *Nuanua*, Malifa 273-74, Malifa 276, Petaia 277-79, Reed 280, Sa'aga 281-82, Simi 283-84,

Simi 285-86, Sinavaiana 287-88

3/23: *Nuanua*, Va'ai 291-94, Von Reiche 298-301.

3/26: *Nuanua*, Wendt 302-21 and 322-28.

3/28: *Nuanua*, Alasia 330, Darcy 331-32, Makini 341-42, Orotaloa 343-49.

3/30: No class.

4/2: *Nation Rising* 283-311.

4/4: *Nation Rising* 331-53.

4/6: *Nation Rising* 267-82.

4/9: *Nuanua*, Fonua 362-67, Hau'ofa 382, Molisa 390-94, Ngwele 395-96.

4/11: Figiel 1-35.

4/13: Figiel 36-91.

4/16: Figiel 92-182.

4/18: Figiel 183-224.

4/20: Finish Figiel. FINAL PAPER DUE.

4/23: Coursepack: Trask, "Pacific Island Women and White Feminism."

4/25: Revisit Jetñil-Kijiner and Perez. Bring their books to class.

4/27: Coursepack: Trask, "Decolonizing Hawaiian Literature."

4/30: FOURTH JOURNAL DUE in my office or department mailbox, by 3:30 PM.