

B. Levy  
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Office Hours:  
After Class

### **English 1365: Literature of Minorities**

The course interrogates questions of individual and collective identities from historical, contemporary and literary perspectives. We look closely at the many categories that have constituted identity in the US, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and the ways in which these categories have come to constitute our cultural conversation about identity. Among terms explored are: “Whiteness,” “Blackness,” “White Supremacy,” “Identity Politics,” “Queerness,” “Pluralism,” etc. We examine the ways these categories have been deployed to assert and marginalize both group self-selected and imposed, as both fixed and flexible, as located and displaced, as both secure and situational.

#### **Books:**

**Ayad Akhtar, *Disgraced***

**Yuri Herrera, *Signs Preceding the End of the World***

**Nella Larsen, *Passing***

**Bruce Norris, *Clybourne Park***

**Phillip Roth, *Goodbye, Columbus***

**Tomine, Adrian, *Shortcomings***

**Zangwill, Israel, *The Melting Pot***

*(Selected Short Stories—(Distributed and/or Canvas)*

#### **Grading:**

**Tests: 30%**

**Paper 30%**

**Journals 20%**

**Participation: 20%**

**Schedule:** Before the course starts, students will read for the first day, *The Melting Pot*, a play by Israel Zangwill. We will be using a “critical edition” which includes lots of interesting contextual and supplementary materials. The book will be available in the SMU bookstore, but if you buy it elsewhere, make sure to get the Broadview Press edition, edited by Meri-Jane Rochelson (isbn: 9781554812431). I will also send to you an essay called *Trans-National America* to read with the play. I will be contacting students before the class starts with a casual writing assignment they will submit on the morning of the first class on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Monday, January 7: (Day I):** Introduction to course

*Discussion of Syllabus*

Discussion of **The Melting Pot**

***Shortcomings (read before class)***

***Our Spiritual Strivings (handout)***

**Film: *Ethnic Notions***

**Tuesday, January 8 (Day II):**

**Film: *Get Out***

***Passing***

**Wednesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> (Day III):**

***Passing***

**Film: *Jazz Singer***

**Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup> (Day IV):**

***A Wife's Story***

**Film (TBA)**

**Friday, January 11<sup>th</sup> (Day V):**

***Goodbye, Columbus***

***Defender of the Faith***

**Monday, January 14<sup>th</sup> (Day VI):**

***Disgraced***

**Film: *The Namesake***

***(Take Home Midterm Due in class)***

**Tuesday, January 15<sup>th</sup> (Day VII):**

***Signs Preceding the End of the World***

***Raisin in the Sun (film)***

## **Wednesday, January 16<sup>th</sup> (Day VIII)**

***Clybourne Park***

**In Class-Final**

**Option:** In lieu of writing the paper, you may work with one other person on a group project/presentation about a subject relevant to the course topic. You will assign the class some readings/viewings/ listenings, and lead a presentation/discussion on your selected topic, which can include leading a discussion of something already on the syllabus. Students who chose to do this will write a project/presentation proposal and a follow-up brief paper. Remember: Like the paper, this will count for 20% of your grade, so your presentations should be polished, thoughtful and provocative. Ideally they will teach the class things we wouldn't know otherwise.

**Procedures:** Read over carefully.

**Attendance:** Given the highly compressed nature of J Term, you are not allowed to miss an entire day of class without losing points off your final grade.

**Written Work:** All written work will be submitted when expected. You will be marked down if your papers are late. Papers must be properly formatted and stapled. When you present sloppy or shoddy work you send a powerful negative message to your instructor, which is never a good idea. If you don't own a small stapler, I suggest you buy one and carry it with you in your backpack.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to be fully conversant with the University Honor Code and University policies about plagiarism and other forms of academic fraud. Violations of the University Honor Code compromise the integrity of the class for all participants, and will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of violating the University Honor Code will be duly charged and brought before the Honor Council. When I encounter a violation of the University Honor code, whether intentional or unintentional, it is my professional responsibility to the class and to the University to report it. Do not put me in the position of having to do so. If you are unsure of whether or not you may be in violation of some aspect of the Honor Code, come see me.

NB: Any act of academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure for the course no matter what percentage of the final grade that assignment is worth.

•**Disability Accommodations:** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.

•**Religious Observance:** Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify me in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with me in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

•**Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:** Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with me prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.