**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**HUMAN EXPRESSION**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number:** EN 376 American Literature V: Contemporary Voices (1970-Present)

**Home Department: English**

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information** (phone, email): Lynn Domina, [ldomina@nmu.edu](mailto:ldomina@nmu.edu), 227-2711

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course** (e.g. every semester, every fall): In rotation with the other American Literature survey courses (EN 370,EN 371, EN 372, and EN 373)

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? YES

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

A. Overview of the course content

EN 376 considers the literature emerging after the Civil Rights and Women's movements, covering Postmodernism and the newest modes of literary expression. Students will explore works by diverse authors and the relationships among the texts and between the texts and their cultural contexts.

B. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes

EN 376 requires students to read a variety of essays, poems, short stories, and novels that emerged after the Civil Rights and Women’s movements, covering Postmodernism and the newest modes of literary expression from a range of U.S. authors. Students will consider literary movements such as regionalism, realism, naturalism, the Harlem Renaissance, as well as the impact of WWI upon American literature.

**Critical Thinking Component:**

* **Evidence:** Students are assessed on their analysis of various texts and their understanding of the texts through various lenses: history, form, and structure by responding to the reading of the text and class discussion. In forming a written response, students should demonstrate an ability to closely read and analyze text, then provide an argument in terms of their understanding of a specific poem, essay, short story, or novel while using textual evidence as support.
* **Integrate:** Students are asked to consider their own experiences, positive or negative, when reading and discussing the text, as well as exploring various historical perspectives on an issue. Throughout the semester, students are taught to consider how varying approaches can lead to different, often contradictory, interpretations of the text. For example, students might examine the short story, “*A Small Place”* by Jamaica Kincaid, and consider how the perspectives of the people who inhabit the island differ from those who visit the island and then consider the same piece through a New Critical perspective.
* **Evaluate:** Students are required to apply varying literary – critical methods in analyzing the text and draw conclusions, in terms of meaning and expression, particularly when considering audience, purpose, and technique. For example, when examining “A Small Place”, students may apply a feminist lens, a New Criticism lens, and the Marxist lens in their written analyses. In the process, students should be able to draw thematic connections among other texts read for class.

**Human Expression Component:**

* **Knowledge of Aesthetic Role:** Students are required to demonstrate a clear understanding of how varying literary styles, genres, and conventions are used in applying specific historical themes.One of the primary goals of the course is to emphasize an appreciation for how these styles, genres, and conventions display the beauty of human experience and expression of such experiences.
* **Innovative Thinking:** Students are asked to consider how historical events have led to diverse approaches to literary interpretations of texts. This requires an understanding of how theme, purpose, and the expression of texts have evolved. This can be assessed in a variety of ways and allows students to draw off of their own ideas and experiences in order to express how their interpretation of the text speaks to their own values and beliefs.
* **Acknowledges Contradictions:** Literature is inherently subject to a variety of interpretations. These are often informed by the purpose of the writer and the reader’s perspective, experiences, beliefs, and values. In analyzing the literature for this course, students are often required to identify or provide varying interpretations and contradictions through acknowledging that the different writers, whom often have a specific purpose unique to their interpretation of the text.

**The following are examples of various means of assessment for both Critical Thinking and Human Expression:**

* + **Discussions:** Students may be asked to participate in class discussions, which may be centered on various concepts and themes. Students will be encouraged to freely and creatively express their thoughts in terms of how their experiences, values, and beliefs mold their understanding of the texts.
  + **Essays/Essay Exams:** Students may be given exams throughout the course of the semester (typically a mid-term and final) designed to test their understanding of the texts. Success is determined by the student’s ability to demonstrate a working knowledge of literary forms, concepts, themes, and terminology, as well as their application to the text.
  + **Project:** Students may be required to complete a project of choice, all of which focus on human experiences and how those experiences are expressed through literature.

C. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.)

Any student of Sophomore standing who has passed through “EN 211” with a grade of C or higher.

D. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.)

EN 376 fulfills major and minor requirements and has functioned to fulfill the division II Liberal Studies requirement.

E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | Quality of information will be assessed through, most importantly, evidence-based writing assignments, as well as through other classroom activities, which may include presentations, creative work, or tests.  **Frequency:** at least two times  **Overall Grading Weight:** 20-40%  **Expected Proficiency Weigh**t: We expect a 75-80% proficiency rate because this is an upper-level class. |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with existing understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | The ability to integrate insight and modes of reasoning will be assessed, most importantly, through the writing assignments indicated above, as well as through in-class activities such as presentations, discussion or group work.  **Frequency:** at least two times  **Overall Grading Weight:** 20-40%  **Expected Proficiency Weigh**t: We expect a 75-80% proficiency rate because this is an upper-level class. |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | The ability to evaluate information and ideas, in accordance with research and analysis principles established, will be assessed, most importantly, through the writing assignments indicated above, as well as through other classroom activities, which may include presentations or tests.  **Frequency:** at least two times  **Overall Grading Weight:** 20-40%  **Expected Proficiency Weigh**t: We expect a 75-80% proficiency rate because this is an upper-level class. |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
HUMAN EXPRESSION**

*Attainment of the HUMAN EXPRESSION Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this learning outcome. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Knowledge of the role of the aesthetic** | Demonstrate comprehension of the role of aesthetic in the human experience including artistic, literary, and rhetorical expression. | Students will demonstrate comprehension of the role of the aesthetic in human experience by engaging with U.S. literature from 1970-present in a variety of ways, including analytical essays, presentations, discussions, and/or exams.  **Frequency:** at least two times  **Overall Grading Weight:** 20-40%  **Expected Proficiency Weigh**t: We expect a 75-80% proficiency rate because this is an upper-level class. |
| **Innovative Thinking** | Create or adapt activities, ideas, or questions expressing both creativity and experience | Students will demonstrate innovative thinking by applying core concepts from lectures and readings to primary texts through analytical essays, presentations, exams, and/or creative assignments.  **Frequency:** at least two times  **Overall Grading Weight:** 20-40%  **Expected Proficiency Weigh**t: We expect a 75-80% proficiency rate because this is an upper-level class. |
| **Acknowledging contradictions** | Integrates alternate interpretations or contradictory perspectives or ideas. | Students will integrate alternate interpretations or contradictory perspectives and ideas through class discussions and group work, as well as through analytical essays and/or exams.  **Frequency:** at least two times  **Overall Grading Weight:** 20-40%  **Expected Proficiency Weigh**t: We expect a 75-80% proficiency rate because this is an upper-level class. |

Lesley Larkin EN 376

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Jamrich 3242 Gries 166

Office hours: T 1-5 & by appt. M/W 1-2:40

American Literature V: Contemporary Voices (1970-Present):

Postmodern Temporalities

**Primary Texts**

Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (1979)

Ana Castillo, *The Mixquiahuala Letters* (1986)

Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (1988)

Tony Kushner, *Angels in America* (1993)

Sharon Olds, *The Father* (1992)

Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (2013)

Richard Powers, *The Time of Our Singing* (2002)

Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969)

**Course Description**

In this class, we will study postmodern American literature, from 1969 to the present day, in relation to specific historical contexts of production and reception. Postmodernism is not easy to define, but it is fair to say that postmodern works often encourage radical skepticism regarding the self, history, and truth. Of particular interest to our class will be what literary works from this period have to say about our relation to time (our “temporality”). How do they represent specific historical periods, the relevance of history to the present moment, and the production of historical narratives? How do they engage the passage of time as it is experienced by human bodies, within human families, and across the national body politic? How do they play with narrative time, and toward what aesthetic, political, or philosophical ends? And how do they borrow from scientific research on time, including relativist and quantum theories, to express a uniquely postmodern sensibility about time?

**Course Objectives**

In this class you will:

* Learn about literary postmodernism and its historical contexts.
* Analyze American literature from 1970 to the present.
* Participate in rigorous discussions—oral and written—of literary form and content.
* Write focused literary analyses and arguments.

**Grading**

Attendance & Participation 5%

Quizzes & Homework 5%

Weekly Response Papers 10%

Essay #1 20%

Essay #2 20%

Final Project Essay 40%

**Attendance and Participation**

EN 376 is a discussion-intensive course. Every student is responsible for participating in the discussions that make up the main content of each class meeting. Careful reflection on course material is required for each class period. Your instructor will guide discussion, provide background and framing material, and lecture when necessary. But the main content of the course will be produced collaboratively through class discussion. You may miss three class periods without penalty. More than 3 absences WILL adversely affect your grade, unless special arrangements have been made and approved by your instructor.

**Quizzes and Homework**

Quizzes and homework will be frequent, unscheduled, and focused on current readings and discussions. They cannot be made up for any reason. Your two lowest quiz/homework grades will be dropped at the end of the semester.

**Weekly Response Papers** (1 page, single-spaced, hard copy)

A response paper is due every Monday (unless otherwise instructed) and will focus on a text from the current week’s reading list. In these papers, you will engage a specific issue or passage from the text, analyzing it, asking questions about it, making connections between it and other passages or texts, etc. The purpose of the response paper is to practice close reading of literary and critical works in relation to the major thematic, aesthetic, and political issues of the course. The response paper is not a venue for personal opinion or evaluation of literary “merit.”

Response papers will be graded on a √ / √- basis. Your lowest response paper grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.

**Essays #1 and #2** (4-6 pages, double-spaced)

Each student will write two short essays over the course of the semester, each focused on a text (or perhaps two) from our reading list. You will sign up for your essay due date at the beginning of the term. You must select a text from the unit immediately preceding each due date. The focus of your essay is up to you; you may write about an aspect of the course or unit theme, but you are not required to do so. Nor are you required to perform outside research, though if you choose to do so, you must cite your sources accurately.

Each essay must:

* Center on a specific, arguable claim
* Support that claim with extensive analysis of both form and content (including quotation analysis)

You may revise one of these essays for a higher grade. You may also use either or both of your essays as early drafts of your final project essay.

**Final Project Essay** (10-12 pages, double-spaced)

Your final project essay is a longer, more in-depth essay that makes extensive use of both detailed analysis and scholarly research to make an original contribution to ongoing critical conversations about one or more of the texts from our reading list. You may use essays #1 and/or #2 as early drafts of your final project essay or you may choose an entirely new topic. If you choose to build on your earlier essays, you are expected to revise and develop them substantially.

All final project essays must:

* Center on a specific, arguable claim about a text from our reading list
* Support that claim with extensive analysis of both form and content (including quotation analysis)
* Cite at least five scholarly sources

**Essay Format Requirements**

* Follow MLA guidelines for formatting and source citation for all written work.
* Use Times New Roman 12-point font, one-inch margins, and page numbers.
* Include student name, course number, assignment number, date, and title on page one.
* Essays that fail to follow these requirements may be returned for correction and counted late.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism includes:

* Using an idea from an outside source without giving proper credit.
* Copying or paraphrasing phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from any outside source (including student essays and websites) without proper citation.
* Buying or borrowing a paper to turn in as your own or as part of your own.
* Allowing a peer or tutor to rewrite your essay in part or entirely.

Plagiarized work will receive a failing grade and may result in disciplinary action.

**A Note on Scholarly Sources**

Your final project essay requires appropriate use of *scholarly* sources. Scholarly sources are to be distinguished from both *primary* sources (the literary and/or cultural text[s] you are analyzing) and *secondary* sources that are not scholarly (such as articles or entries in dictionaries, encyclopedias, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, blogs, etc.). You may use any number of primary and secondary materials that are not scholarly if they are useful to your project, though I strongly discourage dictionary, encyclopedia, or textbook citations. However, such secondary sources do not fulfill the requirement for scholarly citations. Scholarly sources are:

* Written by a professional scholar for an academic audience
* Published by a scholarly journal or press
* Subjected to peer review
* Dependent upon extensive research and scholarly citations

If you are unsure whether a source is scholarly, please see me for help.

**Extra Credit**

**1) Facebook Participation.**

* Participation is OPTIONAL.
* Participate by contributing to on-line discussions; posting news stories, videos, and music clips; commenting on other posts; and organizing group activities on-line.
* Course etiquette guidelines apply to on-line discussions.
* Full credit (for approximately 2 posts per week) = 10% added to participation grade.

**2) Campus/Community Event Response Paper. (Limit 2.)**

* Attend an academic or cultural event on campus or in the community.
* Write a 1-page, single-spaced response paper describing the event and connecting it in some way to our course.
* Each extra credit paper will replace a missing or half-credit response paper.

**Course Etiquette**

***Failure to follow these rules may result in dismissal from class.***

* Bring notebooks, pens, books, reading notes, and printed electronic readings to class.
* Keep your laptop closed during class unless otherwise instructed**.**
* Silence your cell phone and refrain from texting during class.
* Refrain from eating during class (unless you've brought food for everyone!).
* Listen attentively and respectfully when others are speaking.
* Use formal language when addressing your instructor in conversation or in writing. Emails should begin: "Dear Dr. Larkin."
* Do not email your instructor with questions you could answer by re-reading the syllabus.
* Refrain from racist, sexist, and other degrading language. The material of this course may cause us to read, hear, and occasionally quote such language. Our citation of degrading language should always be done with attentiveness to the injury it can do.
* A note on pronouns: “We” and “they” (or “us” and “them”) should be used with caution. Use “I” and “me” to speak of your personal experiences and beliefs. “He” should not be used as a universal pronoun; “he or she,” “they” or “ze/hir” may be used in this way. Members of this class are invited to share their preferred personal pronouns and are asked to respect one another’s preferences.

**Non-Discrimination Statement**

Northern Michigan University does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, height, weight, marital status, familial status, handicap/disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status in employment or the provision of services, and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all programs and activities. If you wish to make a civil rights inquiry, please contact the Equal

Opportunity Office, 502 Cohodas Hall (906-227-2420).

# Disability Services

If you have a need for disability-related accommodations or services, please inform the Coordinator of Disability Services in the Dean of Students Office at 2001 C. B. Hedgcock Building (227-1700). Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state, and University guidelines.

**Course Schedule**

This schedule is tentative. Additional readings will be posted to Educat or distributed in class. All electronic readings must be printed and brought to class. Printing costs $.05 a page at the Olson library. Please budget $30 for printing. Success in this class requires you to annotate your texts.

**Week One** Time Travel and History

M 8.25 TBD

W 8.27 John Barth, “The Literature of Exhaustion”\*

Jorge Luis Borges, “Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*”\*

**Week Two** Time Travel and History

M 9.1 No class – Labor Day

W 9.3 Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*

**Week Three** Time Travel and History

M 9.8 Vonnegut

W 9.10 Octavia Butler, *Kindred*

**Week Four** Time Travel and History

M 9.15 Butler

W 9.17 Butler

**Week Five** Tourist Time

M 9.22 Ana Castillo, *The Mixquiahuala Letters* [Essays on Vonnegut or Butler due.]

W 9.24 Castillo

**Week Six** Tourist Time

M 9.29 Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*

TC Tolbert, selections from *Gephyromania*\*

\*Attend TC Tolbert’s UNITED Presentation [UC – Great Lakes Rooms, 1-2:40]\*

W 10.1 Kincaid

**Week Seven** Family Time

M 10.6 Sharon Olds, *The Father* [Essays on Castillo or Kincaid due]

W 10.8 Olds

**Week Eight** Family Time

M 10.13 Tony Kushner, *Angels in America*

W 10.15 Kushner

**Week Nine** Family Time

M 10.20 Kushner

W 10.22 Kushner

**Week Ten** Quantum Time

M 10.27 Richard Powers, *The Time of Our Singing* [Essays on Olds or Kushner due]

W 10.29 Powers

**Week Eleven** Quantum Time

M 11.3 Powers

W 11.5 Powers

**Week Twelve** Quantum Time

M 11.10 Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being*

W 11.12 Ozeki

**Week Thirteen** Quantum Time

M 11.17 Ozeki

W 11.19 Ozeki

**Week Fourteen**

M 11.24 No class - Thanksgiving

W 11.26 No class - Thanksgiving

**Week Fifteen**

M 12.1 TBD

[Essays on Powers or Ozeki due]

W 12.3 TBD

**Final Examination Week**

Final Project Essay due

Optional essay revision due

Optional extra credit due