English 4307: Topics in American Literature:

Resistance, Resilience, and Identity

Fall 2025

Course: Eng 4307
Class meets in: MAB 205 and synchronously online
Class meets on: MW@2-3:15

Instructor: Dr. Rosemary Briseño
Office: MAB 112-B
Office hrs:M-Th-12:30-2;F 1-3
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email: rbriseno@sulross.edu

Required Materials



Internet access to Blackboard and your sulross.edu email address. Many readings/ material and important class news/updates will be sent to you via Blackboard. *It is your responsibility to check Blackboard and your email/Announcements daily!*

Required texts *(please ensure you acquire the correct edition!)*

1) *Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America (Volume 18)* (ISB-13: 978-0520244245)

2) *Voices of a People's History of the United States in the 21st Century: Documents of Hope and Resistance* (ISBN-13: 978-1644212974)

3) Other required materials will be made available to you by your professor.

Course description

This course explores how writers, artists, and activists in the United States have used their voices to confront oppression, envision change, and cultivate resilience in the face of adversity during the 21st century. Students will examine works of literature, memoir, spoken word, digital media, and grassroots movements that respond to issues such as racial justice, gender and sexuality, immigration, climate change, economic inequality, and Indigenous sovereignty. Through close reading, critical analysis, and engagement with multimedia texts, the course highlights how resistance and resilience emerge in diverse cultural expressions and social contexts. Students will consider not only how these voices challenge systemic injustices but also how they sustain hope, identity, and community. Assignments will encourage students to draw connections between texts, lived experience, and contemporary struggles for equity and justice.

For Remote/Online Courses Only - SRSU Distance Education Statement

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook.

Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

STUDENT LEARNING COURSE OUTCOMES (SLOs):

1. Read a selection of masterpieces in World Literature in order to discover diverse formal elements of style and different belief systems and world views.
2. Demonstrate their ability to select and apply the appropriate evaluative criteria to each particular literary genre studied.
3. Explore by critical analysis in writing and discussion diverse works in World Literature, which involves issues, such as colonialism, cultural conflict, environmental degradation, and war.
4. Show evidence of having mastered the content of literary works by identifying characters, genres, and themes, describing major conflicts, and listing specific literary criteria used in evaluation
5. Show their ability to judge literary quality by applying evaluative criteria and supporting discussion with examples from the texts.
6. Develop a depth of awareness, empathy and appreciation for the people of different cultures.

Marketable Skills

1. Ability to write and speak effectively.
2. Ability to apprehend and act effectively in diverse social and cultural contexts for communication.
3. Ability to interpret texts and negotiate meaning socially.
4. Ability to conduct research and present findings in public forums

ENGLISH (UNDERGRADUATE)

Graduating students will demonstrate that they can

1. Construct essays that demonstrate unity, organization, coherence, and development
2. Analyze literary works by applying principles of literary criticism or theory
3. Produce research papers that demonstrate the ability to locate a variety of acceptable sources, employ them effectively through quotations or paraphrases, integrate them smoothly into the writer's own prose, and document them correctly using MLA format
4. Demonstrate creativity or originality of thought in written or multimedia projects
5. Compare/contrast and analyze major works and periods within World, English, and American literature.

Required Format for Turning in Assignments

When using Blackboard to turn in assignments, please turn in all of your assignments in either Microsoft Word OR PDF formats. I will not accept work turned in using any other format. Every assignment must be typed or digitally uploaded, unless otherwise noted.

Blackboard Collaborate

This course relies heavily on Collaborate--- for office hours and when available, to view recorded lectures. It is imperative that you can use Collaborate from wherever you are taking the course. You must know how this---and all other features of Blackboard works---before classes begin. Not knowing how is not excusable and is student negligence.

Here is how you log on to Collaborate:

1) Log into Blackboard, click on Collaborate in the left-hand menu
2) Click on the name of our class (Advanced Composition). A little office door icon appears to the very left of this
3) Click on Join Course Room
4) Make sure your webcam is ON and microphone are is MUTED

Optional Online Class Meetings and Recorded Lectures

•From time to time I will be recording lectures where you can view the material later.

To access a recorded lecture or meeting, follow these protocols:

1) Log into Blackboard, click on Collaborate in the left-hand menu
2) Click on the name of our class (Advanced Composition). A little office door icon appears to the very left of this
3) Click on the "hamburger"; this looks like three white lines. You can find this on the left-hand side of the window.
4) Click on Recordings
5) Choose the recording you'd like to view. You can identify the subject of the recording by reading the info that appears after the "/" symbol in the default title of the recording that Blackboard assigns.

Confirming You Have Successfully Submitted Your Work

You MUST use this two-step method to ensure your work was submitted correctly. Do not email me to check for you.

Confirming Submission of Your Blackboard Assignments, Methods 1 and 2

METHOD 1: **Assignment Link**	Click on the Assignment link to view the submission history for that assignment. If you are allowed to make more than one submission, you will also see a **Submission History** that will display all your submissions by *date and time. This is important to note especially when you are required to turn in your work by a specific deadline. If you dispute the day and time in which you claim you submitted your work, but Blackboard cites a different time/date (i.e. past the due date), you negate any possibility for any makeup work.
METHOD 2: **My Grades Tool**	You can also confirm your Assignment submission by accessing the **My Grades** area of a course. A yellow circle with a white exclamation point in the center will appear next to any Assignment that has been successfully submitted. You can access the submission history page by clicking either the name of the assignment or the yellow circle/white exclamation point icon.

Tech Assistance

Not knowing how to upload your work properly via Blackboard is not an excuse for not turning in assignments late. If you need help with the technology when submitting an assignment, contact the Lobo Technology Assistance Center (see below) immediately. If you need technical assistance, contact the Support Staff at the Lobo Technology Assistance Center (LTAC)



EXCLUSIVELY FOR ONLINE-ONLY COURSES!

Sul Ross State University allows a maximum of 20% absences in a course before an instructor drops a student for excessive absences. In this online course, "excessive absences" is defined as non-participation in the course for three (3) weeks or more. Any student dropped for non-participation will receive an F in the course.

To avoid being dropped, you must participate regularly. Participation in the course is defined as

• logging in to the course to check activities and to read discussion boards,

• gaining access to and using supplemental materials,

• posting on discussion boards as scheduled, and

• turning in assignments in a timely manner

Makeup Work
Opportunities to make up assignments are available only for Authorized and/or Explained (extreme, urgent circumstances beyond university-sanctioned activities, given at the professor's discretion) it is your responsibility to turn in your work on or before the deadline. If the assignment is not turned in by the agreed upon deadline, the makeup work might be accepted by at 10 points off each day (weekends count) the assignment is late.

1) Before you will be absent, notify me—via email or phone call (email is preferred), in a reasonable amount of time (not 5 mins before class meets). Do not assume your absence will be excused.

2) Make arrangements with me to have the work turned in at a later time. If the excuse (for Explained Absence, not Authorized Absence) is granted, I will enforce a "0" as a placeholder grade. Generally, you will have 7 DAYS to make up the assignment; if you forget, the "0" stands. No exceptions.

No Late Work Policy
Late work is not accepted for any reason due to **student negligence** (forgetting to turn in an assignment, forgetting to log in, not notifying your professor of impending absence, waiting until the last minute to begin assignments, not knowing how to use Blackboard, not managing your time properly, feeling exhausted after a long drive back to Alpine, etc).

Professor e-communication
I will communicate with the class through Announcements and by e-mail, so be sure to log in daily to check for announcements on the course home page and to check your Sul Ross e-mail account regularly.

Email
In an effort to maintain respect and clarity in the virtual classroom setting, please follow these guidelines when emailing your professor:

Please follow these guidelines when emailing your professor:
1) Include a salutation (Dear Dr. Briseno)
2) Provide your name, class, and section
3) Clearly state the reason, problem/concern. Use full sentences; do a spellcheck.
4) Additionally, email is not the best way to teach; therefore, I do not respond to emails asking me to "look over" assignments. If you want to discuss any aspect of your work, please come to office hours.
5) Acknowledge that you have received my email with a simple, "Thank you" and a follow-up regarding your problem, issue, or concern; otherwise, I will be wondering whether or not your issue has been resolved.

Personal Responsibility
It is your responsibility to check Blackboard and your email/Announcements frequently! I leave detailed instructions and details in the Announcements/email feature and in the Tentative Assignment Schedule in Blackboard; it's up to you to check in and find out what's due, when, and how to turn in assignments. *I will not re-open links once they are closed*; as this is time consuming and a waste of precious time, so you must be aware of due dates and times.

If you are absent, do not ask me, "What did we do on the day I was absent?" I review each class day on Bb under Announcements/email; it's your responsibility to check that every day. I will not privately re-teach the material the day you were absent.

Absences
There are three kinds of absences, as recognized by the University. Please familiarize yourself with each.

1) **Explained**: These are always excused. Students must be involved in athletics or other university sponsored activities.
2) **Excused:** These are not guaranteed to be excused. Excuses include, but are not limited to, illness, transportation issues, babysitting, etc. These are excused only by the discretion of the professor.
3) **Unexcused:** These are never excused. These are due to student negligence.

*In course that meets three times a week, students are allowed nine (9) excused absences.
*In a course that meets six times a week, students are allowed six (6) excused absences.

**these are in addition to the explained absences*

Academic Honesty
I expect each student to strictly adhere to the rules and regulations regarding academic pursuits. The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS AI ALLOWED IN THIS COURSE. Any work that is suspected of having used AI or any other kind of academic dishonesty, will automatically receive a failing grade**.

Plagiarism Policy
As a simple guideline, if you submit your own work, you will avoid all serious types of plagiarism. Nevertheless, a responsible student should also consider the less obvious variants of plagiarism, especially when writing research papers that require citations.

Instances of plagiarism, such as submitting an essay with sentences or passages cut and pasted from an online source, or a paper obtained from an online "paper mill," students in this course will automatically fail the assignment, receive a final grade of F, and be recommended for dismissal from the university. There is no excuse for serious plagiarism. I will also regard unattributed citations – verbatim copying of another's person's work without some indication of the source – as a serious form of plagiarism. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE IS AI ALLOWED. In other words, don't insert any text in a paper that is not your own without also noting the source. You can email me with a question before an assignment is due, stop by my office during my office hours, or even parenthetically raise the question in your paper. *It's your responsibility to comply with principles of academic honesty; it's my responsibility to see that every student receives a fair and accurate grade.*

Here is my policy on plagiarism for this course:


The *FIRST offense* of plagiarism, in part or in whole, will result in a failing grade in the course. The student has the right to appeal to the Dept. Chair, then Provost, and eventually to the VP for Academic and Student Affairs before imposition of the penalty. The decision of the Provost and VP for Academic Affairs is final.

ADA Accommodation

Disabilities Statement: Persons with disabilities that may warrant academic accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that we may make arrangements to ensure the most hospitable and enhancing (cyber) learning environment as possible. Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact the counselor below asap.

Counseling and Accessibility Services Office
Ferguson Hall 112
Alpine, TX
(432) 837-8203
counseling@sulross.edu
7 a.m. – 5 p.m; Monday-Friday

Final Note

It's worth noting that there's a predictable and positive correlation between careful time management and academic success. I encourage you to make a wise decision as to what kind of student you will be early on and to plan accordingly.

No extra points, no extra credit work will be assigned, so don't ask.

You are completely responsible for meeting all deadlines and keeping track of any changes made to the course schedule. You have several resources made available to you to ensure your success in this course, so I strongly encourage you to take advantage of them.

You will get the grade you earn, not the grade I give you.

Graded Course Requirements

Midterm Essay……...**40%**
1, 4-6 pages, double spaced, not including Works Cited---must include 3-5+ sources; ALL sources must be pre-approved by your professor.) At least 2-3 rough drafts which show progressive improvement from one draft to the next are required.

Final essay, with PowerPoint
…….……40%
4-5 pages, double-spaced, not including Works Cited---must include 3-5+ sources; ALL sources must be pre-approved by your professor. The student must choose previously discussed concepts and works (any topic after the midterm essay), then illustrate their significance via PowerPoint. The student must present their work in a pre-recorded presentation and upload to Blackboard.

Assignments/Homework……20%
From time to time students will be assigned shorter assignments to either be completed in class (such as quick-response essays and quizzes) and other comprehension exercises.

Grades

I do not change final grades *unless* I made an error calculating your grade. Always check your work and the corresponding percentages that make up your final semester average. Make sure that any possible make up work has been uploaded.

A **90-100:** Outstanding performance in mastering of the subject. Achievement of superior quality. (4 grade : points per credit hour)

B **80-89:** Consistent performance in achievement beyond the usual requirements of the course. Achievement of high quality. (3 grade points per credit hour)

C **70-79:** Performance of a satisfactory nature. Achievement demonstrating an understanding of the subject sufficient for continued study in the discipline. (2 grade points per credit hour)

D **60-69:** Minimally acceptable performance. Achievement demonstrating below average understanding of the basic elements of the course. (1 grade point per credit hour)

F **50-59:** Achievement at a level insufficient to demonstrate understanding of the basic elements of the course. (0 grade points)

Incomplete grade(I):The grade of "I" is given by the instructor upon consultation with the student. The work to be completed and deadline for completion must be specified on the grade report to the Director of Records and Registration. A student may have a maximum of one academic year in which to remove an T during which time the "I" will not be calculated in the student's grade point average. f the work is not completed by the deadline set by the instructor, the "I" will be converted to an "F" and will be calculated n the student's grade point average for the semester in which the "I" was given. Normally, an incomplete grade will be awarded only for situations such as illness, family emergencies, or unusual circumstances which prevent a student from completing a course in a semester or summer term. Incomplete grades must be removed prior to graduation.

Withdrawal grade (W): The grade of "W" is given for courses dropped after the 12th/4th class days through the last day to drop a course with a "W" as published in the University's calendar. Students who wait until the published deadline must have complied with the class attendance policy of this catalog. An instructor is not obligated to recommend a "W" for a class if excessive absences have occurred. Students will not be permitted to drop a course or withdraw from the University after the published deadline.

Fall 2025 Tentative Schedule

(scheduled to change)

For detailed information regarding assignments, due dates, etc., please read **Announcements** in Blackboard. I review what we did during class, what's for homework, and relay any other important information.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK ANNOUCEMENTS ON A DAILY BASIS; FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN EARNING A LOWER COURSE GRADE.

August 25, Monday: First class day. Syllabus and course policies and procedures discussed.

September 1, Monday: *Labor Day Holiday,* no classes held

October 20-24: Midterm; 1st major essay DUE, 10/24

November 26-28, Wednesday through Friday: *Thanksgiving Holidays*, no classes held

December 3, Wednesday: *Last class day*, 2nd major essay DUE

December 4, Thursday: *Dead Day* (no classes held; instructors may not introduce new course materials; students prepare for finals)

Final grades for all classes will be available on Monday, December 15 at 12 noon.

-------END OF FALL SEMESTER 2025------