In this seminar we examine fiction depicting interracial relationships and mixed-race identities in the late 20th century and millennial United States. We pay particular attention to how writers engage additional social categories, including gender, sexuality and economic class in plots and characters. The class looks at how imaginative literature intersects with historical conditions, contemporary society and personal experience in its representation of racial crossing and mixing.

The readings for the quarter are, in the order they will be read:

*Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural* (Essay collection edited by Claudine Chiawei O’Hearn)


*The Color of Water* (Memoir by James McBride)

*Mixed: My Life in Black and White* (Memoir by Angela Nissel)

“Récitatif” (Short Story by Toni Morrison)

*A Feather on the Breath of God* (Novel by Sigrid Nunez)

*Mixed: An Anthology of Short Fiction on the Multiracial Experience* (Short Story Anthology edited by Chandra Prasad)

Films to be screened include *Multifacial* (Vin Diesel, 1999)

**CLASS REQUIREMENT FOR GROUP PARTICIPATION**
READING SCHEDULE

Week 1:  Tuesday April 4. Course Introduction

Week 2:  Tuesday April 11
          Reading: *Half and Half* anthology

Week 3:  Tuesday April 18
          "Black Americans, Half-Lives, and the Mixed-Race Story"
          (Essay by Professor Streeter, course website)
          First Thought Paper is Due

Week 4:  Tuesday April 25
          *The Color of Water* (James McBride)

Week 5:  Tuesday May 2
          *Mixed: My Life in Black and White* (Angela Nissel)

Week 6:  Tuesday May 9
          "Recitatif" short story by Toni Morrison (course website)
          Second Thought Paper is Due

Week 7:  Tuesday May 16
          *A Feather on the Breath of God* (Sigrid Nunez)

Weeks 8, 9 and 10: May 23, May 30 and June 6
          Student Presentations, Selected Short Stories from *Mixed: An Anthology of Short Fiction on the Multiracial Experience*

June 15:  Final Paper is Due

Requirements:  2 thought papers, 2 pages each  40%
                Group Presentation  25%
                Final paper, 5 pages  35%
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

THOUGHT PAPERS

Thought papers are two (2)-page essays. There are no prompts for thought papers. Assignments are evaluated; they do not receive grades. To earn full credit for thought papers, they should be submitted on time, and meet the criteria for the assignment.

Thought papers are aimed at developing critical thinking through the practice of close reading and persuasive analysis.

The goal in a thought paper is to formulate a point of view about some aspect of the reading. The parameters of a thought paper are limited. An “aspect” of the reading is not broad and sweeping. “Aspect” is something you see in a text. The assignment requires that you focus on something specific.

The thought paper is not a summary or a description. The thesis in a thought paper consists of an idea paired with an arguable statement.

The idea derives from your engagement with a reading. It is acceptable to write using the personal pronoun “I.” However, an idea is not a personal opinion. Here, “I think,” is to express something you learn as you look more closely.

The arguable statement communicates a claim. If the idea is the “what” the claim is the “so what.” Like the idea, a claim is not a personal opinion. In a thought paper, the text – the reading, the writing - is the context.

The analysis in a thought paper develops the thesis through close reading of quote and example. Your analysis cites and interprets a reading.

THESIS = IDEA + ARGUABLE STATEMENT

ANALYSIS = INTERPRETATION of QUOTE and EXAMPLE through CLOSE READING

OVERALL GOAL = THESIS is DEMONSTRATED through PERSUASIVE ARGUMENT
FINAL ESSAYS

The essay is five (5) pages long.

Students may select any reading they like for the final essay. It is recommended to focus on up to three readings; however, there is no minimum or maximum. Students may develop ideas from thought papers. However, all writing should be new; one cannot recycle writing from thought papers.

Final papers are graded according to UCLA’s criteria for undergraduate essays.

A
The paper has a clear and articulate thesis. The argument successfully develops it. The argument is supported by evidence – citations and examples. The argument is made with close reading, critical analysis, and interpretation. The paper is well organized and contains virtually no errors of writing composition.

A minus
An A minus paper is likely to be less adept in its analysis than an A. The paper may have minor, but evident errors of writing composition.

B plus
The difference between papers assigned a B plus, rather than an A minus, is likely to lie in the quality of the argument. Are the quotes and examples compelling? Are they developed to their full potential?

B
The paper has a clear thesis, but it is not particularly creative or compelling. On the other hand, B papers may propose a promising thesis, but the argument does not develop it. Writing and composition, while solid, may over-rely on quotes and/or longer citations to do the heavy lifting of analysis.

B minus
The thesis is not evident at the outset. B minus papers may “write to” a thesis. The argument may not be persuasive. However, the engagement with the reading has some merit.

C plus
The thesis does not meet the criteria of arguable claim. However, there is an effort to incorporate quotes and/or examples. The paper is competently written.

C
The paper relies heavily on material from thought papers. The paper is less than four pages long. The paper relies heavily on outside materials and/or personal experience.

D
Although the paper attempts to engage course materials, there are significant errors of writing composition.

F: Zero
The paper engages no course material.
FORMAT GUIDELINES FOR ALL PAPERS

All assignments should be submitted via CCLE

Format all assignments in Word Files only. The title for the word file should be your first and last name, a hyphen, identification of the class, a hyphen, and identification of the assignment.

Examples:    Ron Smith-104B-Thought Paper 1
              Ron Smith-104B-Thesis
              Ron Smith-104B-Final Paper

DO NOT include identifying information on your paper – such as name or date. CCLE supplies all necessary information.

- Double-space essays.
- Use 1-inch margins.
- Underline or italicize titles.
- Use quotation marks for essay and article titles.
- Commas always go inside quotation marks.
- Indent and single-space longer quotes.
- Use parenthetical page citations. (e.g. Davis, p. 1)
- Do not put extra space between paragraphs.
- Use a font no smaller than 11, no larger than 12. If possible, use Times or Times New Roman.
- DO NOT provide page numbers.
- DO NOT provide a bibliography.
- DO NOT use footnotes.