



America Comes of Age: Problems of Race, Sex, and Class in the Modern Novel ENG 362

If you have taken a walk around campus or through Harnett Hall, it is hard to miss the posters advertising Dr. Tangney’s class ENG 362: America Comes of Age: Problems of Race, Sex, and Class in the Modern Novel. The posters are provocative, alluring, and hard to miss. These pictures not only draw your attention, but also reveal a little something about the class. The class discusses American novels of the 20th Century and the connections between race, class, sex, gender, and location. Tangney plans to discuss the importance of these issues within the context of American History. She explains “Novels serve as social documents that help to explain how society was in time. Novels, along with other mediums, serve as a tools to examine a culture such as letters, diaries, speeches, even the Sears Roebuck catalogue. These pieces of society give material, tangible items to their thoughts and ideals.”

The class will discuss multiple modern and post modern texts, authors include: Edith Wharton, Ernest Hemmingway, Kate Braverman, and E. L. Doctorow. The class will be discussion based centered around the novels and their differing aspects of race, gender, and class, issues that America has been grappling with for over 400 years. These issues are not new to Dr. Tangney. Her undergrad studies included a sociology minor, which thoroughly covered issues of race and class. At the time, gender and sex studies were “just boiling under the surface.”

This is not the first time Dr. Tangney has taught the class, but it is the first time ENG 362 has had an official title. The class has been offered several times, with each offering being unique and different. Dr. Tangney remarked, “Each time I have taught the class, something different has come up that ties the novel to the issues of class, race, gender, and sex to present day issues.” She continued, “Something always comes up that makes the material interesting and brings relevance to the topics. This made the discussions livelier and more interesting.” The class allows for an opportunity to explore today’s issues through yesterday’s words!

This class is not for English majors only. Tangney explains, “There are many reasons the class does benefit English majors. It is the only class that covers the 20th Century and corresponding novels. This class is for anybody who is interested in social issues. History and music students have taken it before and add new and different viewpoints to the class discussions. Anyone who is interested in reading and discussing provocative literature would be interested in the literature and the class.” ENG 362 is offered Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 1:00.

Email Dr. Tangney at <shaunanne.tangney@minotstateu.edu> with questions.

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Women And Science Fiction Special Topics ENG 299

After talking with Professor Sherry Stoskopf, it was evident that she is excited to teach the special topics class, Women and Science Fiction. Stoskopf plans have the class apply theory to sci-fi writing. She explained her thought for the class “to examine the theories about women writers in science fiction and how these theories apply to the characters and how they have changed the genre.”

Stoskopf has not always been interested in science fiction. This interest for the genre did not develop until she was developing her masters thesis at the University of Kansas. Her thesis was developed from C. P. Snow’s theory of the two cultures. She applied this theory against his science fiction texts to see application in his own writing. She also compared his texts those by Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov. This was the start of her examining science fiction writing. This reading is not held up to these particular writers but instead covers a great diversity of writers including male and female.

The texts that Stoskopf plans to use in class are *Envisioning The Future*, a collection of short stories and essays on sci-fi edited by Marleen S. Barr, *Frankenstein’s Daughters*, a book on women writing science fiction, by Jane Donawerth, and extracts from *Women of Wonder: The Contemporary Years, Science Fiction by Women from the 1970s to the 1990s* edited by Pamela Sargent. With these particular texts she wants to derive the theories with regard to women writers and characters. Stoskopf also plans to look at how a female character is portrayed. She explained, “Men draw their female characters different than women draw out their female characters, and they may differ as to what makes a strong character. Some men who have written science fiction women characters have tried to develop characters that are more liberated but have not succeeded.”

Each person has their own favorite things to read, but “Women and Science Fiction” is not only for those that read and enjoy this particular genre. This class is for the critical mind that enjoys literature and discussion. Stoskopf describes “science fiction as a way of expanding the world. Within this genre there is a manipulation of parameters that allows for anything to happen. This genre is not only for expansion of the world, but also the mind, and although the material may be fantastic to conceive, the material is not really that far from the reality of human nature. There is more validity in the plots and characters than what meets the eye.” Stoskopf went on to comment, “A work of science fiction is not good unless the work contains a good story about human nature and people. All the characters, no matter what their quirks and differences, possess a humanized quality. This is how the writers of science fiction discuss issues of race and diversity.”

Stoskopf’s excitement about the content of the class could not be hidden. The class will be at 10:00 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. “I anticipate great and thorough discussions about a

genre that allows for anything to happen in any period of time,” Stoskopf remarked.

For more information send email to <sherry.stoskopf@minotstateu.edu>.

Dr. Sauer Receives First LGBT Religious History Award

MSU’s own Dr. Michelle M. Sauer was presented the first ever LGBT Religious History Award. This award was presented to her on April 8, 2006 at Riverside Church in New York City. She was given this esteemed award because of her paper entitled: “Representing the Negative: Positing the Lesbian Void in Medieval English Anchoritism.” In the press release, Mark Bowman, coordinator of LGBT-RAN, said “The jury members chose Dr. Sauer’s work -from among many fine papers they reviewed- for its radical interpretation, analysis and solid presentation.” Dr. Sauer is the coordinator of the Gender Studies program at MSU. To read the press release and winning submission visit: <<http://www.lgbtran.org/HistoryAward.htm>>

Gender Studies Program at MSU

Dr. Michelle Sauer is the Gender Studies Coordinator and program developer for Minot State University. Sauer explains “The Gender/Women’s Studies(GWS) Program is an interdisciplinary academic program that allows students to study the impact that gender has on our lives, institutions, society, and cultural practices. The program focuses on history, development, and consequences of culturally acquired sexual identities. The inclusion of race, class, and ethnicity enrich the curriculum to encompass all diversities and demonstrate how gender intersects with all aspects of society.”

The program currently offers a minor or concentration and is valuable to those who are “pursuing degrees in human services, teaching, law, government, law enforcement, clinical work, social work, public relations, advertising, administration, business, healthcare, and journalism. The material includes feminist theory and research and includes the teachings and contributions of women who have been ignored or misrepresented.” The material looks in depth into society. Sauer goes on to explain the other advantages that the program cultivates: “the skills of analysis, critical thinking, theoretical understanding, and practical application.” MSU’s mission, “to advance knowledge, critical and creative thinking, and vitality of community and cultures” Sauer explains, “is embodied by the GWS program, not only through its interdisciplinary coursework, but also through the understanding of equality for all humanity. The program is a virtual confirmation of the university’s commitment to diversity in education and the advancement and equality of women.”

The required core of the minor program is GS 225: Introduction to Gender/Women’s Studies, ENGL 270: Introduction to Literary Criticism, COMM 413: Gender

Communication, SOC 363: Sociology of Gender, as well as three additional electives. The concentration includes GS 225, and an option of ENGL 270, ENGL 236: Women and Literature, or COMM 413, with two electives.

If there are any questions contact Dr. Sauer on campus or email her at <michelle.sauer@minotstateu.edu>.

Dr. Sauer taught the required GS 225 this past spring. A requirement for the class was a service learning project related to an aspect of gender. These projects consisted of 20 hours of service with a daily journal. A display of the projects was available for a public viewing. These service learning projects covered many areas and involved an important aspect of campus and community life.

“Pay For My Pills” addressed and raise awareness toward the issue that many insurance policies do not cover birth control or contraceptives. This is a concern when medications such as Viagra are covered.

“Abortion Forum” had an open discussion forum, which covered both sides of the debate, pro-choice versus pro-life. This was not a campaign to sway anybody but an attempt to see everybody’s point of view. KMOT News covered one of the two discussions.

“Beaver Babies” discussed how pregnancy impacts a mother’s life and how MSU and Minot accommodate parenthood. This handbook was to raise awareness of pregnancy choices and the impacts on life.

“Domestic Violence Panel” was a panel discussion with an police officer and someone from the Domestic Violence Center. The panel discussed domestic violence in Minot and what part the police played in intervention and prevention.

“Let’s Talk About SEX” was a two-fold presentation—one part being a handbook that was created on essentials about STDs, the other was a speaker who talked about different types of contraceptives- what is available and how they work.

“Women for Women International” was to educate about the organization whose sole purpose is to help women rebuild and regroup. The campaign was to raise awareness about the affect that war and civil strife has had on women.

“Second Amendment Sisters” dealt with the right to bear arms for both men and women. A survey was given out to raise awareness about women’s competency with fire arms, including aim accuracy.

“Safe Space” dealt with the issue creating an area of acceptance and openness of GLBTQQA on MSU campus.

“Survivor’s Art” used visual art with that was compiled from survivors of domestic violence. The art that was displayed was poetry and glass etchings that attempted to convey the emotion and story of each survivor.

“Morning After Pill” was a campaign that was executed on the Minot Air Force Base to raise awareness of the differences between the morning after pill and the RU486 pill. The message was centered toward understanding what each pill was, not about effectiveness.

The 411 on MSU’s Safe Space

Senior English Major, Christopher Lozensky’s is working to raise awareness about the need for safe places on the campus of MSU that are non-discriminatory in terms of differences and sexual orientation. The establishment of protected areas where individuals can discuss issues concerning sexualities is the main goal of Safe Space. Lozensky has researched other types of non-discriminatory programs and has found that this type of program was originally started by AT&T for their employees. The original program used a designated symbol, typically a triangle design, that is obtained after a training session. This symbol can be put over a workplace, a living space, or worn on clothing. Lozensky explained, “The triangle is an outward sign to the public signaling that others can discuss sexual orientation topics or questions with the person possessing the symbol.” Lozensky said he got the idea for the project from Dr. Michelle Sauer, gender studies program coordinator. He then began doing research online and looked at other schools as a possible model. North Dakota State University(NDSU) has a Safe Zone program in place and Bismarck State College (BSC) has implemented their entire campus to be a safe space. Lozensky, along with Dr. Sauer, Dr. Lisa Borden-King, and Molly Schmidt, who are all on the diversity committee and Catherine Borden-King, an interested student, went to NDSU to observe their program and obtain ideas for implementing a similar one on MSU’s campus. Lozensky plans to develop the program for its inclusion on campus. He would also like to stress the importance that discriminatory attitudes are not acceptable in these safe spaces. In these designated, volunteer Safe Spaces, the air of acceptance is required of all people. Lozensky reported that other programs exist on other campuses, businesses, and communities. There are different names such as Safe Zone, Ten Percent Society, and Zero Tolerance for Discrimination. The names may be different but the goal is similar, to provide an air that is free of sexually oriented discrimination.

To obtain more information email <safe.space@minotstateu.edu>.

Food For Thought

As the American public begins to notice expanding waistlines, more diets are beginning to spring up in order to put some control on the expansion. Some of the diets that are becoming more popular are steeped in religion. The ideas all have a central theme of using faith to help fight the fat. A 1998 Purdue study has found that the firmer faith is, the fatter and flabbier the person is. After all, more religious Christians don’t drink, smoke, or abuse drugs, or party. But it also appears that peaching against gluttony is not part of Sunday sermons. Diets are erupting onto the main stage that highlight these strong faiths. These diets include examples such as Makers diet and Hallelujah diet. The weight loss is paired with spiritual and mental health. The idea is that these core concepts -body, mind,

and faith—are the key to the healthy body. Health experts say that some of these diets work, but beware. The focus for people on the diet does not appear to center around their help. When a person is struggling with food intake or an aspect of the diet, he/she is prompted to stick to the rigid structure of diet and not get help. The question is out there—are these diets relying on religiously associated guilt?

Summary based on: Tapper Jake, and Avery Miller; “Not Everyone Is a Believer in Faith-Based Diets” ABC News: 19 January 2006.

Sexual Orientation Determined Biologically?

Research conducted by the Swedish Medical Research Council, Karolinska Institute, and the Wallenberg Foundation shows brain responses of homosexuals as different than those of heterosexuals. The information that was extracted from the studies is additional proof that homosexuality is not a learned behavior but has biological components. The research showed that homosexual women had similar brain responses to that of heterosexual men, and similarly, heterosexual women matched gay men’s chemical brain responses. Another study at the Stockholm Brain Institute had three groups of twelve and had each group smell human pheromones. They discovered that heterosexual females liked both female and male scents equally, while heterosexual men and lesbians preferred female scents. On an irritation basis, homosexual women and heterosexual men were irritated more regularly by the male scent and heterosexual women were more likely to reject the female scented hormone.

The studies did not include the aspects of bisexuality or transgendered bodies. The groups consisted of healthy, unmedicated, right handed, HIV negative individuals. This field of research validates that different sexualities exist and have biological components; however, the methodology of study could be questioned because of the concept that gender is ambiguous.

Summary taken from article, “Research Finds Differences in Lesbian Brains” MSNBC Health & Fitness 8 May 2006.

See article at <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12689293/wid/11915773?GT1=8199>>.

A study published in the journal *Human Genetics* examined the genetic biology between mothers and gay sons. Researchers from the University of California at Los Angeles examined the genetic chromosomes of mothers of multiple gay sons. All women have two X chromosomes and only one is used in each cell. The body inactivates one of these chromosomes, and the X that is inactivated is by chance. Researchers compared it to the flipping of a coin. Women with gay sons had the same X chromosome inactive in each cell. This genetic irregularity is extremely rare. Sven Bocklandt, co writer of the research, explained the significance: “The research confirms that there is a strong genetic basis for sexual orientation, and that for some gay men, genes on the X chromosome are involved.” Other

researchers say that this is not the only cause and other factors are to be looked at. This is one probably biological explanation for sexual orientation.

See article at <<http://channels.netscape.com/whatsnew/default.jsp?story=20060521-0700>>.

Diversity, The Workplace, & You

As people are seeing the advantages of exploring different ideas and backgrounds, employers are taking advantage of diversity and incorporating these important concepts into aspects of the workplace. A 2004 survey conducted by the Boston Works Hiring Hub, revealed that companies found diversity incentives critical to job seekers. Companies are looking for diversity candidates, but also for individuals who are open and accepting of all diversities. The survey also determined that diversity programs created better working environments. Results further revealed that diversity and diversity acceptance are major goals for executives and management. “One of the most interesting findings of this research is that both hiring managers and job seekers think workplace diversity is very important,” explains Wendy Robinson, the advertising research director in charge of all the Job Market research at The New York Times. “The minority candidates we talked to in our survey, both women and men, told us that they are paying attention to whether a company has programs in place that will cater to their needs. Some of those needs have nothing to do with them being minorities, and others have everything to do with it. The bottom line is they want to feel that the company is supporting their needs. One of those needs is that the company has a reputation for hiring and cultivating diverse talent.”

“Creating A Culture of Inclusion—Survey: Diversity Initiatives Critical To Job Seekers” Boston Works Hiring Hub: 14 September 2003.

See article at <http://bostonworks.boston.com/diversity/092003/div_0903_2.shtml>.

As the workforce is changing, so, too, is the way that business is done. Communication has always been a key issue in how a business operates. But now, more than ever, is important to acknowledge that differences exist and to communicate in a manner that is accepting and respectful. In communicating in a diverse workplace, communication whether it be verbal, written, or nonverbal, goes beyond what is written, said, or expressed. The important thing in talking with co-workers, management, or clients is to remember style. Style includes the linear, the to the point person, or the spiraling personality who leads slowly into the point. Other points to remember in communicating are courtesy, phrasing, and assertiveness. Miscommunication is often due to different styles of communication and can be harmful in a business setting and can cause discomfort on many levels. Learning to communicate more effectively, with diversity and culture in mind is important no matter what career field a person pursues.

<http://www.jobweb.com/Resources/Library/Workplace_Culture/Communicating_in_the_12_01.htm>

Mind of Mencia

Comedians have always used taboo issues as part of their routines. Often dubbed the Dave Chappelle of Hispanic comedy, Carlos Mencia is no exception. His television show on Comedy Central uses stereotypes as parts of skits and routines. There are no topics that are off limits for Mencia. He is not afraid of discussing any topic even if it may offend others. He says that he “has had every type of race upset with his comedy and him;” however, he includes every race in his jokes. Some find his humor offensive because it plays upon stereotypes so heavily, and Mencia has been accused of recycling his humor. The television shows have the same set up each week: stand up bits, out on the street, and sketches. The sketches are often considered the best part of the show. Mencia is making waves in the comic world. His humor may offend some, but he a very popular Hispanic comic. There have been others that could compete, but few that have the following that Mencia has. Mencia claims to broadcast the truth to his audiences. His show may raise controversy, but it also appears to be relating to many people.

Summary and information taken from:
<http://www.thepaperexperts.com/carlos_mencia.shtml>
<<http://www.dvdfuture.com/review.php?id=816>>,
<<http://carlosmencia.com/main.php>>

National Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

May is a month set aside to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage. This month began as a congressional bill (1977), that was presented to the house by Rep. Frank Horton of NY and Rep. Norman Y. Mineta of CA. The original proposal called for the president to approve the first ten days of May to be Asian/Pacific Heritage Week. Sen. Daniel Inouye and Sen. Spark Matsunaga also introduced a bill to the senate. In 1978, President Carter signed a joint resolution designating the annual celebration. However in 1990, President Bush did more than acknowledge a week long celebration; he signed a bill proclaiming the month of May to be Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. May was chosen because of the connections with the completed transcontinental railroad in 1869, whose workers were mostly Chinese, and with the first immigration of Japanese people to the United States in 1843.

The month is celebrated with community acknowledgements, government-sponsored activities, and opportunities for students. The theme for 2006 is “Freedom for All—A Nation We Call Our Own.”

Some Famous Firsts By Asian Americans

Norman Yoshio Mineta: Mayor of a Major city—San Jose, California, 1971. Member of presidential cabinet—appointed secretary of commerce, 2000 also only Democrat to serve on Pres. George W. Bush’s cabinet in 2001 as secretary of transportation

Katherine Sui Fun Cheung: Female aviator—licensed in 1932
Ken Kashiwahara and Connie Chung: First network news reporters—1974. Chung became the first Asian American to be a nightly news anchor for a major television network (CBS), 1993.

Eugene Chung: First selected in the first round of NFL draft—selected by New England, 1992.

To read more visit: <<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/asianintro1.html>>

“Big Crowd Enjoys Asian American Festival”

Celebrations are held all over the United States to promote Asian Pacific Cultural Awareness. One such celebration was held in Union City, California in Union City Church. The message promoted was unity and diversity. The celebration included dances, art, crafts, and food from different cultures and countries, including Japan, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Taiwan, and the Philippines. Other parts of the festival were held in Sangha Hall at Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church. Hundreds of people gathered to watch traditional Hawaiian, Afghan, and Filipino dance routines.

Similar celebrations were held all over the country. The celebration acknowledges and celebrates Asian heritage and allows for exposure to different cultures, which other people may not have access to on a daily basis.

Summary taken from Chris De Benedetti; Inside Bay Area.com; 21 May 2006.

<http://insidebayarea.com/argus/localnews/ci_3848982>

Important Dates

APRIL

Holocaust Remembrance Month

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

STD Awareness Month

- 3: Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor becomes the first woman to preside over the US high court when she fills Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist’s position for him. (1995)
- 5: Ching Ming Festival (Hong Kong)—a designated day for people to go out and enjoy the scenery of the landscape and the weather of spring. The essential part of this holiday is for people to tend the tombs and gravestones of departed ones.
- 13: Holy Thursday (Western Christianity)
- 14: Good Friday (Western Christianity)
- 16: Easter (Western Christianity)
- 26: National Independence Day (Israel)
- 30: Buddha’s Birthday (Hong Kong)—to remember Buddha’s birth, enlightenment, and death. People go to the temple and offer food to the monastery. There is also distribution of food to the poor. In the evening, people gather to join in ceremony and chant Buddha meditations and teachings.

MAY

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

- 4: Kent State Students' Memorial Day—Four students were killed by the National Guard during an anti-war demonstration at Kent State in Ohio (1970)
- 5: Cinco de Mayo (Mexico)—Marks the victory of the outnumbered Mexican army against the French at the Battle of Puebla. This battle represented Mexican unity and patriotism.
- 29: Greenery Day (Japan)

JUNE

National Coming Out Month/Gay and Lesbian Pride Month

- 12: Russia Independence Day—remembers the election of 1991. Yeltsin was first elected leader in 1000 years
- 12: Philippines Independence Day—Declared independence from Spain in 1898.
- 14: Feast of Corpus Christi (Portugal, Spain, Germany)
- 18: Father's Day (USA)—1966, Pres. Johnson signed a proclamation declaring the third Sunday in June to be Father's Day. In 1972, Pres. Nixon signed a law making it permanent.

- 18: First American woman in space, Dr. Sally Ride (1983)
- 25: Dragon Boat Day (Taiwan) Commemorates the death of Qu Yuan, who was the minister under Zhou. There are activities such as boat races and people eat zong zi, a traditional dish.
- 25: Supreme court bans school prayer, pointing out that prayer in public school is a violation of the First Amendment's separation of state and church (1962)
- 28: Stonewall Riot Anniversary: Clientele of Stonewall Inn, a gay bar, rioted after the club was raided by police; recognized as the start of the gay liberation movement (1969)
- 30: NOW Founded: The National Organization for Women was founded by Betty Friedan and others attending the Third National Conference on the Commission on the Status of Women 1966)

Correction

In the first issue of MSU Diversity NOW! SS 283 was called Ethnic Experience in America. The correct name of the class is Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in America. We apologize for this mistake.