This sequence has two goals: first, to introduce you to fundamental humanistic themes regarding language, and second, to introduce you to college-level writing in the humanities. Each of the three quarters will focus on a different theme as it relates to language: power, identity, and thought. In the winter, we discuss language and identity.

Your responsibilities
You have two major kinds of responsibility in this course: the first pertains to your participation with the course material, and the second pertains to the writing of three short papers, which is your primary assignment over the course of the quarter.

› Participation

› Reading and attendance
You’re expected to attend all scheduled class meetings, which will take place twice a week, for each week of the quarter (except during finals week). You’re also expected to read the material for the meeting, listed in the schedule below, prior to discussion for that day’s meeting (except for the first meeting of week 1). Come to discussion ready to participate. The first two weeks of instruction will be online, accessed via the Zoom link above. We will begin meeting in person starting on Tues., Jan. 25.

› Discussion comments
For each meeting (except for the first meeting of week 1), you must make a post on the course’s Canvas page, under ‘Discussions,’ pertaining to that meeting’s readings. Please
select a passage from the reading that you would like to see discussed, because it puzzled you, you found it interesting, you took issue with it, etc. Quote the passage in full, and leave a brief response to it with your comments and/or questions (these don’t have to be long – a paragraph or two will do – but try to focus on something that you’re genuinely interested in talking about). Discussion comments should be in by midnight of the day prior to discussion, so that everyone has a chance to read them if they want to, especially anyone who may be preparing a discussion for that day. Feel free to respond to each other’s comments as well.

Discussion leading
Once this quarter, you’ll be expected to lead one of the discussion sections, possibly with one or two of your classmates. These discussions will take place on the second meeting of each week, except for the first week, when I will lead the discussion. Your job will be to provide a brief summary of the week’s readings, and collect a series of questions for discussion, from your classmates’ comments or on your own, to present in order to spark and curate discussion. This should be an informal thing, not a big project in its own right, but it will help to prepare slides, a handout, etc., with your notes and questions about the readings, to present to the class. If you’re working with someone else, you should arrange to prepare the presentation outside of class; feel free to meet with me as well, to discuss ideas prior to your discussion, if you’d like help or direction. Sign-ups for discussion leading will be hosted on the Canvas site.

Papers

Writing
You’ll write three short papers over the course of the quarter, each 1,000 - 1,500 words in length. They will pertain to a focused question based on the course readings. Prompts will be distributed with questions (according to the schedule below), and the paper will give a focused answer to one of those questions, supported by textual evidence and argumentation. You have the freedom to design your own prompt if you like, but please clear it with me first. Each paper will be written in two drafts. The first draft will be commented on by George, and will not receive a letter grade, though it must be turned in on time to avoid a late penalty. For the second and final draft, I’ll assign a grade, and provide some final comments and justification for its score. Drafts will be submitted via Canvas, under ‘Assignments.’ Due dates for all drafts are also on the schedule below.

Seminars
You are also registered for a separate writing seminar course, which is assigned a separate Pass/Fail grade. There will be three writing seminars over the course of the quarter, to be taught by George. You must attend the writing seminars; they are required to pass the class, and so to graduate. Details on scheduling will follow.
**Other materials**
Aside from the course readings, there will be some other asynchronous material hosted on the Canvas site. The rest of the material is for your own interest, and may help with understanding some of the obligatory reading material, but it is not obligatory.

**Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments, seminars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tues., 1/11</td>
<td>• Gloria Anzaldúa: <em>Borderlands / La Frontera</em>, Ch. 5: How to Tame a Wild Tongue</td>
<td>Mon., 1/10: Paper 1 prompts posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thurs., 1/13</td>
<td>• Dante Alighieri: <em>De Vulgari Eloquentia</em>, Book I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tues., 1/18</td>
<td>• Alamin Mazrui: Language and the Quest for Liberation in Africa: The Legacy of Frantz Fanon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thurs., 1/20</td>
<td>• Ngũĩ wa Thiong’o: The Language of African Literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tues., 2/1</td>
<td>• Nathan John Albury: Your Language or Ours? Inclusion and Exclusion of Non-Indigenous Majorities in Māori and Sámi Language Revitalization Policy</td>
<td>Mon., 1/31: Paper 2 prompts posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thurs., 2/3</td>
<td>• Lu Xun: An Outsider’s Chats About Written Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tues., 2/8</td>
<td>• Sumathi Ramaswamy: <em>Passions of the Tongue</em>, Ch. 2: One Language, Many Imaginings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thurs., 2/10</td>
<td>• Neil DeVotta: Ethnolinguistic Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Fri., 2/11, midnight: Paper 2 first draft due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Grade breakdown

Your grade will be weighted as follows:

- Discussion posts: 15%
- Drafts: 7.5%
- Presentation: 2.5%
- Paper 1: 20%
- Paper 2: 25%
- Paper 3: 30%

The letter grade is assigned on an ordinary scale: 93%+ = A, 90-92% = A-, 87-89% = B+, 83-86% = B, 80-82% = B-, 77-79% = C+, 73-76% = C, 70-72% = C-, 67-69% = D+, 60-69% = D, below 60% = F.¹

Papers are assigned a score out of 100, equivalent to a percentage, and are weighted as above. First drafts are not graded, but turning in the drafts is worth 2.5% of the final grade for each of

---

¹ The college doesn’t make use of A+ or D-.
the three, subject to the late policy below. Discussion posts are worth equal portions of 15% of the final grade, and are simply counted as complete, late, or missing (see below). The in-class presentation is granted full credit so long as it’s completed satisfactorily. Final grades are determined by (i) taking the raw percentage score according to the weights above, (ii) rounding it to the nearest whole percentage point, rounding up at .5%, and (iii) assigning a letter based on the scale above.

Late Policy
Please contact me if you need to request a reasonable extension for a draft or discussion post, or makeup for a discussion post. If you foresee a difficulty in completing any work, contact me ahead of time; if there is an unforeseen emergency, contact me as soon as you can. My goal is to make sure that everyone has a fair chance to complete all of the work – you will never be punished for illnesses or emergencies. Please also let me know if you’ve arranged with SDS to receive extra time for assignments.

First drafts of papers do not receive letter grades, but are worth 2.5% of the final grade each. A tenth of the worth of the draft will be docked for each day the draft is late (.25% of the final grade), so that if a draft is missing altogether, or is late by 10 or more days, it receives no credit. Late first drafts are not guaranteed to receive comments – this is up to George’s discretion. Final drafts will receive a flat 10-point penalty to their score out of 100 for each day they are late, and missing final drafts, or final drafts 10 or more days late, receive nothing. Discussion posts receive full credit if on time, half credit if posted late but before the discussion thread is locked, and no credit if they’re not in before the thread is locked.

Texts
The course will make use of the following texts:

- **Mules and Men** by Zora Neale Hurston
- **Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez** by Richard Rodriguez
- **The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao** by Junot Díaz

These are also available for purchase at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore. Purchase the correct editions, using the provided ISBN, so that page numbers are in common. All other readings are available on Canvas. If you have trouble getting copies of the above readings, contact me.

Special accommodations
If you have need of any special accommodations, please talk to me as soon as possible so we can make arrangements. It’s my job to make sure you’re able to participate fully in the course, and I

---

2 If you haven’t already, you may register with SDS as well: https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/.
want all of you to do well. It is entirely up to you whether you want to disclose a disability status to me.

**Etiquette and technology**
Please don’t make use of any electronic devices during class for purposes not directly related to discussion or presentation. The use of devices to present, take notes, or view the discussion board is fine.

**Academic integrity**
Please read and take to heart the statement on academic honesty found here:

[http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/academicintegrity/](http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/academicintegrity/)

Cite the work of others when you appeal to it, and don’t pass off another’s work as your own. If you have any doubts, ask me. Suspicions of plagiarism or other forms of cheating will be taken very seriously.

**Miscellaneous**
You should feel free to contact me at any time with any other worries you have about the course: forms of address (name / pronoun), worries about an assignment, questions about participation, broader concerns with completing the course material, and things of that nature, or even if you just want to discuss some of the material.