



Multicultural Literature

Valverde

2011-12 First Semester Final/Spoken Word Component

“Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words.”

Robert Frost

“If my poetry aims to achieve anything, it's to deliver people from the limited ways in which they see and feel.”

Jim Morrison

“Poetry is a deal of joy and pain and wonder, with a dash of the dictionary.”

Kahlil Gibran

”A poet's autobiography is his poetry. Anything else is just a footnote.”

Yevgeny Yevtushenko

“I grew up in this town, my poetry was born between the hill and the river, it took its voice from the rain, and like the timber, it steeped itself in the forests.”

Pablo Neruda



Purpose: To examine critical concepts approached in Multicultural Literature throughout the first semester—including ideas and terminologies within discussions of race, ethnicity, immigration, education, access, articles, texts, and film—in order to interpret Multiculturalism and its domains through the creative medium of poetry, specifically, spoken word.

Directions: After identifying an area of concern, interest, or irritation in the domain of Multiculturalism or Multicultural Studies, *choose a form of poetry and a topic of interest* with which to engage that interest. For example, if ‘power’ is of particular interest to you, you would identify how we have addressed power this year, add to this your own resources and interests insofar as power is concerned, and construct your poem from this vantage poem.

Presentation Part I: The poem **MUST BE AT LEAST ONE MINUTE** long when read aloud. You can ‘background’ your poem with the music of your own choice, but this music should not have lyrics. There should be no other words coming from anywhere but you! You can speak, rap, sing, or speak/dance, or jump/sing your poem if you need! This is a tremendous opportunity where all students can engage at the level of critical thinking, physicality, musicality, and vocality.

Presentation Part II: Each student must create a collage or auxiliary artistic reference item that is at least 16 by 24 containing images which are connected to the piece. You are the poet/artist. Maybe your collage will be created first and the poem comes after? Or the other way around? It’s up to you. But you will display your piece while reading your poem. It does not need to be drawn by you or painted. It is fine to create a cut-out collage concept of images from the net, magazines, photos that you take, etc. The quality of the piece, in terms of its construction, aesthetic value, and beauty is of paramount importance. I don’t suggest glue-sticking a number of things on construction paper the night before. I can tell. The class can, too.

Requirements: One typed copy of the poem to Dr. Valverde at time of presentation (to read along) and one copy for yourself for the recitation. **Don’t forget any music you may need. It needs to be on a CD or iPod.**

Student question: What do you mean by all of this?

Pick an area of multicultural literature, a concept, or a critical issue, (i.e. race, power, gender, immigration, literature, culture, etc.), and/or an aspect of your cultural identity, awareness, etc. and creatively write about it using poetry, while also rendering a visual companion art piece.

Student Question: How much is this worth? When is it due?

The poem and performance are 50 pts. The poem and illustration is due **January 24-26** (the day of your final exam).

Student Question: How do I start?

Identify your favorite area of multiculturalism and reflect. Having trouble? Review your journals for ideas. Once you have established the ‘essence’—pain of immigration, challenge of being the Other or “Othered”, joy in interculturalism, affects of racism, examining life through multiple “lenses,” etc.—then move into your writing. You must decide what form (rhyming, non-rhyming, etc.) that you wish to take.

I am not going to provide you with overwhelming samples and forms of poetry that will restrict you. You are well familiar with traditional forms of poetry. My suggestion is to embrace an open, free form/free verse approach. This assignment is not designed to see if you have mastered poetic writing. It is designed to encourage your critical thinking to manifest in different forms such as poetry or spoken word. Your poem should demonstrate some of the devices listed below.

Remember, from your years of English grades 9-11, poetry depends on devices to convey its meaning. Make use of them! Sample devices and form approaches such as:

alliteration
allusion
analogy
assonance
blank verse
connotation
couplets
denotation
diction
imagery
poem
metaphor
tone

meter
narrative
onomatopoeia
personification
poetic license
repetition
rhyme scheme
rhythm
free verse
simile
stanza
symbol

Grading is based on:

- ✓ Quality of Poem and Requirements
- ✓ Quality of Visual Accompaniment
- ✓ Quality of Presentation/Read Through
- ✓ Quality of Fielding Questions from Class

“Work hard and have a wonderful time with this open project! Get online and start reading some poetry by young adults! You will be amazed ...”

—Dr. V

Spoken Word

(defined?)

<http://www.spokenoak.com/define.html>

Spoken Word is a term adopted by academia (college circles) in the early 80's to recognize a wave of new word-based performance art that came springing out of the Postmodern Art Movement. *(But what's Postmodern & why was word stuff coming out of it?)* Spoken Word was basically a catch-all category to lump together anything that didn't fit into the already well established categories of performance: Music, Theatre & Dance. *(They were established? I thought God create those on the fourth day?)* Some word performance art had been around for eons— storytelling, sound-emphasis poetry, African American toasting, reggae riddims... these forms just hadn't received much attention and suddenly the well-educated acknowledged the exclusion, suddenly people felt politically incorrect. *(Is that a good thing or a bad thing to be?)*

Okay, we know it's confusing; it's difficult to explain in only a few words how & why Spoken Word finally saw a heyday. It's hard to illustrate the strange, unpredictable process of assigning a new label for a new consciousness. We confess, also, that the term Spoken Word implies that any words that are spoken might qualify as Spoken Word, but then what if it's only recorded, not actually performed live? We might ask "If a word plays on a recorder & no one's there to hear... is it Spoken Word?"

(And what if you add music? Is a telephone call Spoken Word? A rant? Reading aloud to the dog? Just give a good simple definition. Oh, and what is it like to be a spoken word artist? Where do you go to apply?)

There is no simple, singular definition for Spoken Word. And maybe there shouldn't be—most independent artists resent being cubby-holed since it puts a crimp in "the experiment". Most word artists have historically been & currently are rebel artists; often they are marginalized people or

social change activists. These artists resent "experts" defining their work and suspect a link to those who would streamline art as a commodity.

For the sake of scholarly study & to secure federal arts funding, however, academia seems to have settled on a definition: Spoken Word is a category of performance art to encompass any new seriously developed genre or traditional form that is primarily word-based & is not exclusively Music, Theatre or Dance but may include collaborations with other non-word-based art genres or works created in collaboration with artists from non-word-based disciplines. *(Oh yeah, that really sounds simple.)*

GOOD EXAMPLES

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0QiFy8dmX0&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0QiFy8dmX0&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuydRgVxWg4>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhttoJwALoA&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuAbGJBvIVY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATC5OGh3adg>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HFY1s2g070>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xuFnP5N2uA>