

**LEAP 1100**  
**Section 10**

**Crossing Borders:  
Identity in the Modern World**

**Instructor:** Dr. Michael White

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**Phone:** 801-585-9867

**Office:** 150 Sill Center (due east of the Olpin Union, across from the visitor parking lot)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 12:30-1:30; Thursday 1:30-2:30; *and* by appointment

(I am always happy to consult with students, and as often as possible at the student's convenience; please let me know IN ADVANCE when you'd like to meet, including scheduled office hour times.)

**Peer Advisor:** Alyssa Quist: amquist@hotmail.com

**Library Instructor:** Dale Larsen: dale.larsen@utah.edu; 801-581-8323

**Course Overview:**

Drawing upon poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and film, the spring LEAP course will focus upon border crossings. Sometimes this will entail a literal, physical movement across political boundaries, reflecting the restless modern impulse to establish a sense of place in the world. Yet we will also come to understand *borders* in a more figurative sense, as represented by the limits and prohibitions against which people strive. Finally, bridging these concepts, we will reflect upon how human identity is constructed and defined in terms of physicality, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc. – and the myriad “crossings” that complicate identity formation, both within individuals and within communities. Along the way, we will compass a diverse array of human experience (and at least one monster's) while becoming fluent with terms like *alienation*, *displacement*, and *hybridity*. The final project for the course will challenge students to grapple with these concepts on a more personal and familial level.

\* Note: LEAP 1100 fulfills both the Humanities and Diversity requirements.

**Learning Objectives:**

The overarching objectives for the course are to develop critical thinking and writing skills, to expand cultural awareness along with self-awareness, and to provide a lively forum for the exchange of ideas.

## Required Texts:

The five main texts listed below are available at the University Bookstore:

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

Richard Wright, *Black Boy*

Sherman Alexie, *Reservation Blues*

Art Spiegelman, *MAUS I: A Survivor's Tale*

## Course Requirements:

40%-Written Assignments (10% short mid-term paper and 30% final project\*)

30%-Tests (2 tests: 15% each)

20%-Attendance and Participation (including group panel debates\*\*)

10%-Quizzes (unannounced quizzes based on the readings and classroom discussion of readings)

\* The final project for the course will challenge you to *discover* and possibly *recover* a chapter of your family's story. You will focus on a particular *individual* who is/was a border crosser in any of the senses we have explored (or others). You will also focus on a particular *moment* in this individual's life – and, yes, this will require/permit considerable creative license. You can write this narrative in third-person or in first-person (thereby adopting a persona). Importantly, this is a project in which you will work in two different media. So, this would likely include a written (or possibly oral) text and an accompanying visual text (collage, powerpoint, video, etc.). You *may* choose to blend the written and the visual – along the lines, say, of the graphic novel formula – but this is in no way required or expected.

My hope is that the project will combine research skills, writing and communication skills, creativity, and will engage you at the deepest intellectual and personal levels.

\*\* Near the beginning of the semester you will be assigned to a panel group. Each group will be responsible for leading a class *debate* on an assigned question pertaining to a recent reading or film screening. Group members will divide themselves into two camps and then proceed (in hopefully civilized fashion) to lob arguments back and forth. It is not necessary that each group member feels personally committed to a particular position – the important thing is to provide a model of argumentative repartee, of give and take. Once the presenters' initial points have been put forward, audience members (the rest of the class) will be invited to contribute arguments and counterarguments of their own. The hope is that by the end of the debate you'll come away with a more balanced and informed perspective on the issue. I will of course be on hand to facilitate, though I expect each group of debaters to do its best to guide the class discussion for approximately 25 minutes. You're in charge, so be creative and have fun.

Group members should arrange to consult with me (in my office or immediately after class) at least **two days before** their scheduled debate date.

## Grading:

94 and above	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
below 60	E

## Classroom Policies:

Assigned work is due **in class** on the due date, unless otherwise specified. Late work will receive partial credit unless prior arrangements are made (in exceptional cases). Please note that work sent via email or left in my box will not be accepted without prior arrangement.

Success in this class requires **regular attendance** and **engaged participation**. This includes being consistently **punctual** and contributing toward a classroom environment that fosters **courtesy and respect**.

In order to be **prepared** for each class session, you must complete all of the assigned readings. Also, you are responsible for bringing all relevant readings to class on the day(s) they are slated to be discussed (see *Class Schedule* below).

Please ensure that your university email account is operational. It is also imperative that you check this account on a regular basis as I will periodically use email to send out class announcements.

## **Class Schedule:**

Please note that the readings listed for any particular day should be done *before* you come to class on that day. Bring all assigned readings to class. Dates of readings and assignments may change, so be aware of announcements.

### **Week 1:**

January 13:  
Introduction to the course

January 15:  
Overview of literary terms  
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

### **Week 2:**

January 20:  
*Frankenstein*

January 22:  
*Frankenstein*

### **Week 3:**

January 27:  
*Frankenstein*

January 29:  
*Frankenstein*

**Panel Group 1:** *Should the gender and/or race of an author influence how we read his/her book? Otherwise put, should our interpretation of a book be affected by the identity of its author?*

### **Week 4:**

February 3:  
World War I poems (handout)  
Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

February 5:  
*The Sun Also Rises*

**Week 5:**

February 10:

Library Session (meet in the Marriott Library, Room 1120)

February 12:

*The Sun Also Rises*

**Week 6:**

February 17:

*The Sun Also Rises*

February 19:

*The Sun Also Rises*

Richard Wright, *Black Boy*

**Week 7:**

February 24:

*Black Boy*

February 26:

Library Session (meet in the Marriott Library, Room 1120)

**Week 8:**

March 3:

*Black Boy*

March 5:

*Black Boy*

**Week 9:**

March 10:

***Panel Group 2: Does a memoir need to be faithful to the “whole truth and nothing but the truth” OR is there room for some creative “bending” of the facts?***

**Test #1**

March 12:

TBA

**Mid-term paper due**

**Week 10: March 16-20: NO CLASSES (Spring Break)**

**Week 11:**

March 24:

Art Spiegelman, *Maus*

March 26:

*Maus*

**Week 12:**

March 31:

Library Session (meet in the Marriott Library, Room 1120)

April 2:

Lydia Nibley (director), *Two Spirits* (in-class film screening)

**Week 13:**

April 7:

***Panel Group 3: How much of gender is natural (inborn) and how much is learned? What might be gained and/or lost by broadening our cultural conception of gender identity? (ie: what if we were to recognize a third, a fourth, a fifth gender ...?)***

Sherman Alexie, *Reservation Blues*

April 9:

*Reservation Blues*

**Week 14:**

April 14:

*Reservation Blues*

April 16:

*Reservation Blues*

**Week 15:**

April 21:

Marjane Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud (directors), *Persepolis* (in-class film screening)

April 23:  
*Persepolis*

**Week 16:**

April 28:

***Panel Group 4: Should the United States (and other Western nations) fight for the establishment of women's rights and freedoms around the world OR should the United States acknowledge a diversity of cultural values and standards with respect to these issues?***

**Test #2**

Snarfing of Snacks

**Final project due Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> by noon in my box in the Sill Center**

**University Policy: accommodation for students with disabilities**

Read the following statement and, if it applies to you, come speak to me and also visit the University's Center for Disability Services:

*"The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD) to make arrangements for accommodations. All printed information for this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services."*

**University Policy: sexual misconduct**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status, or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585- 2677 (COPS).