TEXTS. Alexie, The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven; Cisneros, Woman Hollering Creek; Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass; Ellison, Collected Essays; Erdrich, The Antelope Wife; King, Green Grass, Running Water Parks, “The American Play” and Other Works; Rivera, ...y no se lo tragó la tierra / ...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him; Roth, The Human Stain; Singer, “Gimpel the Fool” and Other Stories; Viramontes, “The Moths” and Other Stories; Wideman, Fever: Twelve Stories

NOTE ON TEXTS. UNT’s bookstores have not ordered Viramontes’s book for this course; you will need to purchase it separately, probably on-line.

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION. Study of the literatures of several ethnic communities, including, but not limited to, African American, Chicano (Mexican American), Latino, Native American and Jewish American. Comparison of divergent worldviews and ideologies articulated in ethnic literatures. Satisfies the Cross-cultural, Diversity and Global Studies requirement of the University Core Curriculum.

WHAT TO EXPECT. We’ll read and discuss some great material, and I hope we’ll have a great time doing it. I value discussion and participation: learning happens when ideas collide, not when they’re recited and transcribed. I don’t need or want you to agree with everything I say; I do want your disagreements (or agreements) to be based on thoughtful examination of the materials.

CAVEAT. Many of the stories contain strong language and deal with what are sometimes, absurdly, called “adult situations” (as distinct from trips to Chuck-E Cheese, perhaps?). Deal or drop.

GEORGE CLINTON. “Think! It ain’t illegal yet!”

POLICIES. Students who miss two classes will be disallowed the grade “A”; students who miss three classes will be assigned the grade “F.” Two early departures count as one absence; I reserve the right to count “lates” thus, too. No make-up quizzes.

E-MAIL AND WEBSITE. My e-mail address is alexp@unt.edu. Please use e-mail sparingly; e.g., you do not need to tell me if you’ll be absent or late. E-mail is a lousy medium for intellectual discussion; visit me during my office hours for substantive discussions of the material. Basic course information, including more or less current grades, will be posted at http://www.engl.unt.edu/~apettit.

TESTS AND GRADING. Most weeks, I’ll give short objective quizzes. Formats include multiple choice, short answer, and fill in the blanks. No make-ups. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest grade; your final grade will represent the average of the remaining grades. See also “Extra Credit,” below.
EXTRA CREDIT. Performance of one or two of the following tasks will qualify students for a grade of A-, A, or A+ in place of their weakest quiz grade(s):

1. Watch Suzan-Lori Parks’s film Girl 6, directed by Spike Lee (with original music by Prince!) and write a short, informal “response” paper, commenting particularly on one aspect of the film (e.g., dialogue, characterization, &c.). Available from UNT’s library as a videodisc (CLV).
2. Watch the Anthony Hopkins / Nicole Kidman film of The Human Stain and write a short, informal “response” paper, commenting particularly on one aspect of the film (e.g., dialogue, characterization, &c.). Widely available in various formats.
3. Watch Sherman Alexie’s film Smoke Signals, which is based on the collection that we’ll read for this class. Write (type) a short, informal paper commenting on some aspect of the film (as distinct from the stories). Available from UNT’s library in video.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT. Essential competencies for this course include the abilities to read, interpret, and discuss literature; and to answer, in writing, objective questions about the literature. If you have a disability for which you will require accommodation under the terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992, register with the Office of Disability Accommodation and submit your request for accommodation by 9/8.

SCHEDULE. Read introductory and prefatory material and endnotes.
1 Sept. Introduction.
8 Sept. Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
6 Oct. Isaac Bashevis Singer, “Gimpel the Fool” and Other Stories (full collection)
13 Oct. Tomás Rivera, ...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him (i.e., English translation only)
20 Oct. Sandra Cisneros, Woman Hollering Creek (full collection)
27 Oct. Helena Maria Viramontes, “The Moths” and Other Stories (full collection)
3 Nov. Sherman Alexie, The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven (full collection)
17 Nov. Louise Erdrich, The Antelope Wife
24 Nov. Thanksgiving; classes do not meet
31 Nov. Thomas King, Green Grass, Running Water. Final day to extra credit assignments in person. Assignments submitted after this date must reach me electronically, as attachments in Word or WordPerfect, by 6:00, Wednesday 8 December.
8 Dec. Final day to submit extra-credit assignments electronically.