

ENGL 3377: MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE: INVE[N/R]TING MULTICULTURAL

MWF 1:50-2:40pm | Nicole Wright



In a provocative 2004 speech entitled “I Have a Plan to Destroy America,” Richard D. Lamm, the former three-term Governor of Colorado, disparaged “multi-culturalism” as “the doctrine of ‘Victimology.’ ” A decade later, CU Boulder renamed the “Center for Multicultural Affairs” as the “Cultural Unity & Engagement Center.” Yet “Multicultural Literature” is still taught at CU Boulder; in fact, it is the catalog label for this course. Is “multiculturalism” tainted? Defunct? What is it, exactly, and why is it reviled both by edgelords on Parler (on the right) and some Black Lives Matter activists (on the left)? In this course, we will survey materials

ranging from novels to literary theory journal articles to verse to maps to Wikipedia to explore the development—and, some would say, the demise—of the concept known as “multiculturalism.” What does it mean to say that race is a social construct? How does literary fiction (broadly conceived) reinforce or challenge various ideas about culture, race, and the capacity of people from different cultures to live peacefully and communicate effectively with each other? Note: This course is reading- and writing-intensive, so you will emerge with stronger writing and interpretive skills.