

American Literature 2

English 242

Professor Johanna Winant

Tuesday/Thursday, 2-3:35pm

ONLINE

Walt Whitman wrote, “I hear America singing,” and half a century later, Langston Hughes asserted, “I, too, sing America.” In 1956, Allen Ginsberg asks, “America when will you be angelic?” and in 2014, Claudia Rankine writes about America’s “domestic tragedies” of racism, punning on the word “domestic” as meaning both national and personal, in *Citizen: An American Lyric*. What does it mean to “sing America?” or even to sing to America? These questions drive this survey course, and in order to address them we will read texts that make us think more about what we mean when we say “America,” and how and by whom America has been sung over the past hundred and fifty years. Our authors—some of whom read for presidents, some of whom write without planning publication at all—take on, explicitly or implicitly, America as their topic or as their addressee.

