**English 4382/5382 (CRN 28131/28133)**

**Race in American Literature**

**Spring, 2015**

**MWF 11:00-11:50, Irby 304**

**Instructor: Conrad Shumaker**

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**Office hours: MWF 1:00-3:00; TR 8:15-9:15, 12:30-1:30; and by appointment**

**Bulletin Description:** Required for African/African-American Studies majors and a core elective for minors; an elective for English majors and minors. The course explores the depictions of racial definitions, identities, and conflicts offered by American writers of various races, although primarily African-American and white. Focus will be on writers such as Phillis Wheatley, Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain, and Flannery O'Connor. Lecture, discussion. Prerequisite: ENGL 2312 or 2313.

**Description of This Course:** The premise of this course is that in order to understand race in literature, we have to begin by looking at the concept of race itself and the ways it affects our thinking about groups who are different from our own. Biologically speaking, there is no such thing as race--at least as our culture has commonly thought of it--among human beings. Race as it functions in society is what Sociologists call a “socially constructed category”; to put it in literary terms, it’s a *story* that we tell in order to make sense of the world in ways that fit our beliefs and/or interests. This course will begin, then, by examining the stories (sometimes overt, but often hidden) that create and shape this larger story of race. Then we will look at the ways in which American Literature has dealt with the issues raised by the story of race, specifically the way that story has affected our views of American Indian, African-American, and Hispanic peoples. We will examine these literary works within a historical context to better understand how they deal with and reflect the historical forces which shape them and which they help to shape. The course will depend on our discussion of these issues, so it is vitally important that you come to class having read and thought about the material and with a copy of the appropriate text in hand.

**Course Objectives:** This course is designed to develop your ability (1) to read with comprehension, 2) to see connections between literature, culture, and history, 3) to think and write critically about literature and your own ideas, 4) to understand the writing and rewriting process, including the use of primary and secondary texts, and 5) to present and develop your thoughts through discussion.

**Texts (in tentative order of use):**

Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories* (University of Minnesota Press)

Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (Bedford)

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life . . . With Related Documents* (Bedford)

Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Norton)

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (Vintage)

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (Penguin)

Judith Ortiz Cofer, *The Latin Deli* (Norton)

Alberto Rios, *Capirotada* (University of New Mexico Press)

In addition we will read a number of short stories, poems, and other documents; photocopies, references, or internet links to texts will be provided.

**Assignments:** In addition to a midterm and final exam--both primarily essay--you will do daily journal entries that record your responses to the reading, and you will write a paper (7-8 pages) that will involve some research. If you are a graduate student, you will do a somewhat longer paper (10-12 pages) and an annotated bibliography, both of which will show your deeper familiarity with the critical responses to the issue you’re exploring.

**Grading:** Your grade will be based on the following percentages:

*Undergraduate students*

midterm exam 15%

final exam 25%

paper 25%

daily journals 25%

participation 10%

*Graduate students*

midterm exam 15%

final exam 20%

paper 25%

daily journals 20%

annotated bibliography 10%

participation 10%

**Dire Warnings, etc**.: Late papers will be penalized a grade point unless you have a good excuse. No paper will be accepted if it is more than a week late. If you don't come and tell me why your paper is late, I will assume that you have no excuse. *Daily journal entries will not be accepted late.*

Miss class at your own risk. Discussions are an important part of the course, and you can't participate in them if you aren't present. If you miss four times without a legitimate excuse, your final grade will be lowered one point, since you have failed to complete the participation requirement of the course. If you have a legitimate excuse, you can do an extra assignment to make up for what you've missed by not being in on the discussion. **If you miss six times, with or without a legitimate excuse, I will drop you from the course.** It’s up to you to let me know if you feel your excuse is legitimate--if I don’t hear from you I’ll assume your absence isunexcused. If you need to miss class, please don't call the department office, since the secretary doesn't need more calls to answer. If you need to find out something or discuss a late paper, call my extension, listed at the top of this syllabus, or email me. If you're desperate, my home phone number is 205-9868.

Late arrival or early departure disrupts discussion, so if you come into class late (i.e. after your name is called or noted at the beginning of the period), you will be charged with one half an absence. If you leave class early without letting me know at the beginning of the period that you have a legitimate reason, you will be counted absent for that day.

Please be sure that your cell phone is turned off before you enter the classroom. Having your phone ring is highly disruptive to discussions, and will probably make you feel awful for the rest of the day. If you violate this rule more than once during the semester, I will ask you to leave the classroom for the remainder of the period in which the disruption occurs.

It is a requirement of the course that you obtain copies of the required texts and bring them to class on the days when we discuss them. The study of literature involves looking closely at particular examples of language, so if you don’t have the text with you, you can’t participate fully in the discussion. If you come to class without your text, you will be warned the first time and then charged with half an absence after that. Please do NOT plan to use a computer in class unless you have a disability that makes it necessary: you will need to be looking closely at the pages of your book, and having a computer on your desk interferes with that activity, as well as with your ability to contribute to discussion.

**Academic Integrity***:* The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy. To touch on the most directly relevant issue for this course, plagiarism means presenting someone else's words or ideas as if they were your own, either purposely or accidentally (e.g., copying a passage from a critical work or--heaven forbid--Cliff's Notes, or having someone else write a paper for you.) It's your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and to avoid it. If you plagiarize, you will fail this course.

**Other Important Information:**

**Student Evaluations--**Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom, and they aid the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking from June 28 through July 7 by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

An **Emergency Procedures Summary** (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Title IX Disclosure**: If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs, and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on the specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>. *\*Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*

Please familiarize yourselves with the policies included in the **Student Handbook**, especially the sections on sexual harassment and academic policies.

Finally, UCA adheres to the requirements of the **Americans with Disabilities Act**. If you need accommodation under this act due to a disability, contact the Office of Disability Support Services at 450-3135.

**Readings (to be completed by class time on the dates listed)**

**Part I—America and Race in the 17th and 18th Centuries**

1/9 Introduction—The Story of Race

1/12 Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories*, 1-60

1/14 “ 61-119

1/16 “ 120-167

1/19 **No Class—MLK holiday**

1/21 Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness . . .,* Introductory and historical materials--1- 5, 10-44, 115-118

1/23 Rowlandson’s narrative, 68-85

1/26 Rowlandson, 86-112; John Greenleaf Whittier and Nathaniel Hawthorne on Hannah Duston: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/americanlit1e/content/cat_050/01050-04.htm> and <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/americanlit1e/content/cat_050/01050-05.htm>

1/28 Thomas Jefferson on Africans (handout); Video: *Africans in America*

1/30 *Africans in America*, continued: Phillis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America” (handout)

**Part II—Race, Slavery and the Aftermath**

2/2 Wheatley, “To His Excellency, General Washington,” “Letter to Samson Occom,” (handouts)

2/4 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life . . .*, 41-71

2/6 *Narrative*, 72-106

2/9 *Narrative*, 106-125

2/11 Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,* [*http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html*](http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html), chapters I-VI, X

2/13 *Incidents*, chapters XV, XXI-XXIII

2/16 Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 13-66

2/18 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* 67-116

2/20 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 117-170

2/23 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 170-227

2/25 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 228-274

2/27 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 275-296

3/2 Wrap-up *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

3/4 **Midterm Exam**

3/6 Charles Chesnutt, “The Passing of Grandison,” <http://facstaff.gpc.edu/~kjohnson/classes/readings/passinggrandison.htm>

**Part III: Slavery to Jim Crow**

3/9 Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, pp. 3-108

3/11 *Invisible Man*, pp. 109-230

3/13 *Invisible Man*, pp. 231-317

3/16 *Invisible Man*, pp. 318-422

3/18 *Invisible Man*, pp. 423-512

3/20 *Invisible Man*, pp. 513-end; **Paper Thesis Due**

3/23-27 **Spring Break**

**Part IV: The Other Americans**

3/30 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*, pp. 1-48

4/1 *Ceremony*, pp. 48-105

4/3 *Ceremony*, pp. 105-163

4/6 *Ceremony*, pp.164-210

4/8 *Ceremony*, pp. 210-end

4/10 *Ceremony*, concluded; **Rough Draft Due (no outside sources)**

4/13 Judith Ortiz Cofer, *The Latin Deli*, selections

4/15 *The Latin Deli*, selections

4/17 Alberto Rios, *Capirotada*, selections

4/20 *Capirotada*, selections

4/22 *Capirotada*, selections **Paper Due**

4/27 **Final Exam—2:00-4:00**

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