

ENGL 4380/5380: African/African American Literature

Dr. Lori Leavell	Spring 2016
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Office Hours: MWF 9:30 - Noon, M 3:00 - 4:30, and by appointment	Irby Hall 312

COURSE OVERVIEW

“For English majors and minors to satisfy upper-division elective requirements. This is a survey of African and African-American literature from the eighteenth century to the present generally focusing on slave narratives, middle passage and captivity narratives in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and works by such writers as Larson, Petry, Hurston, Bambara, Reed, Baraka, John A. Williams, and August Wilson in this century. Lecture, discussion, writing. Prerequisite: ENGL 2312 or 2313.”

In this particular version of the course, we will focus primarily on African American literature, though Africa will come up as a place remembered and imagined. In fact, the very first text we will read, the eighteenth-century best-selling narrative of Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* (1789), brings to the fore some of the complex questions concerning identity and authorship that we will consider throughout the course. Along with Equiano, our readings in the eighteenth century will include Phillis Wheatley. We'll spend considerable time in the nineteenth century when African Americans established a robust print culture with readings from James Whitfield, Harriet Wilson, Charles Chesnutt, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper among others. With particular focus on the New Negro Movement and writings through mid-century, twentieth-century authors include Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, and Zora Neale Hurston, and we'll conclude with a 2015 work by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Along the way, several questions will warrant our attention, including the following: What is African American literature? What avenues to reading and authorship were available to African Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? What is the relationship of aesthetics to politics? What are some of the defining issues and aesthetic concerns of twentieth-century African American literature?

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To trace a history of African American writing in the United States, beginning with a transatlantic slave narrative and concluding with a work of contemporary literature.
- To recognize some of the historical, political, and cultural forces relevant to the production of literature and to the development of a print culture among African Americans.
- To think critically about the formation of literary histories.
- To become adept at implementing the principles of literary analysis.
- To hone reading, writing, analytical, and research skills.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Equiano, Olaudah. *The Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*. Dover (1999)
- Wilson, Harriet. *Our Nig*. Vintage (2011)
- Chesnutt, Charles W. *The Marrow of Tradition*. Ed. Werner Sollors. Norton (2012)
- Several texts available on Blackboard—to be printed and brought to class. (Reading from a laptop or phone during class is not permitted.)

REQUIRED EVENTS

The College of Liberal Arts Student Research Symposium will take place on April 20 and 21. These two days will consist of student presentations, and the Symposium guest, Dr. Laurie Green (University of Texas, Austin), will deliver a talk each night. In lieu of our class meetings on March 18 and April 20, you are required to attend one panel of student presentations and one of the talks. The final exam will include a component that asks you to write about the talk you attended.

ATTENDANCE, PREPARATION, PARTICIPATION, AND CIVILITY

Attendance: To be counted as present, students must arrive on time with the texts to be discussed and remain engaged for the duration of the class. More than three absences/instances of tardiness is considered excessive. Three absences (for whatever reason) will not alter one's grade; however, each subsequent absence/tardiness will result in the deduction of five points from the final point total. Please be aware that seven absences, regardless of the reasons, will result in a grade of WF/F for the course.

Preparation: To prepare for class, read and annotate the assigned material, post to Blackboard and read your classmates' discussion questions, and come prepared to contribute thoughtful ideas.

Participation and Civility: This course is discussion-based, its success depending on the contributions of the participants. If a full schedule or personal matters will prevent full participation, please take the course another time. Bring to class the readings to be discussed. Several texts have been placed on Blackboard (indicated with "BB" on the day-by-day schedule) and must be printed and brought to class. This course expects that participants will extend respect and courtesy to one another and to the literature. In this spirit, take care to power down and put away all electronic devices before class begins. Make it a point to voice comments and questions every class while being respectful and considerate of others so that no one person dominates the discussion.

ASSIGNMENTS

The course is designed so that each assignment builds on the previous one. Twice a week, you will post to Blackboard questions generated by the readings to be discussed in the upcoming class. Idea papers provide an opportunity to expand on those questions. These assignments will help prepare you to select a research topic, which will focus the short paper, abstract, and expanded paper. Reading and talking with one another no doubt will contribute to the development of our ideas, and the structure of the course—discussion-based with several small writing assignments, culminating in a larger research paper—is organized to facilitate that development. **(Graduate Students: Please notice the assignment substitutions indicated in bold.)**

Blackboard Questions: On Mondays and Wednesdays by 10 am, submit to Blackboard one discussion question provoked by the readings assigned for the day's class and take some initial steps to answer it. (You need not post on days for which a Workshop is scheduled or a paper is due—unless a new reading has also been assigned.) These questions will help structure the lecture and discussion. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Five Writing Workshops: Writing workshops provide the opportunity to offer feedback on your classmates' writing and receive feedback on your own. A complete draft of the upcoming paper is required for admittance to the workshops, and participation is assessed according to quality of offered feedback. Latecomers cannot participate and will take an absence.

Three Idea Papers (2-3 pages): These short papers provide the opportunity to develop ideas generated from the course readings, discussion, and Blackboard posts. Late Idea Papers will not be accepted.

Abstract (1-2 pages): The abstract should articulate the basic questions that your expanded paper will address, preview how your argument will unfold, situate your argument among conversations in scholarship, and

clarify the stakes of the argument. It should demonstrate that feedback offered on the short paper has been addressed and that subsequent research has been completed.

Short Paper (5 pages): Approval of research topic must be secured. This paper should focus on one or two of the class's primary sources. Incorporate 4 secondary sources. Late papers are marked down half of a letter grade for each day they are late, including weekend days. **(Graduate students: Prepare a short paper 7-8 pages in length, and incorporate 5-6 secondary sources.)**

Expanded Paper (8-10 pages): This paper will build on the short paper. It should demonstrate that feedback on the short paper has been addressed and that additional research has shaped the argument (citing 8-9 total secondary sources). Late papers are marked down half of a letter grade for each day they are late and will not be accepted after April 22. When submitting the final paper, include the marked-up short paper. **(Graduate students: Prepare expanded papers 12-15 pages in length with 10-13 secondary sources.)**

Final Essay Exam: Essay exam. A portion will focus on Dr. Green's talks. **(Graduate students: In lieu of the exam, prepare an annotated bibliography [6 pages/ 8 sources, each annotation 150-200 words] along with an introductory essay [6 pages].)**

POINT DISTRIBUTION

<u>Undergraduate:</u>		<u>Graduate:</u>	
Blackboard Questions @ 2 pts. x 20	= 40	Blackboard Questions x 20	= 40
Workshops @ 5 pts. x 5	= 25	*Workshops x 3	= 15
Idea Papers @ 20 pts. x 3	= 60	Idea Papers x 3	= 60
Abstract	= 25	Abstract	= 25
Short Paper	= 75	Short Paper	= 75
Expanded Paper	= 100	Expanded Paper	= 100
Final Essay Exam	= 75	*Annotated Bibliography + essay	= 75
Total Points	= 400	*Presentation	= 30
		Total Points	= 420

(Asterisk = distinction from undergraduate requirements. Graduate Students need not attend Workshops # 4 and #5.)

Points will be converted to percentages to yield final grades according to the following scale:

90% - 100%	= A
80% - 89%	= B
70% - 79%	= C
60% - 69%	= D
Below 60%	= F

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 that the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

THE WRITING CENTER

The Center will help you work on your writing at any stage of development. To make an appointment, submit a paper for online tutoring, or to find out about drop-in hours, visit

<http://www.uca.edu/writingcenter/appointment.php>. They also offer useful online resources at http://www.uca.edu/writingcenter/online_resources.php. The Academic Success Center is also

available to help you with all aspects of college work. Check them out at <http://www.uca.edu/ucollege/asc.php>.

EVALUATIONS

Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the twelfth week of instruction through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES SUMMARY 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 those 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.*

UNIVERSITY POLICIES If you have questions about the university’s academic policies or any other matters, please consult the relevant sections of the UCA Student Handbook. UCA adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, contact the UCA Office of Disability Services at 450-3135.

Day-by-Day Syllabus

Friday, 1/8	Introductions
Week 1	
Monday, 1/11	Wheatley, “To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth,” “To S. M., a Young African Painter, on Seeing His Works,” “On the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield,” and “To Rev. Samson Occom” (BB)
Wednesday, 1/13	Wheatley, continued
Friday, 1/15	Joseph Rezek, “The Print Atlantic: Phillis Wheatley, Ignatious Sancho, and the Cultural Significance of the Book” (BB)
Week 2	
Monday, 1/18	Holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Wednesday, 1/20	Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative</i> , chs. 1-4 (7-70)
Friday, 1/22	Equiano, chs. 5-7 (70-111)
Week 3	
Monday, 1/25	Equiano, chs. 8- 10 (111-49)
Wednesday, 1/27	Equiano, chs. 11-12 (150-80)
Friday, 1/29	Draft of Idea Paper #1 / Workshop
Week 4	
Monday, 2/1	Idea Paper #1 Due / Whitfield, “America,” “Yes! Strike Again That Sounding String,” and “Self-Reliance” (BB)
Wednesday, 2/3	Whitfield, continued
Friday, 2/5	Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (BB)
Week 5	
Monday, 2/8	William J. Wilson, “Afric-American Picture Gallery” (BB)
Wednesday, 2/10	William J. Wilson, continued
Friday, 2/12	Draft of Idea Paper #2: Workshop
Week 6	
Monday, 2/15	Idea Paper #2 / Harriet Wilson, <i>Our Nig</i> (Preface + 1-39)
Wednesday, 2/17	Harriet Wilson, (40-77)
Friday, 2/19	Harriet Wilson, (78-110)
Week 7	
Monday, 2/22	Harriet Wilson, (110-40)

Wednesday, 2/24	Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, "Ethiopia," "Eliza," "Bury Me in a Free Land" (491-500) (BB)
Friday, 2/26	Harper, "The Two Offers" (BB)
Week 8	
Monday, 2/29	Draft of Idea Paper #3 Due: Workshop
Wednesday, 3/2	Idea Paper #3 Due / Paper Topics Due / Meet in Torreyson #117
Friday, 3/4	Chesnutt, <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i> , chs. 1-7 (xxxix-44)
MARCH	
Week 9	
Monday, 3/7	Chesnutt, chs. 8-21 (44-113)
Wednesday, 3/9	Chesnutt, chs 22-29, (113-52)
Friday, 3/11	Chesnutt, chs. 30-37 (152-95)
Week 10	
Monday, 3/14	Hughes, selected poems (BB)
Wednesday, 3/16	Draft Short Paper Due / Workshop #4
Friday, 3/18	No class/ Dr. Leavell's presenting at a conference
Spring Break: March 21-25	
Week 11	
Monday, 3/28	Hughes, continued
Wednesday, 3/30	Short Paper Due / Meet in Torreyson #117
Friday, 4/1	Locke, "The New Negro" (BB)
APRIL	
Week 12	
Monday, 4/4	Wright, "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow" (BB)
Wednesday, 4/6	Hurston, from <i>Mules and Men</i> (BB)
Friday, 8	Hurston, "What White Publishers Won't Print" (BB)
Week 13	
Monday, 4/11	Coates, "Letter to My Son" (BB)
Wednesday, 4/13	Draft of Expanded Paper Due: Workshop #5
Friday, 4/15	Expanded Paper Due / Coates, continued
Week 14	
Monday, 4/18	Review for Final
Wednesday, 4/20:	No Class / Required: Attend CLA Symposium on Wednesday or Thursday
Thursday, 4/21	Required: Attend Symposium Talk by Dr. Laurie Green on Wednesday or Thursday
Friday, 4/22	Study Day
Final Exam:	Friday, April 29 th , 10-noon