

INTERRACIAL LOVE NARRATIVES

Course: 4382 Race in American Literature
Class Meetings: MWF 9 – 9:50 in Irby Hall 310
Instructor: Dr. Isiah Lavender, III
Office: 401 Irby Hall
Office Hours: M-F 2 – 4 p.m. and by appointment
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Required Texts:

The Fall of Rome. Martha Southgate
Fledgling. Octavia Butler
The Human Stain. Philip Roth
*It Ain't All Good: Why Black Men Should Not
Date White Women*. John Johnson

Loving Her. Ann Allen Shockley
Milk in my Coffee. Erick Jerome Dickey
The Professor's Daughter. Emily Raboteau
Pushkin and the Queen of Spades. Alice Randall
A Ship Made of Paper. Scott Spencer

Course Description: What is love? A simultaneous happy/sad, pleasurable/painful, anxious/exciting up/down and all around roller coaster ride of emotions. But what happens when race and all of its inherent difficulties—hatred, bigotry, prejudice, stereotyping, racism, violence, etc.—go along for the ride? This class will explore the concept of forbidden love between the races as it has been imagined throughout the twentieth century. Issues such as miscegenation, passing, mixed/biracial/mulatto offspring, the power of stereotypes, and racism, among other things will be investigated as we try to figure out what love means...in black and white.

Expectations: My expectations are very high, and you should demand the same from me, and especially from one another: if you come to class prepared to fully engage with the material, you should expect the same from everyone in the room. Every absence or withheld participation is palpable; I therefore expect regular attendance, consistent preparation, and active participation. Finally, I expect all of us to have fun because learning should be and can be fun. For my part, I will try to cultivate a lively discussion for each class.

Responsibilities and Behavior: Remember that you only have time for the activity that you put first, and by signing up for this course you are agreeing to put this class first during the specified time period. While I am always willing to work with a student in the event of a legitimate emergency such as the death of an immediate family member or a student's own emergency hospitalization, you should schedule dental appointments, elective surgery, family celebrations, work, and any other non-emergency activity outside of class time. Keep a written record of your absences/tardies so that you know your precise status as I will be doing so.

It is your responsibility either to resolve potential conflicts well in advance of an exam in the exam's favor or to drop the course; never presume upon me to solve your conflict for you. Each absence after **four** absences lowers your final grade for the class by ten points. Any rare exceptions to this policy will be determined on a case-by-case basis; it is your responsibility to contact me immediately to inquire about an exception if such a situation occurs. If you have **four** consecutive absences, you will be dropped from the class. You paid your money to take your chances. If you miss class, you will get behind as well as miss important discussions which

further understanding of the works being examined. You need to be here. Arriving to class late—after the official start time or after me—means you will have to work *twice as hard to receive half a point for the day's discussion*.

As we are all adults here, and this is a university campus, it should be understood that respect for the instructor, fellow students, and the material itself is required. This means, **DO NOT COME TO CLASS LATE. DO NOT LEAVE CLASS EARLY. TURN ALL CELL PHONES OR ANY OTHER GADGETS THAT MAKE NOISE 'OFF' AT THE DOOR AND PLACE THEM OUT OF SIGHT.** Do not work on other assignments for other classes. Do not converse with others randomly during the lecture. Do not sleep (this is not nap-time). Do not **CHEAT. ANY BEHAVIOR** that inhibits the ability of students to learn **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED** and could result in **BEING DISMISSED FROM THE CLASS—PERMANENTLY.** Disruptive Behavior should not be a part of the classroom environment. You will get a warning for the first infraction of this rule. The first warning will be penalized as an absence; in addition to forfeiting all credit on any graded assignment that day. The second instance will result in your being dropped from the class.

Academic Misconduct: Avoid even the appearance of possible impropriety during an exam or quiz; leave books and notebooks closed and out of sight; do not let your eyes stray to another's paper; do not leave the room while the exam is in progress; speak only to the instructor or the exam proctor. A grade of zero will be assigned to any quiz or exam the integrity of which has been opened to question in any way.

Late work: Outside work is due at the start of the specified period; I **DO NOT ACCEPT** late work with two exceptions—a death in the family accompanied by an obituary or funeral program and emergency hospitalization supplemented by admittance papers.

GRADING: Course requirements for **undergraduates** include active participation in discussion, weekly questions, 4 reader responses of 1-2 pages, an essay of 8 -10 pages, and a final.

Course requirements for **graduate students** include: active participation, weekly questions, reader responses on each text, a 12-15 page term paper, 1 teaching session, and a final exam.

All formal writing assignments must be typed in a **12 point Times New Roman font and also be uniformly double-spaced with 1-inch margins in addition to having a title.** Any assignment that does not meet these specific requirements **in addition to length obligations** will receive an X grade and no feedback; an X grade garners zero credit at the end of the semester unless you redo it to my satisfaction. You and you alone are responsible for the condition and submission of your assignments. **DO NOT** rely on spell check alone. **PROOFREAD** your papers and save them. I **DO** encourage you to seek me out and discuss your ideas or lack thereof. Keep all graded assignments easily available for consultation until after the final grade has been recorded, both so that you may compute your average at any point in the semester, and so that any dispute over the final grade's computation may be efficiently resolved. There are **100 points** for the semester.

Participation –This class is discussion oriented which makes your energetic participation essential in having a successful and productive semester. Thus, it is your obligation to read and prepare the assigned readings for class. I strongly encourage you to express your pleasure in as

well as your frustration with the readings because this will stimulate and inspire discussion in the classroom. Attendance is crucial. Another avenue of earning participation points for students who are afraid of speaking in class is by making your opinion known to me via email exchange where you and I will have an electronic exchange of ideas and thoughts. Silent people receive zero points for each class that they are silent (live or internet). (**½ a point per class meeting**)

*****Graduate students are *expected* to orally participate each class period.**

Weekly Questions – Each student is responsible for supplying at least one question per week for the class to consider about our reading. Questions may concern whatever fascinates, arouses, disturbs, or confuses you about a text, character, situation, cultural moment, or something else entirely. I am keenly interested in addressing your questions as opposed to my own. Questions may be submitted in legible handwriting at the beginning of class or via email the night before class. Questions which display an honest, thoughtful attempt to gain insight into a text will receive 1 point; if it shows a safe, solid but not all that perceptive inquiry, you'll receive ½ ; and if you blow it off with a superficial question, you'll score a zero. You can write questions for each class period to increase your chance of earning the week's point. (**1 point a week**)

Reader Responses – Ideally, these response papers will aid in your developing awareness of yourself as a reader throughout the semester. You can write on any material covered in class, whether it be a response to another person's expressed view or your own reading of a text or texts. For example, you could explain how and why a particular passage or line provokes a response from you or why the reading assignment is torturous to complete. I am interested in your response to the readings, but keep in mind that reading only succeeds if you gain "meaning," and the meaning(s) that you gain are transmitted in your interpretations. The possibilities are seemingly endless. Each journal should be **no less than a full page in length and no more than 2 pages**. Thus, it should take no longer than an hour to reflect on what you have read or heard. You are responsible for **four** responses. (**5 points each**)

*****Graduate students will write an RR for *EACH* text. (nine responses 3 points each)**

*****Teaching** – Each graduate member of the class will serve as teacher, lecturer, or facilitator for one of our texts. As the teacher you will begin and lead class discussions, presumably on topics of your particular interest or previous knowledge in relation to our authors. While the assigned readings determine the basic ground for our discussions, I also hope that the discussion leaders will move the class in directions I have not planned or anticipated. I will meet with each graduate student prior to discussion. (**18 points**)

Quizzes – I reserve the right to quiz you during the class period at any time in any form I see fit from group and individual oral quizzes to silent discussions (**BEWARE**) and anything in between including traditional formats of the announced variety. Quizzes greatly depend on your participation.

Essay – There is only one essay for this class. You will choose one or more of our texts that particularly appeal to you and you answer the "simple" question: **WHAT DOES LOVE MEAN FOR YOU?** Alas, there are many ways to answer this question beginning with the course description, but the themes presented there are merely directions for tackling the essay, I must

approve the thesis you select to write on in the essay. I consider this essay to be the most formal assignment. As such, it will be evaluated on the quality of your engagement with the text or idea, focus and organization, writing mechanics, and creativity. The length requirement for this assignment is *no less than eight full pages and no more than ten*. Any paper that does not meet the length requirement will receive a letter grade deduction or worse. **Due Date: Friday December 3, 2010.** (25 points)

Plagiarism -- the act of passing off the ideas or words of another as your own without crediting the source -- is not acceptable and will be severely penalized, meaning an F for the course. Of course, you can use outside sources in as long as you cite them properly using MLA style. Please do not hesitate to ask whether something should be cited if you are unsure.

Final Exam – The final exam format will be announced.

Grade Scale: A 91 and above; B 90-80; C 79-70; D 69-60; F 59 and Below

	<u>U</u>	<u>G</u>
Participation: 40 classes (½ each)	20	X
Weekly Questions: 15 weeks (1 point)	15	15
Reader Responses: 4x5; 9x3	20	27
Teaching:	X	18
Essay:	25	25
Final:	20	15
Total:	100	100

UNIVERSITY POLICIES: If you have questions about the university's academic policies, guidelines regarding sexual harassment, 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.

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.

THIS SYLLABUS IS A TENTATIVE OUTLINE—IT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

CLASS SCHEDULE:

F 8/27: Course Intro: Personal Intros

M 8/30: *Loving Her* pp.1-64

W 9/1: *Loving Her* pp. 65-127

F 9/3: *Loving Her* pp. 127-187

M 9/6: Labor Day Holiday

W 9/8: *It Ain't All Good* pp. v-62

F 9/10: *It Ain't All Good* pp.63-124

M 9/13: *The Fall of Rome* pp. 7-71

W 9/15: *The Fall of Rome* pp. 72-140

F 9/17: *The Fall of Rome* pp. 141-216

M 9/20: *The Professor's Daughter* pp. 1-68

W 9/22: *The Professor's Daughter* pp. 69-126

F 9/24: *The Professor's Daughter* pp. 127-178

M 9/27: *The Professor's Daughter* pp. 179-220

W 9/29: *The Professor's Daughter* pp. 221-276

F 10/1: *The Human Stain* pp. 1-74

M 10/4: *The Human Stain* pp. 75-145

W 10/6: *The Human Stain* pp. 146-201

F 10/8: *The Human Stain* pp. 202-284

M 10/11: *The Human Stain* pp. 285-361

W 10/13: FILM

F 10/15: FILM

M 10/18: FILM

W 10/20: FILM discussion

F 10/22: **Fall Break**

M 10/25: *A Ship Made of Paper* pp. 1-69

W 10/27: *A Ship Made of Paper* pp. 70-140

F 10/29: *A Ship Made of Paper* pp. 141-192

M 11/1: *A Ship Made of Paper* pp. 193-247

W 11/3: *A Ship Made of Paper* pp. 248-299

F 11/5: *A Ship Made of Paper* pp. 300-352

M 11/8: "Black Unicorn" Discussion

W 11/10: *Milk in my Coffee* pp. 1-67

F 11/12: *Milk in my Coffee* pp. 67-122

M 11/15: *Milk in my Coffee* pp. 125-171

W 11/17: *Milk in my Coffee* pp. 172-218

F 11/19: *Milk in my Coffee* pp. 219-265

M 11/22: *Milk in my Coffee* pp. 265-310

W 11/24: Thanksgiving

F 11/26: Thanksgiving

M 11/29: *Fledgling* pp. 1-68

W 12/1: *Fledgling* pp. 69-135

F 12/3: Fledgling pp. 137-196; Essay due

M 12/6: *Fledgling* pp. 197-249

W 12/8: *Fledgling* pp. 251-310

12/13 through 12/17: Final Examinations

Final Exam Date, Time, and Location: **TBA**