Course Overview
The course focuses on the literary works of Haitian-American writer Edwidge Danticat. Danticat’s novels and short stories will facilitate our discussion of the formative, historical developments that have shaped Haiti’s culture, politics, and economic situation, namely the legacies of slavery, revolution, independence, and neocolonialism. We will pay great attention to the contestations against Western ideologies that often serve to disqualify ancestral knowledge or silence women’s voices to state-sanctioned or global narratives. Given Haiti’s revolutionary legacy, we will examine how its citizens, women in particular, develop a vocabulary for protesting against Western imperialism, while learning how to cope with its own home-grown and institutionalized violence, whether cultural, political, or racial.

We will focus our discussion on the narration (narrative voice, structure, point of view, etc) of “unspeakable acts” and explore how the body functions as text or site of memory to subvert state-sanctioned narratives. As central lines of questioning, we will ask: How do state and cultural institutions work to enforce and conceal violence, and what particular narrative strategies are employed? How can trauma (personal, familial, national, historical) be narrativized? How are competing histories narrated?

Required Books*
Edwidge Danticat, *Brother, I’m Dying* [ISBN: 978-140034307]

*Secondary readings will be distributed in class or posted on Blackboard
Course Objectives

- You will learn to come up with your own questions of inquiry as you analyze, write, and present research while engaging multiple literary texts and theoretical sources.
- You will learn critical practices for reading and contextualizing Caribbean literature within its unique specific cultural milieu as you sharpen your analytic competency with nuance and open-mindedness.
- You will also demonstrate your abilities to analyze familiar cultural assumptions in the context of the world’s diverse values, traditions, and belief systems.

Class Expectations

This class will be heavily discussion-based and depends upon the prepared and active participation of all students, which means: taking active notes, listening to each other, debating with each other, contributing impressions, opinions, questions, answers and sharing experiences, perspectives, and ideas. When fellow colleagues give class presentations, as a class we will be active listeners, taking notes, and asking questions not only to further our own understanding, but also to help the presenter in his or her scholarship. Everyone is required to have completed the reading for the day it is listed. Together, as a team, we will engage in a semester-long exploration. How far we get depends on our daily commitment to being critical readers, writers, and thinkers. We will take intellectual risks, we will trust each other, we will listen, we will suggest improvements, we will experiment, we will cast aside all timidity, we will explore our beliefs and feelings, and we will have fun doing it!

Preparation, Attendance, Participation

To prepare for class, read the assigned material, take notes, post your response questions to Blackboard and read your classmates’ discussion questions. Doing so will help to enhance your thoughtful contributions to class discussions. Readings are due on the date they are listed; come to class with the appropriate text—and print out any assigned supplemental readings.

Attendance (10%): More than three absences/instances of tardiness is considered excessive. Three absences (for whatever reason) will not impact your grade; however, each subsequent absence/tardiness will result in the loss of your final grade for attendance and participation. Please be aware that seven absences, regardless of the reason, will result in a grade of WF/F for the course.

Participation (10%): Your attendance and participation are crucial to our success. Our course depends heavily upon discussion and therefore the prepared and active participation of all its members; this means that just showing up and paying attention isn’t nearly enough. You are expected to bring to class the readings to be discussed. A few texts have been placed on Blackboard (as indicated on your reading schedule) and must be printed and brought to class. In order to facilitate everyone’s engagement, I ask that you put all laptops, smart phones, and tablets away (as they are not permitted in our class).

Assignments

Twice a week, you will post a thoughtful question/comment on Blackboard that will help to guide our upcoming class discussion. You are not expected to post on the days that workshops are presentations are scheduled. There will be a total of three essays.

Reading Response Questions (10%): Twice a week you’re expected to submit to Blackboard one thoughtful discussion question by 8 PM the night before class. This question should reflect upon the readings, so as to help to guide our in-class discussion. Late submissions will not receive credit.

Class Presentations (10%): You are expected to give three in-class presentations that relate to the topic you’ve chosen for your essay. Presentations may include handouts and audio-visual information.

Essays (60%): Paper topics will be distributed for each essay assignment. The essay should be thesis-driven and should focus on one or two of the class’s primary texts, along with at least 3-4 secondary sources.
Additionally, each essay should be double-spaced with MLA citations and a works cited page. Late papers are marked down by half of a letter grade for each class session that they are late. A digital copy of all essays should be submitted to Blackboard before the start of class, and a hard copy of the same version is due at the start of class. Each short essay will be worth 20% of your final grade.

For each essay, you must answer the specific question posed on the assignment sheet. Offer a clear and original thesis at the end of your introduction and spend the body paragraphs of the paper backing it up with literary evidence and your interpretation of that evidence, tying each individual body paragraph’s point back to support the larger thesis. Conclude by answering the “so what?” question; that is, how is your argument significant to a global understanding of the text, the region, or humanity? These short papers are opportunities to practice and develop your literary analysis and persuasive writing skills to make you a better critical thinker, reader, and writer.

**Point Distribution**

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<tr>
<td>Reading Response Questions</td>
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<td>Class Presentations</td>
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<td>Short Essay #1 (4-5 pages)</td>
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<td>Short Essay #3 (4-5 pages)</td>
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<td>Class Participation and Attendance</td>
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**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.

**Critical Thinking, Critical Reading, and Critical Writing**

As English majors, this class will encourage three essential skills: critical thinking, critical reading, and critical writing.

*Critical Thinking* – questioning everything you read, hear, and experience, not only for plot, but for tone, intention, consequence, relationships, process, and technique. While many read only for entertainment or for information, in this course we will practice our skills at reading for what is in front of us as well as adjacent,
above, below, and even figure out how whatever we’re reading got there in the first place. As active critical thinkers, we will move away from taking anything at face value.

**Critical Reading** – is asking questions of a text while engaging with it, questions such as: who is the intended audience, whose cultural values are reflected, what is the tone, what is the intention, what are the consequences of reading the text, what truths are revealed in this text in regards to economics, politics, sociology, gender, or race and which truths are concealed, how does this text respond to its time period, what kind of philosophies does this text espouse or depend upon, which does it challenge? To practice and further develop our critical reading skills in this course, we will be actively taking notes as we read and underlining, highlighting, looking up words we don’t know and keeping a list of their definitions in our notebooks.

**Critical Writing** – engages the reader in a lively, well-researched, well-thought-out, and focused conversation. Rather than offering descriptive writing that takes no responsibility for entering a global conversation about its topic, we will focus on critical writing throughout the semester. Distinct from descriptive writing, which also assumes that all information presented is unequivocally true and takes the world at face-value without any consideration of alternative truths, critical writing demonstrates a clear, confident refusal to accept others’ conclusions without evidence and independent evaluation. Critical writing offers a clear presentation of one’s own evidence, argumentation, and conclusions while recognizing their limitations.

**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](http://www.uca.edu/writingcenter/appointment.php). They also offer useful online resources at [http://www.uca.edu/writingcenter/online_resources.php](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](http://www.uca.edu/ucollege/asc.php).

**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 (501) 450-3135.

**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/](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 sets 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](https://uca.edu/titleix). *Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required of the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*
Americans with Disabilities Act Statement
The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Disability Resource Center, 501-450-3613.

Evaluations
Student evaluations of a course and its professors 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 on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction through the end of finals weeks by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

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Schedule of Class Meetings, Topics, and Events

INTRODUCTIONS
Fri: Aug 21
- Overview of the course

1) WEEK ONE
Mon: Aug 24
- Timothy Schwartz, “Haiti” (See Blackboard)
Wed: Aug 26
- Breadth, Eyes, Memory (pp. 1-38)
Fri: Aug 28
- Breadth, Eyes, Memory Girl (pp. 39-89)

2) WEEK TWO:
Mon: Aug 31
- Breadth, Eyes, Memory (pp. 93-157)
Wed: Sept 2
- Breadth, Eyes, Memory (pp.158-193)
Fri: Sept 4
- Breadth, Eyes, Memory (pp. 194-end)
- Handout Paper Topics

3) WEEK THREE:
Mon: Sept 7
- LABOR DAY
Wed: Sept 9
- “Magical Realism” (See Blackboard)
Fri: Sept 11
- Krik? Krak! (“Children of the Sea”)

4) WEEK FOUR:
Mon: Sept 14
- “Historical Trauma” (See Blackboard)
- Krik? Krak! (“Nineteen Thirty-Seven”)
Wed: Sept 16
- Krik? Krak! (“A Wall of Fire Rising”)
5) WEEK FIVE:
   Mon: Sept 21
   o  *Krik? Krak!* (“Between the Pool and the Gardenias”)
   Wed: Sept 23
   o  *Krik? Krak!* (“The Missing Place”)
   Fri: Sept 25
   o  *Krik? Krak!* (“Seeing Things Simply”)

6) WEEK SIX:
   Mon: Sept 28
   o  *Krik? Krak!* (“New York Day Women”)
   Wed: Sept 30
   o  *Krik? Krak!* (“Caroline’s Wedding”)
   o  *Krik? Krak!* (“Epilogue: Women Like Us”)
   Fri: Oct 2
   o  Writing Workshop #1

7) WEEK SEVEN:
   Mon: Oct 5
   o  Short Essay #1 is Due (at the start of class)
   o  Presentations on paper topics
   Wed: Oct 7
   o  *The Farming of Bones* (pp. 1-52)
   Fri: Oct 9
   o  *The Farming of Bones* (pp. 53-99)

8) WEEK EIGHT:
   Mon: Oct 12
   o  *The Farming of Bones* (pp. 100-166)
   Wed: Oct 14
   o  *The Farming of Bones* (pp. 167-225)
   Fri: Oct 16
   o  *The Farming of Bones* (pp. 226-end)
   o  Handout Paper Topics #2

9) WEEK NINE:
   Mon: Oct 19
   o  *The Dew Breaker* (“The Book of the Dead”)
   Wed: Oct 21
   o  *The Dew Breaker* (“Seven…”)
   Fri: Oct 23
   o  FALL BREAK

10) WEEK TEN:
    Mon: Oct 26
    o  *The Dew Breaker* (“Water Child…”)
    Wed: Oct 28
    o  *The Dew Breaker* (“The Book of Miracles…”)
Fri: Oct 30
  o *The Dew Breaker* ("Night Talkers…")

11) WEEK ELEVEN:
  Mon: Nov 2
    o *The Dew Breaker* ("The Bridal Seamstress")
  Wed: Nov 4
    o *The Dew Breaker* ("Monkey Tails…")
  Fri: Nov 6
    o *The Dew Breaker* ("The Funeral Singer")

12) WEEK TWELVE:
  Mon: Nov 9
    o *The Dew Breaker* ("The Dew Breaker")
  Wed: Nov 11
    o Writing Workshop
  Friday: Nov 13
    o Essay #2 is due
    o Class Presentations

13) WEEK THIRTEEN:
  Mon: Nov 16
    o "In New Memoir, Award-Winning Haitian Novelist Edwidge Danticat Chronicles Death of Her Uncle at Federal Immigration Jail" (See Blackboard)
    o *Brother, I’m Dying* (pp. 1-42)
    o *Handout guidelines, due date, and topics for Essay #3*
  Wed: Nov 18
    o *Brother, I’m Dying* (pp. 43-75)
  Fri: Nov 20
    o *Brother, I’m Dying* (76-123)

14) WEEK FOURTEEN:
  Mon: Nov 23
    o *Brother, I’m Dying* (pp. 127-205)
  Wed: Nov 25
    o THANKSGIVING BREAK
  Fri: Nov 27
    o THANKSGIVING BREAK

15) WEEK FIFTEEN:
  Mon: Nov 30
    o *Brother, I’m Dying* (pp. 206-end)
  Wed: Dec 2
    o Final Presentation
  Fri: Nov 27
    o STUDY DAY