

AADS 330W/ WGS 340
Black Queer Literature and Film
Prof. Young Email: hbhanayoung@gmail.com
PAR 105. 2.30-4.00pm

This class will introduce students to literature and film of the African diaspora. It will focus on how queerness travels. What does it mean to be queer, black, and gender variant while belonging/ not-belonging to specific communities across the diaspora? Each one of these communities breaks and endures under the weight of racism and other legacies of colonialism and slavery. We will read supplemental essays as we attempt to construct new types of queer theory that centers processes of racialization, African cosmologies, and the radical potential of being what Hortense Spillers calls 'black flesh'.

Classroom Ethics: TRIGGER WARNING: ENTIRE CLASS CONTENT

The topics in this course may be difficult to discuss and there may be moments where our conversations can become complicated and rather heated. Respect, civility, and decency are mandatory for this class and our time together. Listen attentively and proactively when others are speaking and be respectful when engaging one another in discussion. Each of us is here to learn and engage in healthy academic exchange. Acknowledge that some participants may have experiences that are different than your own. Please listen to the perspectives of others while remaining grounded in the course readings, the academic contributions of the authors and my lectures. Several of our readings include graphic scenes of (sexual) violence. These can be difficult to read but please let me know if you are having difficulties.

At its core, this course embraces a multiplicity of voices and perspectives. It adheres to the principles of diversity and inclusion integral to the academic community. As such, I invite class participants to share their perspectives in the classroom environment which fosters healthy academic dialogue. I also understand that encountering people and ideas that challenge one's strongly held beliefs and perspectives is a defining and invaluable feature of a university education. I invite your feedback on ways that we can, as a community of learners, respectfully and productively assist and challenge one another in our individual and collective academic growth. reading them during office hours.

Respect for the Professor:

Even though I do not formally lecture, I prepare extensively for each class. You are responsible for the theoretic and historical material I communicate in class. **Much of what I say in class is NOT opinion but informed knowledge** that I impart using the Socratic method. When I am expressing an opinion, I am careful to let you know. I also reserve the right to modify the syllabus to benefit us all.

Accessibility:

The university is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Please refer to SSD's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with SSD, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

Electronics:

YOU CANNOT BE FULLY PRESENT WHILE SCROLLING THE INTERNET OR SOCIAL MEDIA. I know it will be difficult to resist the urge to engage in other electronic practices, but I ask that you refrain from cell phone and non-class computer usage during class. I ask that you remain present, engaged, and invested in our work together.

Grade Assignments:

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|-------------|-------------|
| 93 to 100 A | 73 to 76 C |
| 90 to 92 A- | 70 to 72 C- |
| 87 to 89 B+ | 67 to 69 D+ |
| 83 to 86 B | 63 to 66 D |
| 80 to 82 B- | 60 to 62 D- |
| 77 to 79 C+ | 0 to 59 F |

Requirements

1. **Attendance and participation** are crucial. More than two unexcused absences will be penalized. I will be asking for volunteers to look up information throughout the semester and this can boost your participation grade. If you keep up with the reading, you should do well in this class. However even if you haven't read, be sure to come to class. Every student will have at least one question or point prepared for discussion each class. For CoVid related absences, please contact me directly. (7%)
2. Each week in the Assignment section of Canvas, students must post **critical responses** to the material for the week. These should be no shorter than 250 words and discuss something you found interesting about **every** reading/ video you were responsible for that week. You will be graded on how thoroughly and thoughtfully you answer the question. Wrong answers will not be penalized but careless ones will not be accepted. **Students must post responses before class on Wednesday.** (18%)
3. The mid-term will be a take-home exam. Exact word requirements will be provided for each question. There will be no class that day. Due date: October 10 by 5pm on Canvas. (17%)
4. Working in pairs or individually, students will do one **creative performance piece or visual installation**. This may consist of either a creative video, a recorded live performance or a film of your visual installation. If you choose the video option, you cannot simply record your performance. You must engage creatively with video/filmmaking aesthetics. The performance pieces (live or video) must be 7 to 10 minutes long and engage in some way with what we talk about in class. If you make a visual installation (painting, comic book, installation), you must write a page rationale explaining the process of the art project. (23%)
5. 5-8 page **final exam/paper**. Due Date to be Announced. Topics and specific requirements will be distributed later in the semester. There will be no in-class exam for this class. I do not grade late final papers. (35%)
6. You must turn in a mid-term and final exam to pass the class.

Required Texts:

Iweala, Uzodinma. *Speak No Evil*

Butler, Octavia. *Fledgling: A Novel*

Articles available either through UT library database or Canvas

Films on UT Kanopy, Amazon Prime and Vimeo

Monday August 22: Introductions and Syllabus

Wednesday August 24

Keywords: Siobhan Somerville—"Queer"

Keywords: Chandan Reddy—"Queer"

Johnson, E. Patrick. "'Quare' Studies, or (Almost) Everything I Know about Queer Studies I Learned from My Grandmother," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 21 (2001): 1–25. Omit section 'On seeing through queer eyes'--pgs. 14-18

Monday August 29

Reading: Johnson, E. Patrick. Introduction: *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/04/14/986466561/i-grew-up-afraid-lil-nas-xs-montero-is-the-lesson-i-needed>

Wednesday August 31

Film: (To be watched before class) *Tongues Untied* (Kanopy)

Monday September 5 (Labour Day):

No Class

Wednesday September 7

Reading: Tinsley, Omise'eke Natasha. "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage," *GLQ* 14, no. 2–3 (2008): 191–215

Monday September 12

Film: (To be watched before Class) Wanuri Kahiu's *Rafiki* (UT library Kanopy)

Wednesday September 14

Readings: <https://africasacountry.com/2020/08/banned-utopias-joy-and-the-law>

Johnstone, Lyn, "Queer Worldmaking in Wanuri Kahiu's Film *Rafiki*." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 33. 1 (2021): 39-50

Monday September 19

Readings: Uzodinma Iweala's *Speak No Evil* pg. 1-49

Wednesday September 21

Readings: Uzodinma Iweala's *Speak No Evil* pg. 51-101

Monday September 26

Readings: Uzodinma Iweala's *Speak No Evil* pg. 102-150

Wednesday September 28

Readings: Uzodinma Iweala's *Speak No Evil* pg. 151-214

Monday October 3

Film to be Watched Before Class: Cheryl Dunye's *The Watermelon Woman* (UT Library Kanopy)

Wednesday October 5

Reading: Clitha Mason's "Queering the Mammy"

Matt Richardson, "Our Stories Have Never Been Told: Preliminary Thoughts on Black Lesbian Cultural Production as Historiography in *The Watermelon Woman*," *Black Camera* 2. 2 (Spring 2011): 100-113.

Monday October 10 Midterms Due Via Canvas by 5pm

Wednesday October 12

Reading: Butler, Octavia. *Fledgling: A Novel*. Pp. 1-49 (Beginning of Chapter 6)

Monday October 17

Reading: Butler, Octavia. *Fledgling: A Novel*. Pp. 51-110 (Beginning of Chapter 11)

Wednesday October 19

Reading: Butler, Octavia. *Fledgling: A Novel*. Pp. 111-182 (Beginning of Chapter 17)

Monday October 24

Reading: Butler, Octavia. *Fledgling: A Novel*. Pp. 183 to end

Wednesday October 26

Presentations: Group 1

Monday October 31

Film to be Watched Before Class: Film: Annalise Ophelian's *Major!* (Amazon Prime)

Wednesday November 2

Reading: Macharia, Keguro. "5 Reflections on Trans* & Taxonomy (with Neo Musangi)." *Critical Arts* 30.4 (2016): 495-506

Monday November 7

Film to be watched Before Class: *Stories of our Lives* (Vimeo/ Kenya)

Wednesday November 9

Presentations: Group 2

Monday November 14

Film: Isaac Julien's *Young Soul Rebels* Or *Moments That Shaped: Queer Black Britain* or *Three Tidy Tigers Tied a Tie together* (Depending on availability)

Wednesday November 16

Reading: Lara, Ana-Maurine. "Opening Ceremony" in *Queer Freedom: Black Sovereignty*. SUNY, 2020.

Monday November 21: Fall Break

Wednesday November 23: Fall Break

Monday November 28

Reading: Lara, Ana-Maurine. "Opening Ceremony" in *Queer Freedom: Black Sovereignty*. SUNY, 2020. Continued.

Presentations: Group 3

Wednesday November 30

Presentations: Group 4

Monday December 5: Last Day of Class

Presentations: Group 5