

## E 376M • Writing Slavery

**Instructor:** Woodard, H

**Unique #:** 35480

**Semester:** Spring 2012

**Cross-lists:** AFR 374F, WGS 340

**Areas:** N/A

**Flags:** Writing, Cultural Diversity

**Restrictions:** N/A

**Computer Instruction:** N/A

**Prerequisites:** Rhetoric and Writing 306 and English 316K or their equivalents (e.g. T C 603A and 603B), and three additional semester hours of lower-division coursework in either English or rhetoric and writing. No exceptions.

**Description:** This course proposes two primary objectives rooted in past and present literary representations of slavery. Thematizing “the trope of the talking book,” (Henry Louis Gates, Jr.’s *The Signifying Monkey*), the course first examines seminal slave narratives, e.g. the literature of the enslaved as discursive strategies, from self-actualization and resistance to early formations of a black literary discourse. The course then explores how slavery is (*re*)written in a presentist context by contemporary authors, particularly in historical fiction or neo-slave narratives that seek to restore agency for the slave subject. Ultimately, the course engages larger issues about the different venues that writings about slavery offer for academic disciplines, literary instruction, and/or pedagogy.

### **Texts:**

Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. *Classic Slave Narratives*.

Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play and Other Works*.

Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*.

Fred D’Aguair, *Feeding the Ghosts*.

Marlene Nourbese Philip, *Zong!*

E.P. Jones, *The Known World*.

Course Pak (Speedway on Dobie).

### **Requirements & Grading:**

#### \*Course Requirements:

- .75 Three critical essays (25% each; 4-5 pages per essay, typed, double spaced)  
One major rewrite of essay I or II (includes peer evaluation; see revision instruction handout)
- .25 Response papers, based on course readings (1-2 pages);  
reading quizzes; class participation

English Major Area: II. Literary Period or Survey

\*The subject of each class meeting may be determined from the assigned reading for the day (see course schedule). The instructor retains the right to vary this syllabus.

#### Attendance:

Regular attendance is required. More than four absences will be sufficient grounds for failure in the course. The four allowed absences will include illness, deaths of relatives, and other emergencies. If you are more than five minutes late or leave before class ends (without permission), you will be counted absent for that class. You are responsible for all work covered in your absence.

#### Grading Scale:

Final grades will be determined on the basis of the following rubric. Please note that to ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. Thus, a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999. The University does not recognize the grade of A+.

A (94-100); A- (90-93); B+ (87-89); B (84-86); B- (80-83); C+ (77-79); C (74-76); C- (70-73); D+ (67-69); D (64-66); D- (60-63); F (0-59).

Plus/minus grades will be assigned for the final grade. This is a writing-intensive course. No final exam is given.

**Schedule:**

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

- TU 1/17 Introduction to course; policies, etc.  
*Some dates subject to change. Any changes (TBA).*
- TH 1/19 Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, prologue & chaps 1-2.  
Zelizer, "Reading Against the Grain," course pak.
- TU 1/24 Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, chapters 3-4.
- TH 1/26 Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, chapter 6-7.  
"Venus Hottentot," Sharpley-Whiting, course pak.
- TU 1/31 Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 10-12.  
Response paper I Assignment (TBA) DUE 2/2
- TH 2/2 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.  
Hartman, from *Scenes of Subjection*, course pak.
- TU 2/7 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
- TH 2/9 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*  
Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History," pak.
- TU 2/14 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.  
CRITICAL ESSAY I DUE (TBA)
- TH 2/16 Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.  
McKittrick, from *Demonic Grounds*, course pak.
- TU 2/21 Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.
- TH 2/23 Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.
- TU 2/28 Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.
- TH 3/1 Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play*.  
Katy Ryan, "No Less Human," course pak.  
Response paper II (TBA) DUE 3/6
- TU 3/6 Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play*.  
Film clip, "The Lincoln Assassination,"  
Ken Burns, *The Civil War, A Documentary*
- TH 3/8 Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play*.  
Kurt Bullock, "Famous Last Words.
- SPRING BREAK 12 MARCH 17 MARCH (NO CLASSES)
- TU 3/20 Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*
- TH 3/22 Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*  
Nancy Peterson, "History as Wound," course pak.  
CRITICAL ESSAY II DUE (TBA)
- TU 3/27 Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*.

TH 3/29 Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*.

TU 4/3 Fred D'Aguiar, *Feeding the Ghosts*.  
Marlene Nourbese Philip, Zong!

TH 4/5 Fred D'Aguiar, *Feeding the Ghosts*.  
Response paper III (TBA) DUE 4/10  
Marlene Nourbese Philip, Zong!

TU 4/10 Fred D'Aguiar, *Feeding the Ghosts*.  
Marlene Nourbese Philip, Zong!

TH 4/12 Fred D'Aguiar, *Feeding the Ghosts*.  
Marlene Nourbese Philip, Zong!

TU 4/17 E.P. Jones, *The Known World*.

TH 4/19 E.P. Jones, *The Known World*.  
CRITICAL ESSAY III (TBA) DUE

TU 4/24 E.P. Jones, *The Known World*.

TH 4/26 E.P. Jones, *The Known World*.

TU 5/1 E.P. Jones, *The Known World*.

TH 5/3 MAJOR CRITICAL ESSAY REVISIONS DUE.

#### **Policies:**

##### Class Policies:

Absolutely no make-up for reading quizzes. In exchange, the lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Except under extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, late assignments will not be accepted without a penalty. Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date at the beginning of class. Papers turned in during or after class on the due day will be considered late. A five point deduction will be applied for every late day. Use the MLA (Modern Language Association) Stylebook for all papers. Type papers on white, 8.5" x 11" paper, using one side only. Bind pages with a paper clip.

##### UT Honor Code or Statement of Ethics:

The core values of the University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Link to University Honor Code: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>

##### Academic Integrity:

Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. For additional information on Academic Integrity, see <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint.php>

##### Special Accommodations for Students with a Disability:

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities. For more information, contact 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>. Please notify the professor of any special accommodations that you may need prior to the end of the second week of class.

##### Policy on Religious Observance:

A student who is absent from a class or examination due to the observance of a religious holy day may complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence if proper notice has been given. Notice must be given at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates the student will be absent. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, notice should be given on the first day of the semester.