

E 376M • Contemporary African American Women's Fiction

Instructor: Richardson, M

Unique #: 35470

Semester: Spring 2012

Cross-lists: AFR 374F, WGS 340

Areas: N/A

Flags: Writing, Cultural Diversity

Restrictions: Honors, Longhorn Scholars, etc.

Computer Instruction: N/A

Prerequisites: Nine semester hours of coursework in English or rhetoric and writing.

Description: In this course, we will examine the novels and films of women of African descent produced from the 1970s to the present. We will focus on issues of imagination and the creation of spectacular images of the past and the future. Considering the past violence and violations suffered under systems of racism, misogyny and homophobia, what would a utopia or a dystopia look like? How do collective experiences of trauma affect our visions of utopia? In this course, we will use the work of history and psychoanalytic, cultural, queer and feminist theories to assist our exploration of these questions and issues.

Texts:

Beloved by Toni Morrison

Parable of the Sower by Octavia Butler

Erzulie's Skirt by Ana-Maurine Lara

Brown Girl in the Ring by Nalo Hopkinson

Fledgling by Octavia Butler

Course Reader: Readers are available at Jenn's Copy on Guadalupe and 21st St.

Requirements & Grading:

Grading:

Two short papers (4-6 pages each) 20% each 40% total

Close Reading Assignments (no longer than 1pg)20%

Final Paper (8-10 pages) 20%

Attendance and participation 20%

Course Requirements:

Office Hours: Students are REQUIRED to come to office hours at least once during the semester to discuss your progress in the class and any additional questions you may have. You are encouraged to take further advantage of office hours and I am also available by appointment.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class every session. Participation in all aspects of the class is MANDATORY. All readings and assignments should be completed before class meetings and students are responsible for adding to class discussions of material. Please note that attendance and participation is worth 20% of your total grade. Late arrivals are disruptive to class and I will not repeat concepts and assignments given during class. If you miss a class or are late, you are still responsible for any announcements, assignments, lecture material and/or deadlines that are made. Your grade will be affected if you have more than two unexcused absences during the semester.

Short Paper Assignments: There are two short writing assignments as well as a final paper. Short essays are designed to help students analyze the historical and theoretical importance of the primary course material. Collectively the short papers are worth 40% of your final grade. Papers must be TYPED, double-spaced, with times new roman (or equivalent) 12 point font and 1inch margins.

Close Reading Assignments: Each member of the class is required to hand in short response papers for most texts this semester. Response papers are brief (one page maximum!) discussions of a particular passage from the assigned reading for the day it is submitted. Papers must be TYPED, double-spaced, with times new roman (or equivalent) 12 point font and 1inch margins.

Final Paper: The final paper is designed to assess students accumulated application of knowledge. Papers must be TYPED, double-spaced, with times new roman (or equivalent) 12 point font and 1inch margins.

Blackboard: I will be in contact with you about updates in assignments through Blackboard. It is the students' responsibility to make

sure that Blackboard has your updated email address.

NO LATE PAPERS.

I Do Not Accept Electronic Submissions of Papers.

Schedule:

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| Week One | |
| Jan 17-19 | |
| TUES | INTRODUCTION |
| THURS | Excerpt from <i>Finding Soul on the Path of Orisa</i> and "The Spirits" from Introduction to African Religion by John S. Mbiti, Heinemann Educational Books pgs 71-81. |
| Week 2 | |
| Jan 24-26 | |
| TUES | |
| THURS | "Concept of Time" and "The Nature of God" from African Religions and Philosophy by John S. Mbiti, Heinemann Educational Books pgs 15-38. FILM <i>Daughter's of the Dust</i> |
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| | FILM <i>Daughter's of the Dust</i> ; "Interview with bell hooks and Julie Dash" from <i>Daughters of the Dust: The Making of An African American Woman's Film</i> , by Julie Dash, NY: The New Press , 1992, 27-67. |
| Week 3 | |
| Jan 31-Feb 2 | |
| TUES | |
| THURS | FILM Discussion of <i>Daughter's of the Dust</i> ; Start Brown Girl in the Ring ; Close Reading of Daughters of the Dust Due |
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| | <i>Brown Girl in the Ring</i> and " 'Making the Impossible Possible': An Interview with Nalo Hopkinson" in <i>Social Text</i> , Vol 20 no. 2, Summer 2002, 97-113. |
| Week 4 | |
| Feb 7-Feb 9 | |
| TUES | |

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| | Brown Girl in the Ring; and M. Jacqui Alexander, "Pedagogies of the Sacred: Making the Invisible Tangible," from <i>Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred</i>, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005, 287-300; Close Reading of Brown Girl in the Ring Due |
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| THURS | Finish Brown Girl in the Ring and M. Jacqui Alexander "Pedagogies of the Sacred: Making the Invisible Tangible" FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE |
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| WEEK 5 | |
| Feb 14-Feb 16 | |
| TUES | Start Erzulie's Skirt , The Secrets of Voodoo |
| THURS | Erzulie's Skirt and "Ezili" from <i>Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn</i> by Karen McCarthy Brown, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, 220-257. |
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| WEEK 5 | |
| FEB 21 & 23 | |
| TUES | Erzulie's Skirt; Close Reading of Erzulie's Skirt Due |
| THURS | Beloved |
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| WEEK 6 | |
| FEB 28- MARCH 1 | |
| TUES | Beloved |
| THURS | Beloved |
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| WEEK 7 | |
| MARCH 6-8 | |
| TUES | Beloved and Barbara Christian, "Fixing Methodologies: Beloved," <i>Cultural Critique</i> , no. 24, Spring 1993, 5-15 |
| THURS | Beloved; Close Reading of Beloved Due |
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| WEEK 8 | |
| MARCH 13-15 | SPRING BREAK |
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| WEEK 9 | |
| MARCH 20-22 | |
| TUES | FILM BELOVED |
| THURS | FILM BELOVED |

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| WEEK 10 | |
| MARCH 27-29 | |
| TUES | Discussion of Film |
| THURS | FILM Eve's Bayou; SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE |
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| WEEK 11 | |
| APRIL 3-5 | |
| TUES | FILM Eve's Bayou |
| THURS | Discussion of Film |
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| WEEK 12 | |
| APRIL 10-12 | |
| TUES | |
| | Start Parable of the Sower and "In Memoriam: Octavia Butler" by Gregory Hampton, <i>Callaloo</i> Vol. 29 no. 2, 2006, 246-248. and "An Interview with Octavia E. Butler" by Charles Rowell, <i>Callaloo</i> Vol. 20 no. 1, 1997, 47-66. |
| THURS | Parable of the Sower |
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| WEEK 13 | |
| APRIL 17-19 | |
| TUES | Parable of the Sower; CLOSE READING OF PARABLE DUE |
| THURS | FLEDGLING; From <i>Darkmatter</i>, Jewelle Gomez, "Chicago, 1927" |
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| WEEK 14 | |
| APRIL 24-26 | |
| TUES | FLEDGLING |
| THURS | FLEDGLING |
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| WEEK 15 | |
| MAY 1-3 | |
| TUES | FLEDGLING and Pumzi; CLOSE READING OF FLEDGLING DUE |
| THURS | Pumzi |

Policies:

Code of Mutual Respect: In general, this is not a lecture class, but one grounded in dialogue. Feel free to be candid and direct in this class. Your opinions and insights are important, and your voice needs to be heard, so look forward to the opportunity to chime in. I will respect you as adults and assume that you will treat others in the class with respect as well. Because we will be sharing many

personal ideas which may conflict with your own personal ideas and beliefs, it is important that you strive to be considerate, sensitive, and respectful. Be prepared to offer constructive criticism as well as receive it. We will discuss work that includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender themes in this course. Students are expected to approach all class material with maturity and academic rigor.

Code of Academic Conduct: University policy requires that students cite sources they use in their work. THIS INCLUDES PARAPHRASING of materials. Any inclusion of ideas that are not your own will be considered plagiarism. Students who do not properly cite ideas, quotes or paraphrasing of other published or unpublished material will automatically face disciplinary action which will also be reflected in their grade.

Students with Disabilities: Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Religious Holidays: If you observe a recognized religious holiday that is in conflict with the university schedule, please come talk to me.