

E 376M • 3-Writing Slavery

Instructor: Woodard, H
Unique #: 36185; 30400; 47111
Semester: Spring 2014
Cross-lists: AFR 374F 6; WGS 340 31

Areas: G
Flags: Cultural diversity, Writing
Restrictions: n/a
Computer Instruction: n/a

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

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, controversially in a presentist context by contemporary authors, particularly in historical fiction or neo-slave narratives that seek to restore agency and reclaim subjectivity for enslaved individuals. Ultimately, the course engages larger issues about the different venues that writings about slavery offer for academic disciplines, literary instruction and/or pedagogy.

TEXTS:

REQUIRED READINGS:

Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*
Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years A Slave*
Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play and Other Works*;
Lalita Tademy, *Cane River*

Requirements & Grading:

- .75: Three critical essays (25% each; 4-5 pages per essay, typed, double spaced) and one major rewrite of essay I or II (includes peer evaluation; see revision instruction handout);
- .15: Response papers based on course reading (1-2 pages), reading quizzes, class participation;
- .10: Oral group presentations, accompanied by one-page written report.

English Major Area: II. Literary Period or Survey

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.

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 examinaation 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 dafes the student will be absent. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semeser, notice should be given on the first day of the semester.

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.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE
(Some dates subject to change. Any changes (TBA).)

- M 1/13 Introduction to course; policies, etc.
- W 1/15 Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, prologue & chaps 1-2.
Zelizer, “Reading Against the Grain,” course pak.
- M 1/20 Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, chapters 3-4.
- W 1/22 Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, chapter 6-7.
- M 1/27 Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 10-12.
Response paper I Assignment (TBA)
- W 1/29 Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*.
- M 2/3 Morrison, *A Mercy*.
- W 2/5 Morrison, *A Mercy*.
- M 2/10 Morrison, *A Mercy*.
CRITICAL ESSAY I DUE (TBA)
- W 2/12 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.
Hartman, from *Scenes of Subjection*, course pack.
- M 2/17 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.
- W 2/19 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.
- M 2/24 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.
- W 2/26 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.
Response paper II (TBA)
- M 3/3 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.
- W 3/5 CRITICAL ESSAY II DUE (TBA)
- MON MARCH 10 – 15 SPRING BREAK (NO CLASSES)
- M 3/17 Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years A Slave*.
Sam Worley, “Solomon Northup and the Sly Philosophy of the Slave Pen,” in *Callaloo* 20 (1997);
243-59. (course pack.)
- W 3/19 *Twelve Years A Slave*.
- M 3/24 *Twelve Years A Slave*.

- W 3/26 *Twelve Years A Slave*.
- M 3/31 Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play*.
Nancy Peterson, "History as Wound," course pack.
Film clip, "The Lincoln Assassination," Ken Burns, *The Civil War, A Documentary*.
- W 4/4 *The America Play*.
Response paper III (TBA).
- M 4/7 *The America Play*. Kurt Bullock, "Famous Last Words.
- W 4/9 *The America Play*. Katy Ryan, "No Less Human," course pack.
- M 4/14 *Cane River*.
CRITICAL ESSAY III (TBA).
- W 4/16 Lalita Tademy, *Cane River*.
- M 4/21 *Cane River*.
- W 4/23 *Cane River*.
- M 4/28 *Cane River*.
- W 5/2 Group III presentations (TBA).
Final Essay Revisions due.