

E 376M • 3-Writing Slavery

Instructor: Woodard, H

E376M 3-Writing Slavery (#34650)

Semester: Fall 2015; 12:30-2:00 pm TTH PAR 204

Cross-lists: AFR 374F 6 (#29715); WGS 340 31 (#46105)

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

Flags: Cultural diversity, Writing

English Major Area: II. Literary period or survey

This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this case, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also be given the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

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.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs (authors), Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass & Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (Modern Library edition)

Phillis Wheatley, Complete Writings

Charles Chesnut, The Marrow of Tradition

Suzan-Lori Parks, The America Play and Other Works

Mat Johnson, Pym, A Novel

Natasha Trethewey, Native Guard: Poems

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:

.70: 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);

.30: Three response papers based on course reading (2-3 pages), reading quizzes, class participation

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 in hard copy 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.

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).)

TH	8/27	Introduction to course; policies, etc.
TU	9/1	Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
TH	9/3	Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
TU	9/8	Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
TH	9/10	Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
TU	9/15	Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl <u>Response paper I (TBA).</u>
TH	9//17	Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
TU	9/22	Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
TH	9/24	Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
TU	9/29	Phillis Wheatley, Complete Writings <u>CRITICAL ESSAY I DUE (TBA)</u>
TH	10/1	Phillis Wheatley, Complete Writings
TU	10/6	Phillis Wheatley, Complete Writings
TH	10/8	Phillis Wheatley, Complete Writings
TU	10/13	Chesnutt, The Marrow of Tradition <u>Response paper II (TBA)</u>
TH	10/15	Chesnutt, The Marrow of Tradition
TU	10/20	Chesnutt, The Marrow of Tradition
TH	10/22	Chesnutt, The Marrow of Tradition
TU	10/27	Suzan-Lori Parks, <i>The America Play</i> . Lecture and discussion. From Kurt Bullock, "Famous Last Words." Film clip, "The Lincoln Assassination," Ken Burns, <i>The Civil War, A Documentary</i> . <u>CRITICAL ESSAY II</u>
TH	10/29	Suzan-Lori Parks, <i>The America Play</i> . Read Katy Ryan, "'No Less Human'": Making History

in Suzan-Lori Parks' *The America Play*, *Journal of Dramatic Theory & Criticism* 13.2 (1999): 81-94. (Download at JStor or EBSCO.)

- TU 11/3 Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play*.
- TH 11/5 Mat Johnson, Pym.
Response paper III.
- TU 11/10 Mat Johnson, Pym.
- TH 11/12 Mat Johnson, Pym.
- TU 11/17 Mat Johnson, Pym.
- TH 11/19 Natasha Tretheway, Native Guard: Poems
CRITICAL ESSAY III
- TU 11/24 Natasha Tretheway, Native Guard: Poems
Required reading, Carrie Shipers, "Native Guard by Natasha Tretheway," in Prairie Schooner, Vol. 80, number 4 (Winter 2006), 199-201.

NOVEMBER 26 – 28 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

- TU 12/1 Tretheway, Native Guard: Poems
- TH 12/3 Tretheway, Native Guard: Poems
MAJOR CRITICAL ESSAY REVISION DUE.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 4, LAST CLASS DAY