

Performing Black Authors: Gwendolyn Brooks

Fall 2015

AFR372E 29669 TD357T 25890 E349S 34519 WGS340 46074
T 3:30-6:30, GEA 127

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*"This is the urgency: Live!
and have your blooming in the noise of the whirlwind."*

--Gwendolyn Brooks

DESCRIPTION: This course is an examination of the poetry and prose of Gwendolyn Brooks, along with scholarly responses to her work. The course rests on the premise that embodied knowledge expands our understanding of literature and of ourselves. Students will engage in a series of experiences designed to deepen their artistic impulses and align those impulses with their intellectual understandings.

OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this course the students should be able to adapt prose fiction for performance, work collaboratively on the creation of a production, create aesthetic scholarship, use Black Feminist theory as a performance strategy, and identify the major elements in the poetry and prose of Gwendolyn Brooks.

TEXTS:

Two course packets are available at the University Coop, 2246 Guadalupe.

All other readings are available on Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Aesthetic Scholarship Script

You will be assigned a specific section of *Maud Martha*. You will combine that section of the novel with poetry by Brooks and scholarship about Brooks into a performance script. The script must accommodate the number of people in your ensemble. The script should be 2-3 typed pages, stapled, and include a header (your name, and title of the course) on each page. The script should also have a title.

Dramaturgical Presentation

Your ensemble will present a dramaturgical analysis of *Maud Martha* around one of the following areas: 1) Political Context; 2) Black Women of the Era; 3) Key Artifacts from the Novel; 4) Specific Persons/Places/Events Mentioned in the Novel; and 5) Scholarly Response to the Novel. Your presentation must have a visual component and must include a bibliography of your sources to be handed out during classtime. The presentation should 8-10 minutes, and must include all ensemble members.

Chamber Theatre/Aesthetic Scholarship Productions

Your ensemble will present a 10-15 minute production that combines poetry and prose by Brooks with scholarly commentary about Brooks's work. Your production should be informed by the Dramaturgical Presentations that will occur during the semester. Attention should be given to historical details, use of space, relationship to the audience, and individual commitment. Your ensemble will receive a grade for the overall production, and each ensemble member will receive an individual grade for their efforts in making the production a success.

2-Minute Essay

You will write five pop essays based on the course readings. You will have two minutes to complete the essay. This assignment is designed to encourage you to focus on key ideas in the readings and in the course.

Participation

- 1) Class Attendance: You are allowed two unexcused absences during the semester. Attendance will be taken early in the class period. If you enter 10 minutes after class has begun or leave before class is complete, you will be marked absent. **If you have more than two unexcused absences, your final grade will be lowered by one letter.** (3 pts.)
- 2) Class Discussion: You are expected to contribute your thinking to class discussion and to participate enthusiastically in class exercises. Participation is part of being an active member of the class. Students will be randomly asked to offer commentary during class, and should be able to respond articulately. (3 pts.)
- 3) Performance Events: We will attend two performances-- (4 pts.)

25 Sept. *Hands Up Hoodies Down*; The Vortex Theatre, 2307 Manor, 8:00; \$10.00

13 Nov. Performance by Stew, Location: TBA; 5:30-7:00, Free Admission

GRADING SCALE:

Prose/Poetry/Scholarship Script	20 pts.
Dramaturgical Presentation	25
Final Productions	
Ensemble	15
Individual	15
2-Minute Essays (5/2pts.)	10
Participation	10
TOTAL	100 pts.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

*The Learning Center is located in Jester 332. The Learning Center should be consulted as part of your regular activities as an active student. They can assist you with your papers, your readings and your study habits. I strongly encourage you to make them an integral part of your education.

*All papers must be typed, double-spaced and stapled. Use standard margins on all sides of the paper, use a standard font size, number your pages and use a standard format for the bibliography.

*Vigorous respectful discussion should characterize our classroom interactions. All opinions are welcome, and all opinions are subject to challenge. This discussion is critical to a successful experience in the class. This is the space for applying theory and challenging our assumptions. Such discussion may necessitate a spontaneous modification in the course schedule.

*Scholastic Dishonesty will not be tolerated. Use your academic experience to solidify your integrity. If I suspect that you are engaged in scholastic dishonesty, I will take every measure to ensure that this will not happen again. Consult the student handbook for details.

*Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

*By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

*Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

*Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050

COURSE SCHEDULE:

- SEP** 1 Introduction to the course
- 8 *Maud Martha* (in the course packet)
A Street in Bronzeville (poetry in the course packet)
The Warmth of Other Suns (on Canvas)
- 15 *Maud Martha*
Annie Allen (poetry in the course packet)
Black Women Writers at Work (on Canvas)
Performance by Agatha Oliveira, Doctoral Candidate PPP
- 22 *The Bean Eaters* (poetry in the course packet)
In the Mecca (poetry in the course packet)
"The Device of Race" (on Canvas)
"Nuance and the Novella"
DUE: Prose/Poetry/Scholarship Script
- 25 ***Hands Up Hoodies Down; The Vortex Theatre, 2307 Manor, 8:00; \$10.00***
- 29 UCSB and UT Combine Studies
Lecture: Dr. Stephanie Batiste, "The World of Gwendolyn Brooks"
"Taming All That Anger Down" (on Canvas)
- OCT** 6 Lecture/Workshop: Dr. Omi Jones, "Chamber Theatre, Theatrical Jazz"
"Cast a Wide Net" (on Canvas)
- 13 **DUE: Dramaturgical Presentations**
- 20 Lecture/Workshop: Nancy Davis Bellamy
Passing Solo (on Canvas)
- 27 Rehearsal: Preparation
"The Rise of Maud Martha" (on Canvas)
- NOV** 10 Workshop: Stew, *Passing Strange*
- 13 **Performance by Stew, 5:30-7:00, Location: TBA**
- 17 Rehearsal: Present Full Work
- 24 **DUE: Chamber Theatre/Aesthetic Scholarship Productions**
- DEC** 1 UCSB Students Present Their Work
Review of Chamber Theatre/Aesthetic Scholarship Productions