Syllabus--English 252W-01
Major American Authors

Dr. Ferguson
Fall 2014

Students will read closely and write imaginatively about selected multi-cultural, multi-ethnic writings from the late-nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, whose literary contributions have helped develop modern American thought. They will also:

read and write about different American literary genres and theories,
develop an awareness of critical literary analysis and close reading,
discover historical and philosophical roots of American writing,
and further sharpen writing skills.

Students are also required to lead class discussions, write and revise two course papers of at least 3 pages each, and take midterm and final exams.

Required Texts


Tentative Course Reading Schedule

Aug. 18 Introduction
20 Elizabeth Bishop: "The Fish," 2701-2703
27 Ralph Ellison: "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke," pp. 100-112
29 James Baldwin: "Everybody’s Protest Novel" BLACKBOARD

Sept. 1 LABOR DAY (NO CLASS)
3 Tennessee Williams: _Suddenly Last Summer_, pp. 2925-2959
5 Williams continued; **FIRST DRAFT FIRST ESSAY DUE**
10 Bienvenido N. Santos: "Scent of Apples," pp. 2787-2794; **SECOND DRAFT FIRST ESSAY DUE**
12 Gwendolyn Brooks: "the mother," p. 2877
15 Allen Ginsberg: _Howl_, pp. 2963-2974; **FINAL DRAFT FIRST ESSAY DUE**
17 N. Scott Momaday: from _The Way to Rainy Mountain_, pp. 3260-3268
19 Thomas Pynchon: "Entropy," pp. 3022
26 Kurt Vonnegut: "Harrison Bergeron," pp. 3059-3064

3 Martin Luther King: "Letter from Birmingham Jail," pp. 3075-3088
8  King/Malcolm continued
10  MIDTERM EXAM
13  FALL BREAK
15  Linda Beatrice Brown: Belles of Liberty: Gender, Bennett College, in Greensboro, North Carolina
17  Brown continued
20  Brown continued
22  Larry Neal: "The Black Arts Movement" BLACKBOARD
24  Etheridge Knight: "The Idea of Ancestry, p. 3921
27  Alice Walker: "Everyday Use" BLACKBOARD
29  Maxine Hong Kingston: "No Name Woman," pp. 3348-3357

Nov. 3  Louis Valdez: Los Vendidos, pp. 3137-3144
  5  Norman Mailer: from The Armies of the Night, pp. 3185-3196;
     FIRST DRAFT OF SECOND ESSAY DUE
  7  Yusef Komunyakaa: "Fog Galleon," p. 3211
10  David Foster Wallace: "The Devil Is a Busy Man, 3915-3917; SECOND DRAFT
     OF SECOND ESSAY DUE
14  Amiri Baraka: "Somebody Blew Up America" BLACKBOARD;
17  Audre Lorde: "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," pp. 3376-3378;
     FINAL DRAFT OF SECOND ESSAY DUE
19  Toni Morrison: from A Mercy BLACKBOARD
21  Ta-Nehisi Coates: "The Case for Reparations," BLACKBOARD; JOURNALS
     (COLLECTED PRE-CLASS IDEAS) DUE
24  Coates continued
     THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Dec. 1  Ta-Nehisi Coates continued
  8  FINAL EXAM: 8 AM-11 AM

Evaluation:

The final course grade is determined by two three-page course essays that count for
20% each or 40%; a midterm exam that counts for 20%, class leadership (pre-class
ideas/journal) that counts for 15%, and a final exam that counts for 25%. Students will
write both non-graded and graded drafts of the required course papers, which must
have a clear thesis that responds to a specific essay prompt. If after all graded drafts
the essay receives less than "C," it must be revised; the final grade will be the highest of
all drafts. While the topics of the course papers are generally assigned, you may
suggest a subject for the essay, which could be approved. Late papers are dropped
one whole letter grade. Make-up exams are rare, except for medical emergency, for
which the student must provide acceptable written documentation. Students are
also assigned to committees who lead class discussions of syllabus readings throughout
the semester. This participation counts for 15% of the course grade. Several times
during the semester, each student will bring informal written analyses (no less than two
single-spaced pages) to in-person or online committee discussions during which the
group decides on what themes, characters, imagery, or other issues to focus) when
leading class discussion of specific course readings. Students will collect all their
individual writings into a journal throughout the semester and turn them in for a final
grade. The committee chair will collect and turn in all reports for only the first group presentation (as well as an one-page outline for all the class discussions). **ALL COURSE WORK MUST BE TURNED IN ON TIME.** Grades are the following: A= 4.00; A-= 3.7; B+= 3.3; B= 3.00; B-= 2.7; C+= 2.3; C= 2.0; C-= 1.7; D+= 1.3; D= 1.0; D-= .7; F= 0; WF= 0.

Attendance:

Students with more than three unexcused absences are urged to drop the class. **Tardiness will not be tolerated,** and the classroom door will be closed promptly at 9 AM. Except for emergencies, please do not disturb the class after this time.

Plagiarism and Cheating:

Copying the work of others and cheating on course assignments will **not be tolerated.** If you do this, you will receive a "F" for the work, get reported to the Dean of Students and risk expulsion from UNCG. (See the UNCG Honor Code). If you need help documenting your work, I will be glad to help.

Computers and Other Technology in the Classroom:

1. Turn off all cell phones before coming into the classroom.
2. Computers may be used during class (especially by students signed up at Disability Services) but sparingly (if at all) by everyone else.
3. Download **BLACKBOARD** assignments before coming to class.
4. No recording devices may ever be used during classes.

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