ENGL 2180, African American Literature, Fall 2015

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Carrollton, GA
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TLC 2252
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Office hours:
T, R, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm
During office hours you can reach me at the above phone number.

Response Time: Unless you are notified otherwise, I will work to respond to all student questions and emails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours during the weekend.

Accessibility Services:

If you are a student whom is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires assistance or support services, please notify me prior to attempting any activities or assessments in this course. Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given.
Course Description:

An examination of representative African-American texts, with particular attention to the defining aesthetic principles of the tradition. Prerequisites: ENGL 1101 and ENGL 1102.

Course Goals:

After completing the ENGL 2180, you will be able to:

- Recognize, identify, and contextualize significant achievements in African-American literature.
- Understand, and appreciate the application of aesthetic criteria to "real-world" circumstances.
- Develop enhanced cultural awareness and analytical skills.
- Demonstrate their command of academic English and of the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.

Program Goals

- Oral and written communication will be characterized by clarity, critical analysis, logic, coherence, persuasion, precision, and rhetorical awareness (Core Curriculum learning outcomes I)
- Cultural and Social Perspectives: Cultural and social perspective will be characterized by cultural awareness and an understanding of the complexity and dynamic nature of social/political/economic systems; human and institutional behavior, values, and belief systems; historical and spatial relationship; and, flexibility, open-mindedness, and tolerance. (Core Curriculum learning outcomes III)
- Aesthetic Perspective: Aesthetic perspective will be characterized by critical appreciation of and ability to make informed aesthetic judgments about the arts of various cultures as media for human expression (Core Curriculum learning outcomes V)
- This course fulfills the Area C.2 requirement in the core for all students.
- Area C (Humanities/Arts) Learning Outcomes:

  1. To develop the ability to recognize and identify achievements in literary, fine and performing arts;
  2. To have an appreciation of the nature and achievements of the arts and humanities; and
  3. To develop the ability to apply, understand, and appreciate the application of aesthetics criteria to "real world circumstances.

- This course contributes to the program goal of equipping students with a foundation in literary history and the issues surrounding literary study in contemporary culture.
- This course broadens students' desire and ability to take pleasure in their encounter with literature.

Course Text

Title The Norton Anthology of African American Literature
Author Henry Louis Gates, et al.
Whenever possible, this will be a paperless course. Detailed instructions and handouts will be provided online, and you will be held accountable for the successful fulfillment of their respective requirements as well as their corresponding deadlines. This means that if you would like a paper copy of an assignment to annotate, it is your responsibility to print your own copy.

Grading and Standards

Grade Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADED ACTIVITY</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>BRIEF DESCRIPTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>You will present a 15 minute presentation on an author or an aspect of the vernacular tradition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>You will write two literary essays; minimum of 3 pages with two outside sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>You will take frequent quizzes on the reading and the discussion. You will complete these quizzes within Course Den</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm and Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>You will take a midterm and a final exam that could be long answers, short answers, multiple choice, or True/False</td>
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</tbody>
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Grade Scale

Grades are based on student performance and capability. Simply turning in all the assignments does not guarantee that the student will receive a "good grade." To receive a higher grade, a student must demonstrate proficiency in the material. For different students, gaining that proficiency requires different levels of work, because not all students walk into the class with the same aptitude for the course content. The standards for the respective grades are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93 = A-</td>
<td>80-83 = B-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is not appropriate and perhaps unethical for students to ask teachers to change grades based upon the grade that the student needs for certain purposes. Also, keep in mind that an 89.4 is a B and you should not expect me to round it up to an A. There has to be a cut-off somewhere, otherwise I might as well give everyone an A.

Grade Turnaround

I will attempt to grade all assignments and assessments within two weeks’ time. I plan to provide comments along with grade as necessary for feedback. My goal is to answer emails within 24 hours. If you do not receive an email reply from me, please email me again—do not assume that I am ignoring you.

Expectations and Standards

A – To achieve this grade the student must display superior performance in his/her course work. This includes demonstrating the ability to process and comprehend complex ideas, and to be able to convey those ideas to others in a clear, intelligent manner. An "A" student will go beyond simple requirements and seek to excel in his/her preparation for and presentation of assigned work. He/she will demonstrate excellence in communication skills and the ability to contextualize material.

B – To achieve this grade the student needs to display above average performance in his/her course work, including demonstrating the ability to process and comprehend complex ideas, while being able to convey those ideas in a clear, intelligent manner. A "B" student will also go beyond minimum requirements in terms of preparation and presentation of assigned work. He/she will demonstrate above average communication skills and ability to contextualize material.

C – For this grade the student must meet the minimum requirements for the course, displaying adequate performance in his/her course work, and adequately demonstrate the ability to comprehend complex ideas, while also being able to convey those ideas in a like manner. A "C" student demonstrates competence in terms of preparation and presentation of assigned work. He/she will demonstrate adequate communication skills and ability to contextualize materials.

D – A student receiving this grade is performing below the minimum requirements for the course. This could include failure to complete or turn in assignments on a timely basis, or failure to adequately demonstrate the ability to comprehend or convey complex ideas. A "D" student performs below the average in terms of preparation and presentation of assigned work. He/she may not be demonstrating adequate communication skills or ability to contextualize materials.

F – A student receiving this grade has failed to meet the requirements of the course, including failure to complete or turn in assignments, or failure to demonstrate ability to comprehend or
convey complex ideas. An "F" student has not performed in a manner satisfactory to the standards of the class.

**Extra Credit Policy:** I do not give extra credit for additional assignments in this course. Students should focus on completing successfully the requirements described above.

**Attendance and Participation**

Attendance and participation are required. You will be expected to participate in ongoing discussions of the lesson topics and to interact with other students and me regularly. It is expected that you will demonstrate a positive attitude and courtesy toward other participants in the discussion and observe good discussion etiquette. Be sure to read and observe the following procedures:

- You are a guest in my classroom, so be sure to observe the class rules.
- Practice manners and civility, and be polite and respectful of me and classmates in all your communication.
- Be on time in your work submissions.
- Keep me informed of your status.
- Address me as Dr. Boyd
- Use correct grammar and punctuation in all your communication ("Dear Dr. Boyd" not "Hey").
- Accept my feedback and learn from it.

You are allowed 4 absences without penalty. After the fourth absences, 5 points per day will be deducted from your final grade for the semester. I do not distinguish between excused or unexcused absences.

**Note about Language:** Given the course’s subject-matter, one of the first issues we will need to consider is how language matters. While the writers we will be studying (not to mention many contemporary comedians and hip-hop stars) may employ variants of the “N-word” and perhaps the words “colored” or “Negro” to refer to a person or a group of people, we will NOT be employing these words in class discussions. These words have histories and frequently invoke, intentionally or not, a history of racism. We can and should explore this history and learn their multiple meanings and how they are used in contemporary African American literature. However, we must do so in a way that is respectful to all students.

**Department Policy on Disruptive Behavior:** Students may be dismissed from any class meeting during which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others. Such behavior includes—but is not limited to—arriving late to class; entering and leaving class while it is in session; using cell phones to make or receive calls, send or receive text messages, or for other purposes that are not authorized by the me; speaking disrespectfully to me and/or to other students; and using electronic devices for purposes that are not directly related to the learning expectations of the course. Each dismissal for disruptive behavior will count as an absence and will be applied toward the attendance policy described in this syllabus. Repeated
instances of disruptive behavior will be reported to the Office of Student Services for disciplinary action and will be considered grounds for administrative withdrawal from this course. If you have concerns about disruptive behavior or would like to discuss the classroom environment or your participation in this class, please set up a time to meet with me. For more information see [http://www.westga.edu/vpsa/index_4721.php](http://www.westga.edu/vpsa/index_4721.php).

**Time Commitment/Credit Hour Policy**

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

**Late Policy**

Late assignments, quizzes, discussions: I DO NOT usually accept late work.

**Academic Honesty**

*Acknowledgment is hereby given to Georgia State University on whose policy this is based*. As members of the academic community, all students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The University System of Georgia assumes as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters that students be honest and that they submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for fairness require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable or unethical conduct related to their academic work.

In an effort to foster an environment of academic integrity and to prevent academic dishonesty, students are expected to discuss with faculty the expectations regarding course assignments and standards of conduct. In addition, students are encouraged to discuss freely with faculty, academic advisers, and other members of the academic community any questions pertaining to the provisions of this policy.

**Definitions and Examples**

The examples and definitions given below are intended to clarify the standards by which academic honesty and academically honorable conduct are to be judged.

- Plagiarism
The list is merely illustrative of the kinds of infractions that may occur, and it is not intended to be exhaustive. Moreover, the definitions and examples suggest conditions under which unacceptable behavior of the indicated types normally occurs. However, there may be unusual cases that fall outside these conditions that also will be judged unacceptable by the academic community.

**Plagiarism**

(NOTE: I use plagiarism detection systems. For example, see the following site: [http://turnitin.com/en_us/training/student-training](http://turnitin.com/en_us/training/student-training). I will also report violations to the College of Arts and Humanities Dean for investigation.)

Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else.

The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the instructor. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism.

Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the instructor. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly, or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

**Cheating on Examinations**

Cheating on examinations involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, texts, "crib sheets," websites, electronic documents or notes, and computer programs during an examination (unless specifically approved by the instructor), or sharing information with another student during an examination (unless specifically approved by the instructor). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one's own examination and forbidden collaboration before or after an examination.

**Unauthorized Collaboration**
Submission for academic credit of a work product, developed in substantial collaboration with other person or source but represented as one's own effort, is unauthorized. Seeking and providing such assistance is a violation of academic honesty. However collaborative work specifically authorized by an instructor is allowed.

Falsification

It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise, assignment or proceeding. Some examples of falsification are:

- false or misleading citation of sources
- the falsification of the results of experiments or of computer data
- false or misleading information in an academic context in order to gain an unfair advantage.

Multiple Submissions

It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the instructor(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, or required. However, the student is responsible for indicating in writing, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.

Evidence and Burden of Proof

In determining whether or not academic dishonesty has occurred, guilt must be proven by a preponderance of the evidence. This means that if the evidence that academic dishonesty occurred produces a stronger impression and is more convincing compared to opposing evidence, then academic dishonesty has been proven. In other words, the evidence does not have to be enough to free the mind from a reasonable doubt but must be sufficient to incline a reasonable and impartial mind to one side of the issue rather than to the other. Evidence as used in this statement can be any observation, admission, statement, or document that would either directly or circumstantially indicate that academic dishonesty has occurred. Electronic means may be used to monitor student work for the inappropriate use of the work of others.

University of West Georgia Honor Code

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.
The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student’s conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student’s account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions.