ENGL 4170-01
African American Literature
Fall Semester 2015
TR 9:30-10:50
HUMANITIES 208

Dr. S. Boyd
Office: TLC 2252
678-839-4851
sboyd@westga.edu
Office Hours: TR 11:10 A.M.-12:30 P.M. and by appointment

DESCRIPTION:
This course will examine major trends, authors, and texts central to the development of twentieth-century African-American literature.

Prerequisites: ENGL 1101 and ENGL 1102

Required Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nella Larsen</td>
<td>Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni Morrison</td>
<td>Beloved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zora Neale Hurston</td>
<td>Their Eyes Were Watching God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph Ellison</td>
<td>Invisible Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Petry</td>
<td>The Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Baldwin</td>
<td>Going to Meet the Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Johnson</td>
<td>The Oxherding Tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octavia Butler</td>
<td>The Fledging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallace Thurman</td>
<td>Blacker the Berry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supplemental Readings will be provided as needed.

Course Goals

- Students will become familiar with a range of literary works representing different genres from the African-American tradition, understanding how these works are related to each other and to the larger historical-literary traditions of Africa and America.
- Students will know the distinctive properties of literary expression within the African-American tradition.
- Students will understand how social, political, economic, and historical conditions influence the production of literary works.
- Students will demonstrate in both oral and written work a discipline-specific critical facility through convincing and well-supported analysis of related material.
- Students will demonstrate their command of academic English and the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.
- Students will learn to use discipline-specific computer technologies related to the study of language such as listservs, word processing, and internet research.

Program Goals

- This course fulfills one of the departmental requirements for the completion of the English major.
- Students will develop the analytical, oral and written skills to pursue graduate study or careers in teaching, writing, business and a variety of other fields.
Students will be able to define and pursue independent research agendas.
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.

I reserve the right to change this syllabus as needed.

**Attendance Policy**
*Bring your textbook to every class.* Should you find it necessary to miss class, please be aware of the following:
- Each student is allowed four (4) absences. Upon the fifth absence, the student’s final grade will be lowered five points each for every absence thereafter. Be aware that no distinction exists between excused and unexcused absences.
- If the withdrawal occurs prior to last day to receive a W, the student will receive a grade of W. If the withdrawal occurs after the last day to receive a W, the student will receive a grade of WF.
- It is each student’s responsibility to sign the attendance sheet, the official record of attendance for this class.
- Arriving 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early is also a violation of the attendance policy and can result in being marked absent.

**Classroom Decorum**
- Students may be dismissed from any class meeting at which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others. Such behavior includes—but is not limited to—arriving late for class, allowing cell phones to ring, speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students, checking email or surfing the web, and using personal audio or video devices. Each dismissal of this kind will count as an absence and will be applied toward the attendance policy.
- Turn off all electronic communication devices—cell phones, beepers, etc.—before entering the classroom. These devices are inappropriate in the classroom setting. Do not talk or otherwise engage your peers during class except as part of the overall class discussion.
- Sleeping in class is the same thing as being absent. If you fall asleep, do not be surprised if I ask you to leave.

**Email**
Your email correspondence with me should always include a salutation (Dear Dr. Boyd rather than “Hey”), follow appropriate etiquette, and be signed by you. Be sure to include a “subject.” Use your West Georgia email account when trying to email me. You should not expect me to respond to email from other accounts. Please allow some time for me to answer your email. If I have not answered your email by the following class period, you should follow-up with me in person. Do not email your essays to me unless you have my express written permission. Your West Georgia email account is the University’s official means of trying to reach you. You should maintain your account by deleting old email. Otherwise, your inbox may get too full and you will be unable to receive important information from me or from the University.

**Plagiarism**
The Department of English defines plagiarism as taking personal credit for the words and ideas of others as they are presented in electronic, print and verbal sources. The Department expects that students will accurately credit sources in all assignments. Students may not turn in work from another class. Doing so can result in your receiving a zero on that assignment. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to using the words or ideas but not citing electronic and or written sources and excessive collaboration with another person. Plagiarism is grounds for failing this course. The Code of Student Conduct is in effect and will be
enforced in this class. Cliffsnotes, Wikipedia, Sparknotes, and other such sources are considered inappropriate for this class.

**Essays**
You are responsible for two critical essays of five pages each. All essays should meet MLA format regulations: they must be word-processed, double-spaced with one inch margins, left-justified only, and stapled in the upper-left-hand corner. You should use Times New Roman font size 12. Please do not use cover pages or plastic folders; instead you should have a heading in the upper left-hand corner of the first page with your name, my name, the course number, and the date. Your last name should be next to the page number in the upper-right-hand corner of every page after the first. All essays should have interesting, descriptive titles, and you must document any source in MLA fashion, with parenthetical citations and a works cited list at the end of your essay. You are required to have backup copies of all outside papers, and to be able to produce such copies if necessary. We will discuss the essay prompts at a later time.

**Presentation**
To aid our study of American literature, each of you will sign-up to present information on one of the journal articles. The presentations should include a handout that will help your classmates remember the major ideas. As always, you should be sure to include the citation for the sources that you use.

**Annotated Bibliography**
A portion of your grade will come from the Annotated Bibliography. Decide on a topic or text related to our class about which you would like to find out more information. Find and cite (in MLA format) at least 15 scholarly sources that relate to your topic. The sources you find can either discuss your topic directly or provide a theoretical/historical background—or they can do both.

**Grading**
You can expect to receive the grade you earn in this class; please refrain from telling me what grade you “need” in the class (for Hope, for athletics, to fulfill a dying relative’s final request, etc.), or what grade you “really want” (presumably an A).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will be assigned a letter grade for each assignment ranging from A+ to F based on the following numerical scale. The numerical grade will be used when calculating the final average at the end of the semester.

- 97-100 = A+
- 87-89 = B+
- 77-79 = C+
- 67-69 = D+
- below 60 = F
- 94-96 = A
- 84-86 = B
- 74-76 = C
- 64-66 = D
- 90-93 = A-
- 80-83 = B-
- 70-73 = C-
- 60-63 = D-

**Late Work**
I will not usually accept late essays. Late work is any work given to me after the deadline unless prior arrangements have been made with me.
Special Needs
If you have a registered disability that I can help accommodate, please see me at the beginning of the semester.