

Home in Contemporary African Diasporic Fiction
Professor Young. E-Mail: hbhanayoung@gmail.com
Tuesday/ Thursday 9.30-11am Gar 2.112
Office Hours: Tuesday 11-12.30pm and by appt
GWB 4.112

Course Description:

When someone asks 'where are you from' the answer is sometimes simple. Often however, you find yourself going through a long list of places you have lived and left, people you have loved and lost. Using novels and performances of the African diaspora, this class will follow protagonists as they attempt to answer this question. We begin with African Americans 'returning' to the 'motherland' only to find the slave hold. Simultaneously Zimbabweans, Nigerians and other Africans, using the desperate logic of colonialism, seek better opportunities in the so-called first world, only to confront their foreign-ness and blackness in new ways. A young girl missing the taste of mangoes, a magistrate in Edinburgh whose Walkman is on a constant loop playing music from 'back home' in Zimbabwe, a geeky overweight Dominican who sees himself as an X-man—these stories etch out the fraught politics of belonging in the African diaspora. These characters splinter under the weight of multiple transnational displacements, removals and returns, showing the high cost of change. Performances and films include Zola Maseko's film *The Life and Times of Sara Baartman* and *Dirty Pretty Things* directed by Stephen Frears,

Reading List:

Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route by Saidiya Hartman
Lucy: A Novel by Jamaica Kincaid
Speak no Evil: A Novel by Uzodinma Iweala
What we Lose by Zinzi Clemmons
The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao by Junot Diaz
We need New Names by NoViolet Bulawayo

Grading Rubric:

1. Attendance and participation (10%)
You must attend lecture Feb 26th: 3.30-5pm
2. One **performance** based on the reading. (15%)
3. Three short writing assignments and/or quizzes. (20%)
4. Midterm paper due March 14th by noon (20%)
5. Final Paper due May 14th by noon (35%)

Week One: Losing one's Mother

Tuesday: Jan 22 Introduction

Thursday: Jan 24 Prologue from *Lose Your Mother* by Saidiya Hartman

Week Two: Au-pairs and other types of feminized labor

Tuesday: Jan 29. Lucy, pps. 1-41

Thursday: Jan 31. Lucy, pps. 42-112

Week Three: Claiming the Devil

Tuesday: Feb 5. Lucy, pps. 112-163.

SHORT ASSIGNMENT ONE: 2 pages DS (Why does the protagonist name herself Lucy?)

Thursday: Feb 7. Speak No Evil, pps. 1-49

Week Four: No Country for Gay Men

Tuesday: Feb 12. Speak No Evil, pps. 51-101

Thursday: Feb 14. Speak No Evil, pps. 102-150

Week Five: Losing one's mother again

Tuesday: Feb 19. Speak No Evil, pps. 151-214

Thursday: Feb 21. What we Lose, pps. 1-50

Week Six: I See You Looking At Me

Tuesday: Feb 26. What we Lose, pps. 51-107

Thursday: Feb 28

Attend Guest Lecture with Saidiya Hartman: 3.30 to 5pm

Week Seven

Tuesday: March 5. What we Lose, pps. 108-159

Thursday: March 7. What we Lose, pps. 160-207

Week Eight

Tuesday: March 12 FILM: Zola Maseko: The Life and Times of Sara Baartman

Thursday: March 14 MID-TERM DUE by noon

Week Nine: March 19-21 SPRING BREAK

Week Ten: Curses and other Historical Sentences

Tuesday: March 26. The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, pps. 1-64

Thursday: March 28. Oscar Wao, pps. 65-113 (El Hollywood)

Week Eleven

Tuesday: April 2. Oscar Wao, pps. 114-184

Thursday: April 4. Oscar Wao, pps. 185-237

Week Twelve

Tuesday: April 9. Oscar Wao, pps. 238-284

Thursday: April 11 Oscar Wao, pps. 285 to end **READING QUIZ.**

Week Thirteen

Tuesday: April 16. FILM: Dirty, Pretty Things

Thursday: April 18. Performance artists and discussion of film

Week Fourteen:

Tuesday: April 23. We Need New Names, pps. 1-43

Thursday: April 25. We Need New Names, pps. 44-105

Week Fifteen:

Tuesday: April 30. We Need New Names, pps. 106-164

Thursday: May 2. We Need New Names, pps. 165-216

Week Sixteen:

Tuesday: May 7. We Need New Names, pps. 217 to end

Thursday: May 9. Review

FINAL PAPERS DUE MAY 14th by noon