

Instructions

- Complete top portion to identify the course, title, instructor, unique #, etc.
- Complete Description, Texts, Requirements & Grading, Schedule, Policies, and Web Site items.
- Complete Instructors section; do not list personal information.
- Return completed template to Meredith Furgerson via e-mail (mfurgerson@austin.utexas.edu). This will serve as your public syllabus on the campus-wide system.
- After you've returned this template to Meredith, you can add information and reformat to your liking; this may serve as your private syllabus and need only be provided to students in your course.
- You may include a weapons policy on your class syllabus if you wish, but it will be deleted from your public syllabus before Meredith uploads it per department policy
- For additional guidance on writing your private syllabus, consult <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/teaching/>.

E 376S • African American Literature since the Harlem Renaissance

Instructor: Wilks, J.
Unique #: 35710
Semester: Spring 2019
Cross-lists: AFR 372E

Areas: G
Flags: Cultural Diversity, Writing
Restrictions: N/A
Computer Instruction: N/A

Prerequisites: Nine semester hours of coursework in English or rhetoric and writing.

Description: In his 2011 text *What Was African American Literature?*, University of Chicago professor Kenneth Warren provocatively speaks of African American literature in the past tense. In meditations on literary and social history, he asks whether it is possible to identify a unified body of literature by Americans of African descent in the wake of the Jim Crow era and the Civil Rights movement it engendered. Indeed, similar questions have been raised about the larger category of race given the election of Barack Obama as the first African American president of the United States. Are we ready, however, to speak of the U.S. as a post-racial society? If not, what does it mean to be “post-black”? Using fiction and nonfiction works published since the year 2000, this course will address these questions and examine the thorny complications and rich complexities of black identities in the early 21st century. These issues, in turn, will be used to develop the critical thinking and writing skills central to class discussion and assignments.

Texts:

Primary

Percival Everett, *Erasure* (Graywolf Press, 2001)
 Danielle Evans, *Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self* (Riverhead, 2010)
 Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Graywolf Press, 2014)
 Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad* (2016)
 Tayari Jones, *An American Marriage* (2018)

Secondary

Touré, “Keep It Real Is a Prison,” *Who’s Afraid of Post-Blackness?* (Free Press, 2011)
 Kenneth Warren, “Historicizing African American Literature,” *What Was African American Literature?* (Harvard UP, 2011)

Requirements & Grading:

Requirements

* **Papers:** Two short papers, the first of which will be turned in to the instructor as a **complete, 4-page rough draft**, revised, and resubmitted for a final grade; and a final critical essay. All papers **must** be formatted according to the guidelines of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, available online and in libraries and bookstores.

*** Reading responses:** Short responses on assigned readings. You do not have to address everything in the reading; unless I give you a specific question or topic, you may write on whatever in the reading interests you. You may be asked to share your reading response with the class. I will collect them at the end of class, and they will be graded with a **check** (you did it), **check-plus** (you're really *thinking* and *asking* questions), or **check-minus** (did you read the assignment?). Responses will **not** be accepted late, and they should be typed (1.5-2 double-spaced pages).

*** Prompt, regular, and engaged attendance:** Attendance is required. Your participation in class discussion and group activities is just as important as the timely completion of written assignments.

In the event of an absence, you are responsible for knowing what was discussed in class as well as for getting any missed handouts or assignments. If you are absent due to an illness or emergency, please contact me by phone or e-mail.

You are allowed **3** unexcused absences, after which your grade will be lowered one level (for example, from A to A-, from A- to B+, and so on) for each subsequent unexcused absence.

Grading

Two short papers (4 pages each)	40%
Final critical essay (6-7 pages)	35%
Reading responses/class participation	15%
Rough draft of first short paper (4 pages)	10%

Plus/minus grading will be used.

Late Work

Students who turn in late papers will lose one grade "level" for every 24 hours the assignment is late (that is, a paper that would have merited an A- will receive a B+ if submitted within 24 hours after the due date, a B if submitted within 48 hours after the due date, and so on). Extensions are obtainable only for personal illness or emergency, and then only if requested in advance from the instructor. Please note that outside commitments are not an excuse for lateness.

Incompletes

Incompletes will not be given except under extenuating circumstances that are discussed with the instructor prior to posting final grades. In the event that an incomplete is granted, all outstanding work must be completed no later than the last week of classes of the following semester. No extensions of incompletes will be granted.

Schedule:

Week One

January 22	Introduction and course description
	Touré, "Keep It Real Is a Prison" (excerpt)
January 24	Warren, "Historicizing African American Literature"

Week Two

January 29	<i>Erasure</i>
January 31	<i>Erasure</i>
	<i>Native Son</i> introduction/review

Week Three

February 5	<i>Erasure</i>
	Response 1
February 7	<i>Erasure</i>

Week Four

February 12

Peer Review

February 14

Paper 1 (draft)

Documentary

Week Five

February 19

Documentary (cont'd)

February 21

Paper 1 (final)*Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self***Week Six**

February 26

Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self

February 28

Response 2*Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self***Week Seven**

March 5

Citizen

March 7

*Citizen***Week Eight**

March 12

Citizen

March 14

Response 3**Week Nine****March 18-22****Spring Break****Week Ten**

March 26

Feature film

March 28

Peer Review

Paper 2 (draft)**Week Eleven**

April 2

Feature film (cont'd)

April 4

Paper 2 (final)*The Underground Railroad***Week Twelve**

April 9

The Underground Railroad

April 11

*The Underground Railroad***Week Thirteen**

April 16

The Underground Railroad

April 18

Response 4*The Underground Railroad* recap**Week Fourteen**

April 23

An American Marriage

April 25

An American Marriage

Week Fifteen

April 30 *An American Marriage*
 May 2 *An American Marriage*
Response 5

Week Sixteen

May 7 Course recap: What is (was?) African American literature?
 May 9 Final reflections; evaluations

****Final essay due via Canvas Friday, May 13, at 5pm****

Policies:*** Documented Disability Statement**

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>.

*** Honor Code**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

*** Academic Integrity**

Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit must be the student's own work.

"The University of Texas traces its genesis to the state Constitution of 1876, which called for the establishment of 'a university of the first class.' This ideal has shaped the University's mission since its founding and continues to guide the policies of the University today. As a university of the first class, The University of Texas also participates in a larger mission: the advancement of knowledge. The sharing of knowledge forms the heart of university life. Scholars, teachers, and students all participate in a community of learning, where the ideas and information that have been developed over centuries are disseminated, elaborated upon, and added to in a continual process of intellectual advancement. High standards of academic integrity help ensure that this process functions smoothly.

At its core, academic integrity requires honesty. This involves giving credit where it is due and acknowledging the contributions of others to one's own intellectual efforts. It also includes assuring that one's own work has been completed in accordance with the standards of one's course or discipline. Without academic integrity, neither the genuine innovations of the individual nor the progress of a given field of study can adequately be assessed, and the very foundation of scholarship itself is undermined. Academic integrity, for all these reasons, is an essential link in the process of intellectual advancement."

This passage quoted from and additional information available at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint.php>.

*** Religious holidays**

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of a 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, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

***Email**

I am happy to answer your questions about the course via email, which I check daily during business hours, Monday through Friday. As a result, you should not rely on me to answer questions about an assignment (for instance) the night before it is due. It is your responsibility to seek help ahead of time. If you have substantive questions about the course, it is best to visit me during office hours so that we can talk about your concerns in person.

Web Site: The class will use the Canvas course management software provided by the university.