

English 381R Tentative Syllabus

Fall 2007

Dr. Loflin

Office : Humanities 204

Office Hours: MW 9:30-11:30, Tuesday 11:30-12:30 and by appointment

Course Description: In this course, we will be reading contemporary Southern African literature from a variety of women writers. These include works written during and after the apartheid era in South Africa, as well as works by women from Zimbabwe and Botswana. Focus will be on the different representations of social, political and cultural life in Southern Africa and how these construct and define issues of nationality and nation building, race and ethnicity, gender and class. We will also be considering how characters establish their identity in a society of dramatic change, and how the changing social and political conditions in Southern Africa affect women's roles. Authors included in the course: Doris Lessing, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Yvonne Vera, Zoe Wicomb and Nadine Gordimer. In addition to these authors, the course will include some history, literary criticism, and possibly films.

Course Goals:

I expect by the end of the course that you will

- a) be familiar with major women writers in Southern Africa and be able to discuss critically their use of narrative strategies, gender roles and social issues in their works.
- b) have a background familiarity with South African and Zimbabwean history, geography and culture.
- c) be able to demonstrate your ability in literary analysis in class and in your written work.

Policies:

Attendance: You should be present for every class and prepared to participate. If you are absent, you are responsible for informing yourself about any missed assignments or announcements, and for material covered during that class. All absences should be for good reason; however, you may miss two classes without explanation. . Because excessive absences are disruptive to the entire class, once you have missed four classes you will lose a third of a grade for every unexcused absence after that point.

Class Participation: This will count for 10% of your grade. For full credit, you will need to attend every class ready to participate. This means not just responding when called on, but coming to class with questions from the reading and topics for discussion, responding to other students' comments on the text, and taking active responsibility for the liveliness and pertinence of discussion.

Plagiarism: In this course, as in all other courses, you are bound by the Honor Code. Therefore, the work you submit for this class must be your own. If you use any outside

sources in your writing for this course, you must acknowledge them by using the MLA system of documentation, which is presented in detail in *The Bedford Handbook*. **All Websites or other Internet sources must be acknowledged and documented.** If you have any questions regarding the Honor Code as it applies to this course, please consult me or pages 96-99 of the Oxford College catalog.

Requirements:

1. Class attendance and participation
2. 5 2-page papers
3. A research paper, 7-10 pages
4. A midterm and a final exam

Grading percentages:

Class attendance& participation:	15%
Short papers	30%
'Midterm'	15%
Research Paper	20%
Final Exam	20%

Tentative schedule of primary readings:

W8/29 Introduction

Labor Day

W9/5 Doris Lessing, The Grass Is Singing, Chapters 1-4. Short paper due: What gender attitudes/stereotypes are revealed in these first chapters? What racial attitudes and stereotypes? Be sure to refer to specific passages, language, and/or images in the text.

9/10-12 Readings: Doris Lessing, The Grass is Singing, secondary texts TBA

9/17-9/19 Readings: Antjie Krog Country of my Skull

9/24-26 Country of My Skull

October 8 Fall Break

10/10-10/17 Zoe Wicomb Playing in the Light, secondary texts TBA

10/2-10/4 Vera The Stone Virgins

10/8-10/10 Fall Break (no class)

10/15-10/24 *Nervous Conditions*

10/20 draft abstract of research paper—peer review in class

10/29-10/31 Vera, *The Stone Virgins*

11/5-7 Vera, *The Stone Virgins*

11/12-11/21 Nadine Gordimer *Burger's Daughter*

11/23-11/24 Thanksgiving

11/26-28 drafts of research paper due; reading: Gordimer Burger's Daughter
Research paper due 12/8

12/3-12/5 Research presentations

12/12 Review for final