

E 349S Toni Morrison

Instructor: Woodard,H

Unique #: 35755

Semester: Fall 2018

Cross-lists: AFR 372 #30680; WGS 345 6

Areas:

Flags: Writing, Diversity

Restrictions: none

Computer Instruction: none

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

Course description:

This course examines select novels by Nobel laureate and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, Toni Morrison. The novels thematize womanism as theory in experiences uniquely shared by women across ethnic, class, and regional boundaries. Collectively, Morrison's characters confront a wide range of challenging crises: infanticide, familial relationships and conflict, cultural survival, etc. Morrison's novels are a gloss on the African-American literary tradition, deeply rooted in the American literary tradition.

Writing Flag:

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Diversity Flag:

This course carries the Flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

English Major Area: Single or Dual Author

Texts for Required reading:

Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*.

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*.

Toni Morrison, *Sula*.

Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon*.

Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*.

Toni Morrison, *God Help the Child*.

Requirements & Grading:

.60 Two Critical essays TBA (5 pages each; typed, ds)

.20 Reading Notebook (weekly entries); 12-page minimum; typed, ds; see separate instruction sheet

.10 Critical citations / reading quizzes

.10 Class participation & attendance (reading discussants assigned)

Note: You will be given the opportunity to revise critical essay I (revision due on the final day of class.) (You will be given separate handouts with instructions for the reading notebook, the critical citations, and essay revisions.)

Articles for required reading (canvas)

Wyatt, Jean. "Failed Messages, Maternal Loss, and Narrative Form," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 58.1 (1912), 128-151.

Terry, Jennifer. "Breathing the Air of a World So New": Rewriting the Landscape of America in "Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*," *Journal of American Studies*, 48.1, 127-145.

Michaels, Walter Benn. "You Who Never Was There: Slavery and the New Historicism, Deconstruction and the Holocaust," *Narrative*, 4.1 (January, 1996), 1-16.

Gillespie, Diane and Missy Dehn Kubitschek. "Who Cares? Women-Centered Psychology in *Sula*,"

Black American Literature Forum, 24.1 (Spring, 1990), 21-48.

Gay Wilentz, Gay. "Civilizations underneath: African Heritage as Cultural Discourse in Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon, African American Review, 26.1 (Spring 1992), 61-77.

Kuentz, Jane. "'The Bluest Eye': Notes on History, Community, and Black Female Subjectivity," African American Review 27.3 (Fall 1993), 421-431.

Attendance:

Regular attendance is required. More than four absences will be sufficient grounds for failure in the course. Penalties may range from a reduction in overall course grade to failure of the course itself. I reserve the right to make decisions on a case-by-case basis. The four allowed absences would include illness, deaths of relatives, and other emergencies. If you are more than five minutes late or leave before class ends (without permission), you will be counted absent for that class. You are responsible for all work covered in your absence. Read each novel completely by the first day of discussion for that book. No makeup for quizzes is permitted. Course pack articles are required reading.

*The course contains select novels from the Toni Morrison literary canon. The subject of each class meeting may be determined from the assigned reading for the day (see course schedule). The instructor retains the right to vary this syllabus.

Class Policies:

Absolutely no make-up for reading quizzes. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Except under extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, late assignments will not be accepted. I reserve the right to make these decisions on a case-by-case basis. Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date at the beginning of class. Read all material assigned before class time. Participation in class discussion is required. Papers turned in during or after class on the due day will be considered late. Use the MLA (Modern Language Association) Stylebook for all papers. Type papers on white, 8.5" x 11" paper, using one side only. Bind pages with a paper clip.

Special Accommodations for Students with a Disability:

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259. Please notify the professor of any special accommodations that you may need prior to the end of the second week of class.

Policy on Religious Observance:

A student who is absent from a class or examination due to the observance of a religious holy day may complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence if proper notice has been given. Notice must be given at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates the student will be absent. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, notice should be given on the first day of the semester.

Grading Scale:

Final grades will be determined on the basis of the following rubric. Please note that to ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. Thus, a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999. The University does not recognize the grade of A+.

A (94-100); A- (90-93); B+ (87-89); B (84-86); B- (80-83); C+ (77-79); C (74-76); C- (70-73); D+ (67-69); D (64-66); D- (60-63); F (0-59). Plus/minus grades will be assigned for the final grade. This is a writing-intensive course. No final exam is given.

TENTATIVE COURSE READING SCHEDULE
(Note: Syllabus is subject to announced changes)

TH	8/30	Introduction to course; policies, etc. Toni Morrison, bio-critical portrait of a Pulitzer winner and a Nobel Prize Laureate.
TU	9/4	Morrison, <i>A Mercy</i> (circa 1682-1690.) Read Jean Wyatt, "Failed Messages, Maternal Loss, and Narrative Form," <u>Modern Fiction Studies</u> , 58.1 (1912), 128-151.
TH	9/6	Morrison, <i>A Mercy</i> , Lecture and discussion.
TU	9/11	Morrison, <i>A Mercy</i> , Lecture and discussion.
TH	9/13	Morrison, <i>A Mercy</i> , Lecture and discussion.
TU	9/18	Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> , Lecture and discussion.
TH	9/20	Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> , Lecture and discussion. One-page critical citation due for A Mercy. Out of class reading notebook entry on <u>A Mercy</u>.
TU	9/25	Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> (circa 1835-1875). Lecture and discussion. Critical essay I due (TBA).
TH	9/27	Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> , Lecture and discussion. Read the article by Walter Benn Michaels, "You Who Never Was There: Slavery and the New Historicism, Deconstruction and the Holocaust," <u>Narrative</u> , 4.1 (January, 1996), 1-16. Out of class reading notebook entry on Beloved.
TU	10/2	Morrison, <i>Jazz</i> , Lecture and discussion.
TH	10/4	Morrison, <i>Jazz</i> , Lecture and discussion. One-page critical citation on Beloved due. Out of class reading notebook entry on Beloved.
TU	10/9	Morrison, <i>Jazz</i> , conclusion, Lecture and discussion.
TH	10/11	Morrison, <i>Jazz</i> (circa 1919 – 1965), Introduction. One-page critical citation due on Jazz. Out of class reading notebook entry on Jazz.
TU	10/16	Morrison, <i>Sula</i> , Lecture and discussion.
TH	10/18	Morrison, <i>Sula</i> , Lecture and discussion. Read Diane Gillespie and Missy Dehn Kubitschek, "Who Cares? Women-Centered Psychology in <i>Sula</i> ," <u>Black American Literature Forum</u> , 24.1 (Spring, 1990), 21-48. Reading notebook entry on Sula.
TU	10/23	Morrison, <i>Sula</i> , Lecture and discussion.
TH	10/25	Toni Morrison, <i>Song of Solomon</i> , (circa 1931 – 1963). One-page critical citation due for Sula due. Out of class reading notebook entry on Sula

TU	10/30	Morrison, <i>Song of Solomon</i> , Lecture and discussion. Read the article by Gay Wilentz, "Civilizations underneath: African Heritage as Cultural Discourse in Toni Morrison's <i>Song of Solomon</i> , <i>African American Review</i> , 26.1 (Spring 1992), 61-77. Out of class notebook entry on Sula.
TH	11/1	Morrison, <i>Song of Solomon</i> , Lecture and discussion. Reading notebook entry on Song of Song of Solomon.
TU	11/6	Morrison, <i>Song of Solomon</i> , Lecture and discussion.
TH	11/8	Morrison, <i>The Bluest Eye</i> , Lecture and discussion. One-page critical citation for Song of Solomon due. Out of class reading notebook entry on Song of Solomon.
TU	11/13	Morrison, <i>The Bluest Eye</i> Lecture and discussion.
TH	11/15	Morrison, <i>The Bluest Eye</i> , (circa 1940s – 1960s) Critical essay due II due (TBA). Out of class reading notebook entry on The Bluest Eye.
TU	11/20	Morrison, <i>The Bluest Eye</i> , Lecture and discussion. Read the article by Jane Kuentz, "'The Bluest Eye': Notes on History, Community, and Black Female Subjectivity," <i>African American Review</i> 27.3 (Fall 1993), 421-431. Out of class reading notebook entry on Song of Solomon
THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (11/21—11/25)		
TU	11/ 27	Toni Morrison, <i>God Help the Child</i> , Lecture and discussion. Critical citation for The Bluest Eye due.
TH	11/29	Morrison, <i>God Help the Child</i> , Lecture and discussion. Reading notebook entry on God Help the Child.
TU	12/4	Morrison, <i>God Help the Child</i> . Lecture and discussion. Final reading notebooks due.
TH	12/6	Morrison, <i>God Help the Child</i> . (OUR LAST CLASS DAY)