INTRODUCTION TO BLACK WRITERS: Global Black Fiction
Fall 2015 – AAS 264-002/ENG 260-002
MWF 12:00-12:50 – White Hall Classroom Building 237

Professor: Patrick Herald
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Office Hours: Mondays 2-4, Fridays 2-3, and by appointment
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Overview

This course focuses on developing skills of close reading and literary analysis, both in class
discussion and in assignments, through the study of major black writers. This section will be a
study of global black literature—novels, drama, and poetry—written in English from the
twentieth century to the present. We will consider how major authors from myriad locations
depict the experience of being black in different times and places, during and after colonialism.
While the class will primarily focus on major texts written by these authors, time will also be
spent considering the historical and cultural context in which these texts were produced,
including colonialism and postcolonialism.
Offers UK Core credit for Intellectual Inquiry in the Humanities. Does not fulfill ENG premajor
requirement. Can be taken for ENG Major Elective credit. Provides ENG minor credit.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- read and analyze works of black literature from across several genres and cultures
- use the terminology and categories of literary analysis
- draft, compose, and revise 2 substantial essays with specific emphasis on the skills
  needed to devise theses, craft arguments, and use supporting evidence for the
  development of analytical interpretations
- assess supporting materials, scholarly resources, and contextual documents
- demonstrate mastery of the assigned reading through quizzes and in-class work

Required Texts

Things Fall Apart – Chinua Achebe (Anchor Books)
Death and the King’s Horseman – Wole Soyinka (Hill and Wang)
A Grain of Wheat – Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (Penguin Modern Classics)
Nervous Conditions – Tsitsi Dangarembga (Ayebia)
Brown Girl, Brownstones – Paule Marshall (Martino)
On Beauty – Zadie Smith (Penguin)

Additional readings posted on Canvas

I have parenthetically indicated the publisher for the editions ordered to the campus book store.
Feel free to use other editions, but the listed ones are ideal because pagination sometimes varies
between editions, which can make located passages we discuss in class difficult. While you may use an electronic copy of a book, I encourage you to purchase a print copy instead, for a number of reasons I can cover in class.

**Course Policies/Requirements**

**Learning Outcomes**
- Write a capable, interesting essay about a complex issue (discipline-specific) for a general university audience.
- Demonstrate an ability to discover, evaluate, and clearly present evidence in support of an argument in the subject area and utilize documentation that conforms to the formats and the citation conventions of the subject area.
- Write a paper that is essentially free of mechanical errors (grammar, punctuation, spelling, and syntax) and awkwardness, using a style that is appropriate to the purpose and audience.

**Writing Requirements**
- Students will be required to write 2 formal essays, one 5 pages in length and the other 8 to 10.
- All essays must go through a *draft, review, and revision* process (peer review meets this requirement). Failure to participate in the drafting process (not submitting a draft, or missing peer review with an unexcused absence) will result in 5 points off per occurrence from the final essay grade.

**Grading Policies**

**Grading Scale:** 90-100, A / 80-89, B / 70-79, C / 60-69, D / Below 60, E

- **Essays (60%):** Your major essays will combine to form the bulk of the grade for this course: Essay 1 = 20%; Essay 2 = 40%.
- **Participation (20%):** Student participation is absolutely essential to the success of this class, which requires us to engage in an ongoing conversation of the readings as a group. That said, opportunities for participation outside of full-class discussion will be available, from group discussion to peer review to office appointments. This portion of the grade is also reliant on regular attendance.
- **Presentation (10%):** You will prepare one presentation on a topic, author, or text and deliver it near the end of the semester. This presentation may take a number of forms that we will determine as a class, and may be a group or individual presentation.
- **In-Class Work/Quizzes (5%):** Class activities will vary from day to day, but students must be ready to complete short in-class writings or quizzes drawn directly from assigned readings or notes from the previous class’ lecture/discussion, so it is important to read and annotate all assignments and to take careful notes during class.
- **Discussion Board Posts (5%):** Each of you will respond regularly to prompts posted to Canvas. Typically, you will have about one post due per week. I may ask you to read and respond to other’s posts. We will discuss the nuts and bolts of accessing and posting to the board in class.
- **Late Work:** Essays not submitted in class on the due date will lose a letter grade for each class period it is late. If a hard copy of an essay is not turned in by the 4th day after the due date it will receive a 0. Daily assignments not completed during class as well as any
short writing assignments cannot be made up and will earn a 0. In-class assignments missed as a result of an excused absence will not count against you and short writings missed as a result of an excused absence will be accepted.

Please Note: Simply emailing me a copy of your essay/assignment before class on the date it is due will not suffice; you must provide a hard copy in class. (See below for policy regarding emailed work).

Assistance and Contact with the Instructor
I am always happy to meet and discuss any aspect of the class. My office hours are listed above and you are welcome to come by my office during that time, though without an appointment this will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. I am also readily available by email to answer short questions and set up appointments. I typically will not review a full draft over email (you should set up an office meeting for this). I will look at smaller-scale paper questions by email, however (a question about your thesis or works cited page, for example). Note that final drafts of papers are not accepted by email unless I inform the class otherwise.

The Writing Center
The Writing Center, Room B108B in The Hub of the W. T. Young Library (lower level), is available to help you with your writing. It is open 9 AM-9 PM Monday-Thursday, 9 AM-3 PM Friday, and 8 PM-11 PM Sunday. It is strongly advised to make an appointment in advance: go to uky.mywconline.com to sign on as a new client (select "First visit? Click here to register") or to log in and schedule an appointment. More information about the Writing Center is available at: http://wrd.as.uky.edu/writing-center. You can contact the Director of the Writing Center, Judy Prats at judithgprats@uky.edu.

Attendance Policies
In-class discussion is essential to the success of this class, which means that attendance is mandatory. You may accrue three unexcused absences without penalty, but your final course grade will be reduced by a half letter grade for each unexcused absence thereafter. If you miss more than one-fifth of class contact hours for any reason, you cannot receive credit for the course. This means you must withdraw or receive a grade of E upon the ninth absence.

Tardiness will count against your participation grade. Students who are more than 10 minutes late will be marked absent for the day. That absence will become an unexcused absence, weighing against your total number of unexcused absences, if you cannot provide proper documentation. If a quiz occurs, you may only make it up if you have a valid, documented excuse for your tardiness. You will not be given extra time on quizzes if you are late, and if you miss it entirely you will receive a 0. So be prepared and on time!

Excused Absences
Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible. S.R. 5.2.4.2 defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: [a] serious illness, [b] illness or death of family member, [c] University-related trips, [d] major religious holidays, and [e] other circumstances found to fit “reasonable cause for nonattendance” by the professor.

Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays no later
than the last day in the semester to add a class. Information regarding dates of major religious holidays may be obtained through the religious liaison, Mr. Jake Karnes (859-257-2754).

Students are expected to withdraw from the class if more than 20% of the classes scheduled for the semester are missed (excused or unexcused) per university policy.

**Verification of Absences**

Students will be asked to verify their absences in order for them to be considered excused. Senate Rules 5.2.4.2 states that faculty have the right to request “appropriate verification” when students claim an excused absence because of illness or death in the family. The statement discusses the important public health and policy reasons why a sufficiently ill student ought to be absent from class and also not make a visit to University Health Services. UHS provides in this circumstance an “Explanatory Statement of Absence from Class,” or “Tier 1 document,” that students may complete and submit to the Instructor to document an absence from class. Due to the self-reporting nature of the Tier 1 document (which carries significant potential for abuse), I will accept the document for up to two missed class period only. A Tier 2 or 3 document provided by UHS is considered appropriate verification for an excused absence due to illness.

Appropriate notification of absences due to university-related trips is required prior to the absence.

**Academic Integrity**

Per university policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records. Students are expected to adhere to University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is considered severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, more serious penalties, up to suspension from the university may be imposed.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Complete information can be found at the following website: [http://www.uky.edu/Ombud](http://www.uky.edu/Ombud). A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited.

Part II of *Student Rights and Responsibilities* (available online [http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html](http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html)) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about the question of plagiarism involving their own work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgement of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else’s work, whether it be a published article, chapter of a book, a paper
from a friend or some file, or something similar to this. Plagiarism also includes the practice or employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be.

Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual work is done, it must be done by the student, and the student alone. When a student’s assignment involves research in outside sources of information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where, and how he/she employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content, and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain (Section 6.3.1).

Please note: Any assignment you turn in may be submitted to an electronic database to check for plagiarism.

Accommodations Due to Disability
If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodation, please see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center, which is located at 725 Rose Street, Multidisciplinary Science Building (the building between the T. H. Morgan Building (Biological Sciences) and the College of Nursing), Suite 407. The DRC can be reached at phone number 257-2754 and email address dtbeac1@uky.edu for coordination of campus disability services available to students with disabilities.

Classroom Behavior/Other Policies
- E mail: I do not accept work by e mail unless specified otherwise or if I have made special arrangements on a case by case basis. Work submitted via e mail without prior permission will receive a 0 for daily work or, in the case of major essays will be treated as late work and penalized accordingly. Do contact me by email if you will not be in class, so that you can inquire about what you missed. Note that this does not excuse the absence, however: only proper documentation will.
- Cell Phones/Texting/Outside Work: In order to maintain a productive work environment, I expect you to turn off your cell phone before each class period and refrain from eating (a drink or snack is fine—just don’t make a meal out of it), sleeping, reading irrelevant materials, or engaging in off-topic discussion/side conversations. Violations will result in a lowered participation grade.
- Laptops/Tablets/Smart phones/Kindles: Should only be opened and/or turned on if you are using it for the assigned reading for that day (please let me know what you are doing).

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE
Note: This schedule is subject to change as necessary for the needs of our class. All readings are to be completed before the day they are due (For example, you need to have read chapters 1-5 of Achebe before we meet on August 31)
Week 1
Wed Aug 26: Course introduction
Fri Aug 28: Gwendolyn Brooks, “a song in the front yard,” “Primer For Blacks,” “We Real Cool” (under “Pages” on Canvas, or find on poetryfoundation.org on your own)

Week 2
Mon Aug 31: Achebe, Things Fall Apart Chapters 1-5
Wed Sept 2: Achebe Chapters 6-8
Fri Sept 4: Achebe Chapters 9-11; Board post 1 due

Week 3
Mon Sept 7: Labor Day; no class
Wed Sept 9: Achebe, Things Fall Apart Chapters 12-18
Fri Sept 11: Achebe Chapters 19-end

Week 4
Mon Sept 14: Soyinka, Death and the King’s Horseman Acts 1-3; Board post 2 due
Wed Sept 16: Soyinka Act 4
Fri Sept 18: Soyinka Act 5

Week 5
Mon Sept 21: Thiong’o, A Grain of Wheat Chapters 1-6; Board post 3 due
Wed Sept 23: Thiong’o Chapter 7
Fri Sept 25: Thiong’o Chapters 8-9

Week 6
Mon Sept 28: Thiong’o, A Grain of Wheat Chapters 10-13 Board post 4 due
Wed Sept 30: Thiong’o Chapter 14
Fri Oct 2: Thiong’o to end; rough draft of Paper 1 due in class for peer review

Week 7
Mon Oct 5: Dangarembga, Nervous Conditions Chapters 1-3
Wed Oct 7: Dangarembga Chapter 4
Fri Oct 9: Dangarembga Chapter 5; Paper 1 due
Week 8
Mon Oct 12: Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* Chapters 6-7

Wed Oct 14: Dangarembga Chapter 8

Fri Oct 16: Dangarembga Chapter 9-end; **Board post 5 due**

Week 9

Wed Oct 21: Marshall, Book 2 through Book 3 chapter 1

Fri Oct 23: Marshall, Book 3 chap 2 through Book 3 chap 3

Week 10
Mon Oct 26: Marshall, Book 3 chap 2 through Book 3 chap 3; **Board post 5 due**

Wed Oct 28: Marshall, Book 3 chap 4 through Book 3 chap 7

Fri Oct 30: Marshall, Book 3 chap 8 through Book 3 chap 10

Week 11
Mon Nov 2: Marshall, Book 4 chap 1 through Book 3 chap 7; **Board post 6 due**

Wed Nov 4: Marshall, Book 4 chap 7 to end

Fri Nov 6: No class – instructor out of town for a conference

Week 12
Mon Nov 9: Smith, *On Beauty* pages 1-78; **Board post 7 due**

Wed Nov 11: Smith 79-104

Fri Nov 13: Smith 104-125

Week 13
Mon Nov 16: Smith, *On Beauty* pages 127-208; **Board post 8 due**

Wed Nov 18: Smith 208-248

Fri Nov 20: Smith 249-271

Week 14
Mon Nov 23: Smith, *On Beauty* 273-332; **No regular class – mandatory individual meetings with instructor to be scheduled instead; paper 2 proposal due in meeting**

Wed Nov 25: Thanksgiving holiday; no class
Fri Nov 27: Thanksgiving holiday; no class

**Week 15**

Wed Dec 2: Smith 389-419

Fri Dec 4: Smith 419-end; **Paper 2 draft workshop**

**Week 16**
Mon Dec 7: Presentations

Wed Dec 9: Presentations

Fri Dec 11: **Final essay due**; presentations; last day of classes

Final exam: No final exam for our class