

Faculty of Arts/Department of English
English 379: American Slave Narratives, Then and Now

Instructor	Dr. Faye Halpern
Email:	fhalpern@ucalgary.ca
Class Meeting Time & Place	We'll be meeting Mon/Wed from 2-3:15 pm with a few exceptions (see the reading schedule), over Zoom
Web Page:	https://d2l.ucalgary.ca/d2l/home/399926 (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours	Thursdays, 2-3 pm over zoom; if you can't make it then, email Dr. Halpern to set up an alternative time.

Course Description

How did enslaved people fight against slavery through their own narratives of their lives in bondage? How do contemporary authors revise these earlier narratives? Readings include Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (a nineteenth-century slave narrative), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (a neo-slave narrative), and Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*. Students will leave this course with an array of techniques for analyzing and appreciating literature, including recognizing the surface of a text and figuring out what lies beneath it; identifying meaningful patterns in a text; describing the significance of character, setting, perspective, and a variety of literary devices; and making connections between a text and its surrounding context. At the end of the course, students will have the chance to connect what they've learned about how authors have depicted enslavement to a current depiction of racial injustice. The course has no pre-requisites.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- ✓ Identify the conventions of slave narratives and use the historical context of US slavery to enrich your interpretations of them;
- ✓ Connect nineteenth-century depictions of enslavement to contemporary depictions of racial injustice;
- ✓ Develop different techniques of literary analysis and use them to move beyond superficial interpretations of a literary text;
- ✓ Develop strategies for unpacking formally difficult literary texts;
- ✓ Use other students' ideas and feedback to develop your own literary interpretations through synchronous discussions and activities;
- ✓ Craft active sentences free from common grammatical errors.

Required Texts (available at the University bookstore unless otherwise noted):

- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* by Frederick Douglass. Modern Library Ed., 2004.
- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. Vintage International Edition, 2004.
- *The Hate U Give* (novel) by Angie Thomas. HarperCollins, 2017.
- *Digging into Literature: Strategies for Reading, Analysis, and Writing*. By Joanna Wolfe and Laura Wilder. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016.

- “Désirée’s Baby” and other short course readings can be found on D2L, under the week it’s assigned.

Expectations Around Synchronous Attendance:

This course will take place online, but it will take place synchronously, during our regularly scheduled class times. Although you will be expected to do the readings and assignments outside of class, you are expected to attend all the classes synchronously and participate in the discussions and activities that will take place during them. That is, this class will function very much like an in-person class in that we will be meeting in real-time and together (although over Zoom).

<u>Course Requirements</u>	<u>Percentage of Final Grade</u>
Discussion and Activities Assignment.....	20%
Getting to Know Your Classmates Assignment	5%
Quizzes.....	10%
Three Social Annotation Exercises	20%
Reflection on Black History Month Event or Documentary (400-700 words).....	15%
“Connecting the Dots” Essay (1400-1600 words.), including draft and peer workshop.....	30%

There is no final exam in this course.

Grading System

You must receive a passing grade on the “Discussion and Activities Assignment” as well as complete all written work to qualify for a passing grade.

This class uses a combination of letter grades and percentages. Grade conversions follow the English department’s standard rubric:

90 + %	A+
85 – 89 %	A
80 – 84 %	A–
77 – 79 %	B+
74 – 76 %	B
70 – 73 %	B–
67 – 69 %	C+
64 – 66 %	C
60 – 63 %	C–
55 – 59 %	D+
50 – 54 %	D
0 – 49 %	F

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations for intellectual depth, insightfulness, and collegiality.

Components of the Course (For more details on each of them, go to “Assignments” on D2L):

- **Discussion and Activities Assignment:** There will be two synchronous classes each week with three exceptions. These classes include discussions and other activities to help you develop different techniques to interpret and write about the literature we’ll be reading. After the add/drop period, you will receive one point for each time that you attend class (you must attend the whole class) **and** participate in the discussions and activities taking place that day. To facilitate these discussions and activities, you will be expected to read the texts assigned for that day before we meet. The maximum points available are 19. Here is the grade breakdown: 18-19 points=A+; 16-17 points=A; 14-15=B; 12-13=C; 10-11=D; 9=F; 8 or fewer=no credit.
- **Getting to Know Your Classmates:** Each student will be assigned a cohort group. So that you can get to know some of your classmates, you’ll post an introduction and respond to two other introductions from people in your group.
- **Three Social Annotation Exercises:** In order to practice the different aspects of literary analysis you are learning and prepare for the essay, you and the members of your cohort group will annotate passages together and respond to each other’s annotations. To do this, you’ll use a platform called Perusall, which can be accessed from D2L.
- **Reflection on a BHM Event or BLM Documentary (1-2 pp.):** As a way to understand the current moment of race relations and its connections to the past, you will choose to watch and reflect on either a virtual workshop held last year in honor of Black History Month or a documentary connected to the Black Lives Matter movement.
- **“Connecting the Dots” Final Essay and Peer Workshop (1400-1600 words):** This course aims to leave you with an ability to connect the dots between current and past depictions of racial injustice, which this essay asks you to do. This essay also asks you to engage again in literary analysis. Because successful academic writing requires reflection and feedback, you will write a draft of this essay and participate in a peer workshop, which requires you to write letters to two of your peers. Note that you are not able to take an extension on writing the draft and peer workshop letters. If you cannot participate in the workshop for whatever reason, you can still turn in the essay, but it will receive a full letter-grade deduction (e.g., go from a “B” to a “C”).
- **Quizzes:** There will be four short quizzes over the course of the semester. These will help you keep up with the readings, practice different reading strategies, and demonstrate your ability to write grammatical sentences. You will know what readings and subjects the quiz covers before you take it.

All assignments will be submitted online, via D2L. Assignments submitted via email will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made.

Missed Classes and Quizzes:

An occasional missed class will not seriously impact your participation grade (remember that you collect one point for every synchronous class you participate in). You are also allowed to make up one quiz that you miss, for whatever reason. However, you need to contact Dr. Halpern about making that quiz up, and you must make it up before the next class after it was given in order to allow the class to go over it in the following class.

Late Assignments:

Because these are difficult times and emergencies can easily arise, you are allowed to turn in any one assignment up to two days late with the exception of the Connecting the Dots essay draft and workshop letters (which need to be turned in on time to enable your peers to give you feedback and allow you to participate in the workshop). However, you do need to let Dr. Halpern know you are taking the extension at least twenty-four hours before it's due. Turning in more than one assignment late will result in a 1/3 grade deduction on that assignment for every day late. You cannot split up the extension and use it for more than one assignment.

Expectations Around Turning In Your Own Work and Taking the Quizzes Independently:

You are expected to be the sole author of the writing you do for this class—no part of it should be written by someone else or taken from the web. Academic writers often incorporate the words of other scholars to help them make their own points; when you do this, you need to make it clear when you are including the words or ideas of other writers, including any anonymous writers from the web. We'll discuss in class how to use parenthetical references and a works cited list to do this.

You are also expected to take the quizzes on your own, without the help of your classmates or anyone else. Do not share your answers with other classmates or help them take their own quiz. This kind of collaboration defeats the purpose of the quiz: to motivate you and your classmates to keep up with the reading and see what you need to work on more.

If you feel pressured or tempted to violate any of these expectations, please let Dr. Halpern know, and we can work together to figure out a way for you to succeed in the course without having to resort to these activities.

Conduct:

When participating in class, please keep in mind that we all bring a diversity of knowledge, lived experiences, and blind spots to the table. Engaging in lively discussion and debate is one of the most rewarding parts of the university experience; please remain collegial at all times when interacting with your fellow students and instructors, even if you find yourselves disagreeing. Racist, sexist, homo/queer/transphobic, or otherwise inflammatory remarks will not be tolerated in the classroom.

Students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate behavior in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. For more details, see

the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Internet and Email Use:

Students are responsible for being aware of and following the University's Internet and email use policy, which can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/electronic-communications-policy.pdf>

Guidelines for Online Sessions:

To help ensure sessions are private, please do not share the zoom links or passwords with others, or on any social media platforms. Course links and passwords are intended only for students registered in the class. Zoom recordings and materials presented on Zoom/D2L, including any teaching materials, should not be shared, distributed or published without the instructor's permission.

The use of video conferencing programs relies on participants to act ethically, honestly and with integrity, and in accordance with the principles of fairness, good faith, and respect (as per the [Code of Conduct](#)). You play an important role in helping create an effective, safe and respectful learning environment while we're zooming with each other. Participants are required to use names officially associated with their UCID (legal or preferred names listed in the Student Centre) when engaging in these activities.

Instructors/moderators can remove those whose names do not appear on class rosters. Non-compliance may be investigated under relevant University of Calgary conduct policies (e.g., [Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#)). If participants have difficulties complying with this requirement, they should email the instructor of the class explaining why, so the instructor may consider whether to grant an exception, and on what terms. For more information on how to get the most out of your Zoom sessions visit: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/guidelines-for-zoom/>

Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that will allow you to be fully present and engaged in Zoom sessions. In this class, students will be asked to keep their cameras on and unmute themselves as much as possible.

Our classes will be recorded in order to enable students who had to miss a session because of an emergency to watch them. These recordings will be used to support student learning only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

Technology Requirements:

In order to successfully engage in learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Webcam (built-in or external);
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection.
- Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone.

Academic Integrity:

This course, like all courses at the University of Calgary, holds students to high standards of honest and responsible scholarship. Please consult the [Academic Integrity website](#) for a detailed description of university policies, which will be enforced in this course. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Associate Dean of Arts for a ruling.

Plagiarism is a type of academic misconduct. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of another person as their own. Another equally serious form of plagiarism occurs when a student submits something they have written themselves for credit in two or more courses without first securing written permission from all those course instructors. Consequences for plagiarism include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Using any source whatsoever, *including material from a blog site or other unofficial sources from the web*, without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.

Deferral of term work and final examinations:

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an [Application of Deferment of Term Work](#) must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process with the instructor. The University also has regulations governing the [deferral of final examinations](#).

Grade appeals:

To pursue a Reassessment of Graded Term Work or a Reappraisal of an Academic Assessment, Consult the [University Calendar](#) and request advice from the English Department at engl@ucalgary.ca. Please note that mere dissatisfaction with a grade is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English.

Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:

The [Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club](#) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. Our email address is smecuofc@gmail.com.

Writing support:

[The Student Success Centre](#) offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

[Academic regulations and schedules](#)

Student Academic Accommodations:

The Student Accessibility Services website is available [here](#). University accommodation policies can be found at the following links:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html>

Program Advising and Student Information Resources is done through the Faculty of Arts Students' Centre. Office location: SS102; phone: 403-220-3580; email: ascarts@ucalgary.ca
Website: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>

Instructor's Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors, including presentations, posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams, remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may not be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

Sexual violence policy:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

Other important information:

- [Wellness and Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Student Success](#)
- [Student Ombuds Office](#)
- [Student Union \(SU\) Information](#)
- [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\) Information](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points](#)
- [Safewalk](#)

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

Please participate in [USRI Surveys](#) toward the end of the course. The feedback they provide helps us evaluate teaching, enhance student learning, and guide students as they select courses.