



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

COURSE TITLE: Topics in American Literature. Selected Mid 20 th Century African American Novels.			
Course Number	382.01	FALL 2019	
Faculty / Department	Faculty of Arts/Department of English		
Instructor Name	Christian Olbey	Email	cwolbey@ucalgary.ca
Instructor Email Policy	Student emails are addressed during weekly office hours		
Office Location	SS 1022	Telephone No:	403-220-8176
Office Hours	Thursday 11-12		
Class Dates/Times/Location	Tuesday and Thursday/ 9:30-10:45/ SS 109		

Course description:

“You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive.”

– James Baldwin

You probably know that slavery and racism are significant aspects of American history. You also probably know it was a big deal that Barack Obama was elected President of the United States in 2008, that many athletes have chosen to kneel during the American national anthem, that the Black Lives Matter movement developed as a response to higher rates of police violence against African Americans, that incarceration rates are still much higher than those for Euro-descended Americans and that African Americans are still underrepresented in powerful and influential positions in American society. But have you ever wondered how America got to this point or what it is like to live inside the African American experience? In this course we will explore several critically acclaimed novels in the African-American literary tradition between the 1930s and the 1960s or between the literary movements known as the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement. Our discussions will provide the opportunity for a critical engagement with earlier moments of African American experience and will include though not necessarily be limited to the following topics: the American Dream, history, love, hate, sex and sexuality, community, identity, race, miscegenation, gender (masculinity and femininity) construction and class dynamics, and the role of literature in the larger project of African American freedom and empowerment. While we will certainly relate these works to their own specific historical moments and contexts, we will also explore questions of how these novels contribute to our understanding of contemporary dynamics and aspects of African American experience.

Texts and readings:

James Baldwin *Another Country*
 Ralph Ellison *Invisible Man*
 Zora Neale Hurston *All That Matters*

Assignments and Evaluation:**5% *Attendance:**

- Will be taken for all available classes beginning with the first class after the add/drop date up to and including Tuesday Dec. 3
- Each available class is equally weighted and the total will be officially calculated after the final class. Example: 5% grade weight divided by 20 available classes would mean .25% of your final grade is awarded for each class attended
- Each student receives one free absence which will not count against your grade in this category. This is to cover the possibility of unforeseen circumstances that cause a student to miss a class (illness, missed buses/trains, other appointments, alarm malfunctions etc.).
- Example: If there are 21 available lectures to attend, I will calculate your total out of 20. If a student attends 15 out of 21 available classes, their grade calculation would be $15/20 = 75\%$ ($15 \times .25 = 3.75 / 5 = .75$ or 75%).
- Attendance will be taken in the last portion of classes and will indicate being present for the full class only.
- It will be the student's responsibility to record their initials during or immediately after each class unless otherwise specified.

15% Reading Quizzes

- 5 short (10 minutes max.) reading quizzes.
- Quizzes consist of 6 multiple choice questions on the events of the story or section of the assigned reading according to the course schedule.
- Quizzes can occur at any time during the class.
- Dates on or after which quizzes are given are on your course schedule
- Each quiz is scored out of 5 with question 6 as a bonus. The final calculation is cumulative and out of 20 marks. Example: student quiz scores that read 4, 5, 6, 0 = $15/20 = 75\%$ for this grade category.
- Bonus marks here add up to one free quiz and are used to cover the possibility of unforeseen circumstances that might cause a student to be absent (illness, missed buses/trains, other appointments, alarm malfunctions etc.) for a class in which a quiz appears and to allow students dealing with heavy workloads to not be excessively hindered by missing one reading assignment.

20% Exam #1

- Multiple choice questions on plot, concepts, material from class lectures, critical reading of passages from texts discussed in class
- Close reading and textual analysis

25% Exam #2

- Multiple choice questions on plot, concepts, material from class lectures, critical reading of passages from texts discussed in class
- Close reading and textual analysis

10% Exam #3

- Multiple choice questions on plot, concepts, material from class lectures, critical reading of passages from texts discussed in class
- Close reading and textual analysis

25% Class Project

- Your choice from the following options: critical essay, individual or partnered creative project, an original short story, or a group project for class presentation

Options:

- **Critical Essay option: minimum minimum 5- maximum 6 typed, double-spaced pages (12 pt. Times New Roman or Arial font; Approximately 1250-1500 words)**
- **Short Story and Critical Explication option: minimum 4 , maximum 5 (short story) + 2 or 3 (critical analysis) typed, double-spaced pages (Minimum 12 pt. Times New Roman or Arial font; Approximately 1500 words)**
- **Creative Project: Your choice of creative presentation with a minimum 3 page explication and analysis of the critical relationship between your project and a course text**
- **Group Presentation and Critical Explication: Max. 30 minute group presentation of critical engagement with one of the final two novels on the course list + minimum 3 typed, double-spaced pages that present your own critical response to your group's presentation.**

Assignment Information

- There is no Registrar scheduled final exam in this course.
- Students **are not required** to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in the course.
- There are no 'extra credit' assignments in this course.
- Unless specifically directed to do so, there is no electronic submission of assignments. If you are handing in an assignment after the posted due date, please hand it in to the English department main office so that it can be date stamped and placed in my mailbox.
- All assignments must be handed in at the beginning of the class in which they are due. After this they are considered late.

Assignment Submission

Please make every effort to take assignments directly to the instructor. If it is not possible to do so, take your assignment to SS 1152 and put it in the dropbox. Your assignment will be date-stamped and placed in the instructor's mailbox. Any other submissions are dated when I receive them (of you slide it under my office door on Friday but I do not get it until the following Tuesday, the latter becomes the submission date. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of all assignments in case of loss by any cause. Assignments cannot be returned by staff in the Department office.

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (an A- to B+) for each business day [not class] that the assignment is overdue. Please make every effort to take assignments directly to the instructor. If it is not possible to do so, take your assignment to SS 1152 and put it in the drop box. Your assignment will be date-stamped and placed in the instructor's mailbox. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of all assignments in case of loss by any cause. Assignments cannot be returned by staff in the Department office.

Attendance

There is an explicit grade for attendance in this course. The rationale for this incentive grading component is to reinforce the understanding that each class, in a variety of ways, will develop skills and deliver information needed to score effectively on assignments and that in most cases there is a direct correlation between attendance and the student's ability to produce a successful educational and grading experience in this course.

Participation

There is no explicit grade for participation in this course. However, students should be aware that student participation in various ways (questions, comments, discussions, debates, arguments, presentations etc.) will be a key feature and an important tool to facilitate student success in this course. Students are encouraged, but not required, to speak in class and effective participation can be just as much the act of attentive, engaged listening and thoughtful consideration as insightful speaking. Since our readings will lead us into a wide range of critical investigations of social, cultural, historical, aesthetic and political issues, and since the class is a relatively large, diverse group of human beings with different ideas, opinions, arguments and positions on the issues and ideas the stories present, this course will proceed with a fundamental tone of respect, tolerance, and thoughtful consideration of the ideas of others (the instructor for students, students for the instructor, and students for each other). This guiding tone of respect does not mean that ideas, opinions, and arguments, expressed by students or instructor, cannot be challenged and debated from other positions and through different arguments. Indeed this can and should be an interesting and engaging aspect of our course. It means that when we disagree we try to persuade others through offering a more convincing argument. When students engage this sort of participation they further develop skills required to produce success on assignments and exams. This is one key reason for why, in most cases, there is a direct implicit correlation between participation and the student's ability to produce a successful experience in this course. In addition, participation is one component used at the end of the course "when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades."

Policy on Electronic Devices

Over the last few years an increasing number of students report that they find device use for non-class purposes by their peers to be distracting and as an instructor, I find, through much experience, that the distraction is amplified and can negatively affect the class as a whole. While I understand that laptops have become a necessity for many students and accept their use for notetaking or other course tasks, I request that their use be limited to course concerns while we are in class. I further request, as a courtesy to other students and your instructor, that phones be left on silent in your bags or pockets during class lectures and discussions except in cases where course texts are accessed through your phone. I too will adhere to the same policy and will extend the same courtesy and consideration to you by not having my phone out and active for other concerns while we are working in class together.

E-mail: I encourage students to use office hours for questions and course concerns. I check student emails as part of my office hour commitments during the week. This means that I read student email during office hours if no students are present or shortly after office hours during the week. Students should not expect that I have seen emails at any other time. My expectations are that students can email me to notify me of important or emergency situations (family emergencies, accidents, illnesses etc.). Questions and comments about course lectures and discussions are also acceptable, although in most cases I will respond to the question or comment at the beginning of the next class. Students should not assume that email is a substitute for missing class. If you miss class it is your responsibility to get the material from one of your peers and then to bring any further questions or discussions into office hours. Further all questions about writing or format or assignments, or the solicitation of my opinions or suggestions regarding your writing should be stated in class for the sake of efficiency and time management or in office hours.

Explicit Content Advisory:

The stories and discussions in this class, like most literature, will include material that deals explicitly with issues of sex, sexuality, race and violence or abusive situations that some may find offensive or disturbing. While at all times I will strive to be sensitive to these issues and respectful of different perspectives, students will certainly encounter such material in their own individual reading and possibly in class discussions as well.

Grading system:

In this course, your final grade will be marked on the University of Calgary's four-point Undergraduate Grading System, as described in the Calendar: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-2.html>

A+/A (4.0); A- (3.7); B+ (3.3); B (3.0); B- (2.7); C+ (2.3); C (2.0); C- (1.7); D+ (1.3); D (1.0); F (0)

All quizzes and exams will receive a numerical grade to be converted using the following scale:

90 + %	A+	4.0
85 – 89 %	A	4.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7
67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
64 – 66 %	C	2.0
60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
50 – 54 %	D	1.0
0 – 49 %	F	0

Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1), instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the 4-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>

Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:

The Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club (SMRWC) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. We strive to enhance the academic and social experience of undergraduate students by promoting academic excellence and interaction between students, faculty, and the community, through social, cultural, and academic events

<http://english.ucalgary.ca/scribe-and-muse-english-club>.

Our email address is smecuofc@gmail.com.

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/english>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

Writing support:

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Library and Research Support:

Melanie Boyd, Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact: maboym@ucalgary.ca.

Find The English Pages research guide here:

https://library.ucalgary.ca/sb.php?subject_id=52619

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:**Academic regulations and schedules:**

Consult the Calendar for course information, university and faculty regulations, dates, deadlines and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the University Calendar is <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/index.htm>

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that “mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision.”

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

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 form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Student Accommodations:**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available

at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf> .

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip>

“Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Arts Students' Centre (ASC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at ascarts@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3rd Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

Contact for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:

arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca

Contact for Students Ombudsman's Office: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/ombuds/role>

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

"At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses (www.ucalgary.ca/usri). Your responses make a difference – please participate in USRI Surveys."

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:
 - a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
 - b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
 - c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
 - d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see

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

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University Calendar; <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2.html>

“The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, . . . , to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community”. The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a “positive and productive learning and working environment.” This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that “seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff”. Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.