2014

344-01 Major Black Writers

Tyrone Williams
williamst@xavier.edu

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Focus: This upper-level English literature elective course concentrates on the experiences of African and African Diaspora women writers from the early 20th to the late 20th century. In particular, insofar as all these novels take place “after” slavery or in “non-slavery” locations (from Cincinnati Ohio in the early 20th century to London, England near the end of the 20th century), we will trace the persistence of the after-effects of slavery and its attendant undercarriages (racism and sexism) in these stories. In doing so we will travel from the American South and Haiti to Cincinnati, Ohio and New York City, from Nigeria and Zimbabwe to Los Angeles and London.

Required
Texts: Beloved, Toni Morrison; Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neale Hurston; Kindred, Octavia Butler; The Stone Virgins, Yvonne Vera; Kehinde, Buchi Emecheta; The Icarus Girl, Helen Oyeyemi; The Dew-Breaker, Edwidge Danticatt

Recommended
Text: Towards An Understanding of Africology, Victor Oguejiofor Okafor

Requirements: Two Oral Reports: On the days that I am not in class—February 21, February 26, March 21 and March 28—students will give short oral reports (5-7 minutes) on a particular topic or issue pertinent to the novels we have read and are reading. These reports may function as brief summaries of your papers. These presentations will be recorded by ISS. Half of the class will give their presentations on one of the two dates in each month. The rest of the class will give their presentations on the second date. Those who present first (February 21) will give their second presentation on the last date (March 28). Those who go second in February (February 26) will go first in March (March 21).

Two Papers: The first paper, which will be due Friday February 28, must cover two of the first three novels (Beloved, Their Eyes Were Watching God, The Stone Virgins). The second, due May 2 (we will not have class that day so you may email or drop off the paper), must cover two of the last four novels (Kehinde, Kindred, The Icarus Girl, The Dew-Breaker).

Midterm examination on Friday February 28.
Final Examination on May 9 (8:00 a.m.-9:50 a.m.)

Impromptu (“pop”) quizzes on reading assigned for specific class days.

Regular and consistent participation in class discussions.

**Grading:**
- Oral Reports: 20 points (10 points each)
- Papers: 20 points (10 points each)
- Midterm examination: 20 points
- Final examination: 20 points
- Impromptu quizzes: 10 points
- Class participation: 10 points

**Schedule:**
1. Beloved
2. Beloved
3. Beloved
4. Their Eyes Were Watching God
5. Their Eyes Were Watching God
6. The Stone Virgins; Oral Report
7. The Stone Virgins; Oral Report; Midterm exam; Paper #1 Due
8. The Stone Virgins
9. Kehinde
10. Kindred; Oral Report
11. Kindred; Oral Report
12. The Icarus Girl
13. The Icarus Girl
14. The Dew-Breaker
15. The Dew-Breaker
16. Final Examination May 9, 2014, 8 a.m.-9:50 a.m.

**Miscellaneous:**
The use of laptops*, cell phones, I-phones or any texting devices during class is **strictly** forbidden. Any student caught using such devices will be marked absent for the day and will not be allowed to participate in class in any form whatsoever. Students who attend class **without the book** being discussed that day will also be considered absent and will likewise be forbidden to participate in class discussions or take quizzes. Students who walk into class more than **five minutes** after class begins will also be considered absent for the day and will not be permitted to participate in class discussions and/or take quizzes. Late papers will be penalized a half a grade per **day** (not class) late. **Plagiarism,** intentional or not, will result in automatic failure of the course.