205-11/14 Literature and the Moral Imagination

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Focus: These sections of Literature & the Moral Imagination examine several memoirs and autobiographies in the context of geopolitical developments in and outside the United States. Briefly, each memoir will serve as a portal through which we may glimpse Southern life before and after the civil rights movement, the free speech movement, the Vietnam War from the “other side,” a military coup in Chile, the rise and fall of a postcolonial dictatorship in Ethiopia, family life during the Cultural Revolution in China, and the life of a black daughter and her mother under American violence, unsanctioned and sanctioned.


Assignments: Oral report (3-5 minutes) on one or two of the first two books
A short paper (5-7 pages) on two of the first three books
Midterm examination on the first three books
Impromptu quizzes on the readings assigned for a class
Class participation

Oral report on any of the remaining three books
A short paper on two of the final three books
Final examination on the last three books
Impromptu quizzes on the readings assigned for a class
Class participation

Grading: Paper 1: 20 points
         Paper 2: 20 points
         Midterm Exam: 20 points
         Final Exam: 20 points
         Participation: 10 points
         Oral Report: 10 points
         *Oral Report: 5 points (extra credit)

Schedule: Weeks (T=Tuesday; R=Thursday)

1. Mississippi (Part 1—T; Part 2)—R)
2. Mississippi (Part 3—T; Parts 4 and 5—R)
3. Bust Dying; 1-72; 73-129
4. Busy Dying; 130-174; 175-261
6. Busy Dying; 262-292; A Viet Cong Memoir (xi-80)
7. A Viet Cong Memoir (81-198; Fall Break October 9, 10, 2014
8. A Viet Cong Memoir (198-257 T; 258-310 R); Paper 1 Due; Midterm exam (take-home);
9. Saborami; Oral Reports: Midterm Exam Due
10. Notes from the Hyena’s Belly (Book One, 1-86 T; 87-189 R)
11. Notes from the Hyena’s Belly (Book Three, 190-351); *Oral Reports:
November 6, 2014

12. The Little Red Guard; Chapters 1-5 (1-64 T); 6-11 (65-124 R)
13. The Little Red Guard; Chapters 12-16 (125-207 T) 17-20 (208-263 R)
15. Don’t Let Me Be Lonely (74-123 T; 124-155 R); Paper 2 Due
16. Final examination in class

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.