

University of Bergen, Department of Foreign Languages
ENG 333, Fall 2018: "African American Literature and the American South"
Professor Matthew Teutsch

Course Description:

The American South looms large in the minds of Americans throughout the United States. It has served, and continues to serve, in some ways, as the repository for the nation's sins, namely the "peculiar institution" of slavery, and as the space where culture and imagination cease to flourish. "African American Literature and The American South" will explore the ways that African American authors, both those from the South, and those who write about the South, imagine and approach the region in their writing. The Southern context will allow us to cover a broad swath of African American literature from nineteenth century authors such as Paul Laurence Dunbar and Charles Chesnutt to contemporary authors such as T. Geronimo Smith and Octavia Butler while highlighting the transnational threads that appear in these works and stretch not just to Europe but to the Caribbean and Africa as well. While the above authors hail from the South, the course will also look at the ways that writers such as James Baldwin, and William Melvin Kelley construct and think about the South as a space. In this manner, you will get a broad image of the ways that African American authors approach the South in their writing to comment on the nation, thus creating a perception of America through a specific region.

Exam format: School exam.

Primary Texts

Paul Laurence Dunbar "The Tragedy at Three Forks" (1899)
Charles Chesnutt *Paul Marchand, F.M.C.* (1920s)
Claude McKay *Banana Bottom* (1933)
Zora Neale Hurston *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)
Frank Yerby *The Foxes of Harrow* (1946)
James Baldwin *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964)
William Melvin Kelley *A Different Drummer* (1962)
T. Geronimo Johnson *Welcome to Braggsville* (2015)
Octavia Butler *Kindred* Graphic novel adaptation by Damion Duffy and John Jennings (2017)

Critical Texts

Anderson, Eric Gary. "The Real Live, Invisible Languages of *A Different Drummer*: A Response to Trudier Harris." *South Central Review*, vol. 22 no. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 48-53.
Battle, ShaDawn. "Singing 'Blues' for Black Bodies: Epistemic Violence and Black Male Killings Examined in James Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie* and the Michael Brown Murder Case."
Byerman, Keith. "Performing Race: Mixed-Race Characters in the Novels of Charles Chesnutt." *Passing in the works of Charles W. Chesnutt*. Edited by Susan Prothro Wright and Ernestine Pickens Glass. University of Mississippi Press, 2010. pp. 84-92.
Harris, Trudier. "William Melvin Kelley's Real Live, Invisible South." *South Central Review*, vol. 22 no. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 26-47.

- Jarrett, Gene Andrew. "The Race Problem was *Not* a Theme for Me." *Deans and Truants: Race and Realism in African American Literature*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, 143-166.
- Lowe, John Wharton. "A Proper Order of Attention, McKay and Hurston Honor the Hardy Peasant." *Calypso Magnolia: The Crosscurrents of Caribbean and Southern Literature*. University of North Carolina Press, 2016. pp. 198-248.
- Miletic, Philip. "Octavia E. Butler's Response to Black Arts/Black Power Literature and Rhetoric in *Kindred*." *African American Review*, vol. 49, no. 3, Fall 2016, pp. 261-275.

From *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 3rd edition, edited by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan

- Foucault, Michel. "Right of Death and Power Over Life"
- Hinrichsen, Lisa. "Trauma Studies and the Literature of the US South"

From Robert Dale Parker's *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies*

- Chapter 10: "Postcolonial and Race Studies" Chapter 11: "Reader Response"

Week	Readings
38	Paul Laurence Dunbar " The Tragedy at Three Forks " James Baldwin <i>Blues for Mister Charlie</i> ShaDawn Battle. "Singing 'Blues' for Black Bodies: Epistemic Violence and Black Male Killings Examined in James Baldwin's <i>Blues for Mister Charlie</i> and the Michael Brown Murder Case." Lisa Hinrichsen. "Trauma Studies and the Literature of the US South"
39	Charles Chesnutt <i>Paul Marchand, F.M.C.</i> Keith Byerman "Performing Race: Mixed-Race Characters in the Novels of Charles Chesnutt." <i>Passing in the works of Charles W. Chesnutt</i> . Edited by Susan Prothro Wright and Ernestine Pickens Glass. University of Mississippi Press, 2010. pp. 84-92.
40	Claude McKay <i>Banana Bottom</i> Robert Dale Parker Chapter 10: "Postcolonial and Race" Michel Foucault "Right of Death and Power Over Life"
42	Zora Neale Hurston <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> John Wharton Lowe. "A Proper Order of Attention, McKay and Hurston Honor the Hardy Peasant." <i>Calypso Magnolia: The Crosscurrents of Caribbean and Southern Literature</i> . University of North Carolina Press, 2016. pp. 198-248.
43	Frank Yerby <i>The Foxes of Harrow</i> Gene Andrew Jarrett "The Race Problem was <i>Not</i> a Theme for Me." <i>Deans and Truants: Race and Realism in African American Literature</i> . Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, 143-166. Robert Dale Parker Chapter 11: "Reader Response"
44	William Melvin Kelley <i>A Different Drummer</i> Trudier Harris. "William Melvin Kelley's Real Live, Invisible South." <i>South Central Review</i> , vol. 22 no. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 26-47. Eric Gary Anderson. "The Real Live, Invisible Languages of <i>A Different Drummer</i> : A Response to Trudier Harris." <i>South Central Review</i> , vol. 22 no. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 48-53.
45	T. Geronimo Johnson <i>Welcome to Braggsville</i>

46	<p>Octavia Butler <i>Kindred</i> Graphic novel adaptation by Damian Duffy and John Jennings</p> <p>Philip Miletic. "Octavia E. Butler's Response to Black Arts/Black Power Literature and Rhetoric in <i>Kindred</i>." <i>African American Review</i>, vol. 49, no. 3, Fall 2016, pp. 261-275.</p>
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