

Texas A&M University-Central Texas
ENGL 4319-110
Literary Genres: African-American Literature
Spring 2018 Course
Online via Canvas | 16 Weeks | Writing Intensive

Instructor: Ryan Bayless
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(please use our course Canvas email whenever possible)
Office Hours: Regularly available by email through Canvas or by appointment.

Mode of Instruction and Course Access:

This Writing Intensive designated course meets 100% online with materials made available through the A&M-Central Texas Canvas Learning Management System. To access online components: <https://tamuct.instructure.com>

The Operation of the Online Course and Being an Online Student

Online learning requires students to be very self-disciplined, so be sure you understand and are prepared to comply with all required class assignments and deadlines. Please check the Announcements, Calendar, and Email/Messages on Canvas regularly for assignment details and due dates.

1.0 Course Prerequisite

Freshman Composition I and II; six hours of Sophomore Literature (or approval of department chair).

2.0 Course Description

ENGL 4319 (Literary Genres: African-American Literature) offers a critical survey of major writers and movements in African-American literature with emphasis on such representative authors as Phillis Wheatley, Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, Amiri Baraka, Alice Walker, August Wilson, and Toni Morrison.

In addition to exploring poetry, drama, and fiction, this section emphasizes the origins of African-American literature in the Blues and highlights the evolution of music, art, and popular culture in conjunction with the lives and times of representative authors. Emphasis

will be placed on close reading skills and the ability to form and deliver academic literary arguments in both class discussions and writing assignments.

This class will at times deal with controversial issues and subject matter. Students should be able to tolerate innovation, viewpoints different from their own, as well as creative and cultural diversity in the arts.

3.0 Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Identify major works and authors in African-American fiction, drama, poetry, and song
- Trace the development of themes, ideas, and attitudes expressed in these works over time
- Describe the relevance of African-American literature (and its interpretation) to both individual readers and American society as a whole
- Account for the multiple meanings and interpretations of texts through close reading and critical thinking
- Create and sustain text-based literary arguments in class discussions, written assignments, and formal essays
- Prepare and produce a documented academic literary essay on a defined topic using primary and secondary sources

4.0 Required Text

The Norton Anthology of African American Literature, Henry Louis Gates, editor. W.W. Norton & Co., 3rd edition (vols. 1&2), 2014.

This course also makes use of a number of other texts, film clips, and selected songs and poems. Links to these sources will be made available through Canvas and/or through handouts distributed in class.

5.0 Course Requirements

This course has two non-gradable and five gradable categories of assignments. A discussion of each follows:

Non-Gradable Requirements:

Regular Reading and Viewing/Listening Assignments:

The reading in this course serves as a catalyst for everything we do. I have worked to keep the required reading to a minimum with the hope that students will have time to read and comprehend all that is assigned within each unit. Those who attempt to complete writing

assignments without first absorbing and actively engaging with the readings and various links to songs and related materials might be able to approximate the course requirements, but they will not be able to accomplish them.

Unit Worksheets:

Unit Worksheets will serve to introduce unit themes and texts, as well as direct the dialogue on the discussion board and the focus of your three formal essays. These worksheet offers a written version of what we would do in-class were this a face-to-face section. It clarifies or redirects the readings, provides links and clips to illustrate points, introduces prompts for response papers, and provide a prompt for the formal essay due at the end of each unit.

Gradable Requirements:

Response Papers (15% of final grade):

Response Papers offer students the opportunity to demonstrate a command of the concepts introduced in the readings and worksheets, as well as provide analysis and critique of the songs, links, and texts that accompany them.

The exact task for each assignment varies. In most cases, these assignments ask students to produce a 400-600 word discussion that responds to a specific topic, theme, and/or text. Specific prompts, directions, and due dates are provided in each week's worksheet.

These "papers" will not be submitted directly to the professor, but instead will be posted on the Discussion Board on Canvas, which will allow other students to read and analyze/respond to your ideas. In this sense, each student will continuously provide new content and discussion topics for the course. (These papers will be graded on a ten point scale each week and averaged at the end of the semester.)

Discussion Board Responses (10% of final grade):

The Discussion Board is the place where course content is negotiated, personalized, and connected to broader issues than those outlined in the readings. Students should expect to use this space regularly to initiate, support, and advance critical discussion of the assigned material.

Discussion Board Responses will be graded holistically on the basis of engagement with the ideas, texts, and songs explored in the Response Paper being commented on. Comments need not always be refined, but they do need to initiate meaningful discussion or contribute meaningfully to some discussion already underway. (Posts that simply say, "I (dis)agree," or that praise or critique the writer will not be deemed "meaningful.") Responses can be thought of as a way of "thinking out loud," similar to what would happen in a

classroom discussion. That said, please edit them for errors and avoid overly informal writing (like abbreviations or “text/twitter speak”).

Students are expected to reply to at least 2 posted Response Papers per unit. Consider this the “participation” element of your overall grade. The quality, not the quantity, of comments is what I’m looking for, but feel free to comment and discuss as much as you like.

Essay 1: Close Reading/Explication Paper (20% of final grade):

The Close Reading/Explication Paper (1000 words) will ask students to make a very focused thematic argument about a specific text by employing academic paragraph structure and using textual evidence to support its claims and analysis.

Essay 2: Literary Argument Paper (25% of final grade):

The Literary Argument Paper (1500 words) will ask students to put forth and sustain a thesis-based claim and comparison of two literary texts by employing academic paragraph structure and using textual evidence to support its claims and analysis.

Essay 3: Documented Literary Thesis Paper (30% of final grade):

The Documented Literary Thesis Paper (2000 words) will ask students to develop and elaborate on a thesis-based interpretation of the evolution of thematic and/or formal elements of multiple literary texts over time. This formal paper will employ academic essay and paragraph structure, use textual evidence to support its claims and analysis, and incorporate secondary sources.

6.1 Grading Computation

Final Grades will be calculated using the following percentages:

- Response Papers = 15% (3 total worth 5% each)
- Discussion Board Responses = 10% (graded holistically at the end of the course)
- Essay 1: Close Reading/Explication Paper = 20%
- Essay 2: Literary Argument Paper = 25%
- Essay 3: Documented Literary Thesis Paper = 30%

The distribution of final grades is as follows:

- Semester grade: A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; and, F=0-59
- (Borderline grades will not be automatically rounded up.)

6.2 Grading Standards and Expectations

Along with the students' adherence to the assigned prompt and engagement with course concepts and themes, the essays assigned in this course will be assessed and graded by the following standards:

C C indicates a satisfactory performance. A C paper demonstrates positive qualities and avoids serious errors. The positive qualities include the presentation of a central idea that is adequately developed and competently organized. The errors to be avoided include serious flaws in the construction of paragraphs and sentences, in the selection of appropriate words, and in the use of conventional written English. The style of the writing is generally clear.

B The B paper surpasses the C paper by demonstrating a higher level of effectiveness in the organization and development of a central idea. The B paper shows greater complexity of thought and development, while sustaining clarity in expression. It has few or none of the common errors in the use of conventional written English. The style of the writing is generally fluent and polished.

A The A paper is outstanding work. It is clearly a superior performance according to the criteria of clarity of expression and logical development of a central idea. It shows originality of thought and imaginative competence in the development of the material. It engages and holds the reader's attention and invites rereading. The style of the writing is consistently fluent, polished, and distinctive.

D D indicates an unsatisfactory performance. A D paper is flawed by any one or several of the following: weakness in establishing or developing a central idea; serious errors in sentence or paragraph construction; serious errors in grammar, spelling, or the mechanics of written expression.

F F indicates an unacceptable performance. An F paper is flawed by one or more of the following: failure to follow the assigned topic; failure to conceive, state, or develop a central idea; serious repeated errors in sentence construction or paragraph development; serious repeated errors in grammar, spelling, or the mechanics of written expression.

In addition to these general guidelines, I will assess your writing on the following criteria:

I will be looking for solid thesis statements that clearly articulate and put forth the central argument of your essay. In order for a thesis statement to be strong, its stated intention must be sustained throughout a paper. I will constantly ask: How does each statement/paragraph/example in your paper relate to the central idea of your thesis?

Beyond cohesion of this central thesis throughout your paper, I will be paying close attention to how well you transition between different paragraphs/claims/examples. This is essentially the structure and flow of your paper. Ideally, the reader should not wonder how any one of your statements relates to another. Consider the appropriate use of topic

sentences, supporting points, illustrations and examples as evidence, and sufficient explanation and analysis of the evidence and scholarship provided as it relates to your thesis.

And remember... Write to your academic audience. Stay objective in tone and use appropriate, professional language. Do not assume that the reader already knows what we go over in class. Be clear and specific with your wording. Proofread carefully for clarity and use the proper MLA formatting for citing quotations and secondary sources. (For help with MLA formatting, refer to the related writing links on our Canvas site.)

6.3 Late-work/Make-up/Extra Credit Policy

Neither late work nor make up work will exist in this class. Assignments that fail to be submitted by the deadline posted on the calendar in Canvas for that assignment will not be accepted (unless you get specific approval from me for unexpected and uncontrollable extenuating circumstances that occur before the due date). Likewise, I do not assign extra credit; therefore, students should focus on providing their best work on assignments throughout the semester.

6.4 Incomplete Policy

Students are responsible for turning in all assignments during the scheduled timeframe for the course. Incompletes should be reserved for unexpected, life altering situations that develop after the drop deadline. Students should drop a course should something happen that prevents them from completing the course ahead of the drop deadline. Failure to do so may result in failing grades on assignments or the course if missing work is not completed and submitted before the last day of the semester. Please let me know immediately if serious health or life issues prevent you from attending class or submitting assignments. (*Also see the university "Drop Policy" below.*)

6.5 Classroom Conduct and Discussion

When participating in discussion, keep in mind that the university classroom is one of the most diverse spaces within our society. Thus, you need to understand that there will be other members of the class with whom you disagree or who will disagree with you. This is fine; in fact, it is welcome. It is only through considering the beliefs and ideas of those with whom we disagree that we can truly decide on what we believe. So feel free to disagree with, refute, and/or challenge the ideas of others. However, when doing so, remain calm, polite, and respectful at all times toward your classmates, instructor, and their ideas. Anyone who engages in discrimination and/or vulgarity, or who is personally disrespectful in any way towards the professor or other students will receive a zero on the assignment in question and may be reported to Student Affairs.

6.6 Artifact Collection for English Program Assessment

To ensure the learning outcomes are met in the English Department, there is a program-wide artifact collection process. To that end, some of the projects you complete for this

course this semester may be used for programmatic assessment. Please note that all efforts will be made to keep your identity anonymous; as such, all identifying markers will be removed from your work if used for programmatic assessment. Instructions for how to upload your assignments will be provided in class.

7.1 Technology Requirements

This course will use the A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system.

Logon to A&M-Central Texas Canvas: <https://tamuct.instructure.com>

Username: Your MyCT username (xx123 or everything before the "@" in your MyCT e-mail address)

Password: Your MyCT password

7.2 Technology Support

For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

Web Chat: <http://hdc.tamu.edu>

Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.

For issues with Canvas, select "chat with Canvas support," submit a support request to Canvas Tier 1, or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953, links to all are found inside of Canvas using the "Help" link.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

8.0 Course Calendar

This calendar outlines the general themes covered in the course. Because we will build upon the topics and themes explored in each unit, the material and assignments will be posted to Canvas as each new unit is introduced. This will allow students to concentrate solely on the material as it is presented in each unit. There is no reason (or ability) to skip ahead.

Readings, assignments, essay prompts and due dates will appear on each Unit Worksheet and essay prompts as they are assigned, but can also be found on the course "Calendar" link in Canvas.

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Week 1: Introduction to course; discussion of syllabus; individual introductions

**Introduction assigned and due*

Unit I (Weeks 2-5): Slavery, Freedom, and Reconstruction

- * *Response Paper 1 assigned and due*
- * *Discussion Board Responses assigned and due*
- * *Essay 1 assigned and due*

Unit II (Weeks 6-10): The Harlem Renaissance and Modern Period

- * *Response Paper 2 assigned and due*
- * *Discussion Board Responses assigned and due*
- * *Essay 2 assigned and due*

Unit III (Weeks 11-16) : The Black Arts Era and Contemporary African American Writers

- * *Response Paper 3 assigned and due*
- * *Discussion Board Responses assigned and due*
- * *Essay 3 assigned and due*

****This 8-Week Online Course begins January 16 and ends May 11, 2018.****

9.0 Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a Drop Request Form: https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf

Professors **cannot** drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The record's office will provide a deadline for which the form must be returned, completed and signed. Once you return the signed form to the records office and wait 24 hours, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. Should you still be enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the records office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course.

10.0 Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. **Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course.**

Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action. More information can be found at <http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/studentconduct/academicintegrity.php>

Depending on the severity of a student's act of academic dishonesty, a student found to have committed any of the above will receive nothing less than a zero on the assignment on which the infraction occurred and nothing more than expulsion from the university. A minor infraction includes but is not limited to improper citations or allusions to an outside source (one not directly assigned or approved by me before submission). A major infraction includes but is not limited to the undocumented lifting of ideas, phrases, or any text from a source that finds its inspiration some place other than the student.

11.0 Access & Inclusion/Disability Support

At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html) webpage:
<https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html>

Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit <https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php>. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines online](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf), please visit the website:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>

12.0 Tutoring

Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.

If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Larry Davis at lldavis@tamuct.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

13.0 University Writing Center

Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-5pm Monday-Thursday with satellite hours in the University Library on Mondays from 6:00-9:00pm. Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via [WCOonline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) <https://tamuct.mywconline.com/> In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu to schedule an online tutoring session. Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process.

While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help!

If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu.

14.0 Library Services

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-

person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the TAMUCT main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our homepage:

<http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/library/index.php>

15.0 911 Cellular

Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas

911Cellular is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in 911 Cellular through their myCT email account.

Connect at 911Cellular [<https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management>] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in 911Cellular, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

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**The professor reserves the right to amend this syllabus at any time during the semester as issues or needs arise. Written addendums will be distributed should this need occur.*
