

AMST 201: Literary Approaches to American Studies- Reading American Spaces

Summer Session II 2013: Monday-Friday, 11:30 A.M.- 1:00 P.M., Greenlaw 317

Instructor: Ben Bolling, bbolling@email.unc.edu

Office Hours: Monday- Friday 10:00 A.M.-11:00 A.M. and by appointment

Office: Greenlaw 443

Course Description: AMST 201: Literary Approaches to American Studies is an introduction to interdisciplinary methods of cultural analysis in the study of literature of the United States. The curriculum provides an overview of major developments in the field of American Studies and contemporary approaches to the study of American society and culture. We will focus on the idea of “reading” American places, particularly constructions of home. We will engage issues of trauma and the familiar in Joyce Carol Oates’ *Zombie*, Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead*, and Toni Morrison’s *Home* (the 2013 Carolina Summer Reading Program selection), consider class and race in the construction of Appalachian spaces in *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* and Adriana Trigiani’s *Big Stone Gap*, and examine the networks of connections that individuals use to identify as members of communities in works by William Faulkner, Randall Kenan, and others. The course aims to build key analytic skills such as close reading and interdisciplinary research strategies while empowering you to question the representational possibilities of various cultural productions.

Required Texts:

Required texts are available at the UNC Bookstore, but feel free to purchase a different edition or used copy if it is more convenient. All other readings will be made available on the Sakai website or through UNC library reserves.

Zombie

Author: Joyce Carol Oates

Publisher: Ecco; Reprint edition (September 15, 2009)

ISBN-10: 0061778915

ISBN-13: 978-0061778919

Go Down, Moses

Author: William Faulkner

Publisher: Vintage

ISBN-10: 0679732179

ISBN-13: 978-0679732174

Home

Author: Toni Morrison

Publisher: Vintage

ISBN-10: 0307740919

ISBN-13: 978-0307740915

The Trail of the Lonesome Pine

Author: John Fox, Jr.

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (March 13, 2013)

ISBN-10: 1482767511

ISBN-13: 978-1482767513

Big Stone Gap

Author: Adriana Trigiani
Publisher: Ballantine Books
ISBN-10: 0345438329
ISBN-13: 978-0345438324

Gilead

Author: Marilynne Robinson
Publisher: Picador
ISBN-10: 031242440X
ISBN-13: 978-0312424404

Evaluation

Your grade in this course will be comprised of the following:

Close Reading Paper	15%	Final Paper	20%
Participation	20%	Digital Photo Essay	15%
Daily Responses	10%	Final Exam	20%

Close Reading Paper: This assignment asks you to sustain a close reading of a text for 1,200-1,400 words without consulting or bringing in outside sources. “Close reading” is a mode of attending to (“reading”) a text that focuses on details and tries to understand the way these details produce meaning in the overall text. It requires that you notice, interpret, and use details that you might otherwise have passed over. Thus, “close” reading also means “slow” reading. It requires that you spend time with the text’s language, rhythms, tones, structures, and other “forms” upon which meaning is built. These details can be single words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs (or even an image, a chapter title, a line break, a weird punctuation mark) that, when you read them, strike you as strange, interesting, out of place, beautiful—that is, worthy of your sustained attention.

Participation: Because this class will be based largely on our free and open discussions as a group of scholars, it is of the utmost importance that we each participate as fully as possible during every class meeting. Classroom participation is, therefore, a substantial portion of your final grade. Participation includes, but is not limited to: constructive contributions to class discussions and activities, engagement with and support of classmates, and timely completion of reading and homework assignments. Your participation grade represents your presence in the classroom—both physically and intellectually. Each student will receive a daily participation grade of 1-3 points. Students will receive 1 point for being present, 2 points for basic participation, and 3 points for being an active participant.

Daily Responses: Over the course of the term, you will be given 15 short answer prompts on your reading assignments. On the day a prompt is given, you will spend the first 5 minutes of class writing a brief response. Your top 12 scores will factor into your final “daily response” grade, meaning that I will drop your lowest *three* scores. If you are absent from class on the day of a response, you may *not* make up that response; that

day's response will count as one of your dropped scores. If you are tardy to class and miss the administration of a response, you may *not* make it up; that score will be dropped.

Final Paper: This writing assignment will be a 1,400-1,600 word research paper that cites *at least* three academic sources and uses proper MLA citation throughout. I will ask you to analytically engage at least one text discussed over the course of the term and a smattering of scholarship about that text. The successful paper will advance a critical thesis about the text, illustrate engagement with the work of other scholars who have also considered the text, display deft close reading skills, and make bold and assertive claims about the importance of the paper's central argument.

Digital Photo Essay: This assignment will ask you to curate a collection of photographs that explore real or imagined American spaces. Your exhibition will also include a short critical writing component.

Final Exam: We will discuss the format of the exam and my expectations of you as this assignment approaches. The Summer School has scheduled our final exam on Thursday, July 25th from 11:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. in our regular meeting place (Greenlaw 317). This date and time is fixed by the Registrar and is therefore non-negotiable.

Attendance and Preparedness: Because this class is discussion-based, your attendance, preparedness, and active participation are integral to our success. Summer session involves an accelerated schedule for the course and it is essential that you be present at each class meeting. Please contact me before class if an emergency prevents your attendance during any class. **Attendance is mandatory.** If you accrue more than two absences, your final grade will be lowered. Five or more absences will result in automatic failure of the class. Incompletes will not be given. Tardiness disrupts the classroom environment and is disrespectful of your colleagues and me. Repeated or excessive tardiness may be counted as an absence, so please arrive on time. Failure to complete papers on time will adversely affect your grade. I do not accept late assignments.

Conferences and Office Hours: Please schedule an appointment with me during my office hours if you have any questions, if you are struggling with an assignment, or if you would simply like to chat. If my office hours are not convenient for you, let me know and we will arrange another mutually convenient time.

Plagiarism and the Honor Code: Plagiarism is a very serious Honor Code violation as it is a breach of the academic community's trust. Every piece of work you produce in this class (oral or written) must be your own. You are bound by the Honor Code in all that you do at this University, and so am I. I take that responsibility very seriously. I am required to report any work I believe may be plagiarized. Handing in work that is not your own not only violates the Honor Code, it also ruins the trust between us. If I find you have plagiarized in my course, I will fail you on the assignment – no exceptions – and I will seek additional, more severe penalties from the Honor Court. If you are

struggling with an assignment, please speak to me. If you are struggling with your time management, please speak to me.

Please speak to me if you have any questions. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for breaching the Honor Code. And please remember: this policy applies to drafts as well as final products.

Academic Etiquette: Toleration for diverse opinions voiced in class and online is essential. I expect all students to treat each other with respect. In order for us to learn from one another, we have to allow each other to make mistakes, and/or to offer unpopular positions for debate. Before class begins, please turn your cell phones off. If your phone rings or if you fiddle with it during class, I will make every possible effort to embarrass you. Unauthorized use of any technology in the classroom (texting, checking email, Facebook, etc.) will result in a student being counted absent for the day, including an automatic zero for participation and reading quizzes. I do not respond to emails after 8 P.M., so please send any correspondence at an appropriate time. Finally, we are all adults now and I will expect you to take responsibility for your learning.

Computers: Computers are not permitted for in-class use except by special permission of the instructor. The temptation of distraction is just too great. Should an activity require the use of your computer during class, you will be notified by the instructor at least two days in advance. You should observe appropriate behavior during all computer-based activities related to this class. Engaging in activities deemed to be offensive or inappropriate may be considered violations of the UNC Honor Code.

Sakai: Sakai is a web-based instructional environment that will provide our digital home for this semester. Here, you will find the course syllabus, assignments, notes, reading materials, resources, and important announcements/reminders. To sign into Sakai, go to: sakai.unc.edu .

Your username and password are your university Onyen and password.

The Writing Center: The UNC Writing Center is an excellent resource if you need additional help with your writing outside of class. In either face-to-face or online sessions, tutors will help you at any stage in your composition process. Tutors will not revise, edit, or proofread your papers for you. However, they will help you organize your paper, think through your ideas, and improve your arguments. For more information about the writing center or to schedule an appointment, visit their website at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/>.

Your pledge to me:

By signing below, I indicate that I have read and understood the above requirements. I agree to abide by these requirements.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

AMST 201 SSII 2013 Schedule:

Thursday, June 20

- Introduction
- Close reading
- Research methods/resources

Friday, June 21

LAST DAY TO ADD A CLASS

- “Things of this World; or, Angels Unawares” by Randall Kenan
- “Transnationalism and American Studies” by John Carlos Rowe
- “Transnationalism in American Studies” by Greg Robinson
- “Transnationalism and American Studies: The View from Abroad” by Alfred Hornung
- Close reading exercise

Monday, June 24

- *Home* by Toni Morrison

Tuesday, June 25

- Selections from *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* by Toni Morrison
 - “Black Matters” and “Romancing the Shadow”
- “After Suspicion” by Rita Felski

Wednesday, June 26

- *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* by John Fox, Jr.
 - Read through Chapter 14

Thursday, June 27

- *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* by John Fox, Jr.
 - Read through Chapter 26
- “Beyond Isolation and Homogeneity: Diversity and the History of Appalachia” by Ronald L. Lewis

Friday, June 28

- *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* by John Fox, Jr.
 - Finish novel
- “A Judicious Combination of Incident and Psychology: John Fox, Jr. and the Southern Mountaineer Motif” by Darlene Wilson

Monday, July 1

- *Big Stone Gap* by Adriana Trigiani
 - Read through Chapter 7

- In-class workshop of close reading papers

Tuesday, July 2

- *Big Stone Gap* by Adriana Trigiani
 - Finish novel

Wednesday, July 3

CLOSE READING PAPER DUE

- *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, 1936 film (Directed by Henry Hathaway)

Thursday, July 4

UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY

CLASS WILL NOT BE HELD

Friday, July 5

CLASS READING DAY

CLASS WILL NOT BE HELD

- “Pilot,” *Friday Night Lights*: Season 1, Episode 1 (Written and Directed by Peter Berg)
- “Pilot,” *American Horror Story*: Season 1, Episode 1 (Directed by Ryan Murphy, Written by Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk)
- *Battlestar Galactica: The Miniseries* (2003), (Directed by Michael Rymer, Written by Ronald D. Moore and Glen A. Larson)
- “Pilot,” *Arrested Development*: Season 1, Episode 1 (Directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo, Written by Mitchell Hurwitz)

Monday, July 8

LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS

- “A Cultural Approach to Television Genre Theory” by Jason Mittell

Tuesday, July 9

- *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson
 - Read through pg. 131

Wednesday, July 10

- *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson
 - Finish novel
- “‘Looking Back from the Grave’: Sensory Perception and the Anticipation of Absence in Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead*” by Laura E. Tanner

Thursday, July 11

- *Zombie* by Joyce Carol Oates
 - Read through Chapter 30
- “Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth” by Hayden White

Friday, July 12

- *Zombie* by Joyce Carol Oates
 - Finish novel
- “Historicizing the Postmodern: The Problematizing of History” by Linda Hutcheon

Monday, July 15

- *Go Down, Moses* by William Faulkner
 - Read through “Pantaloon in Black”

Tuesday, July 16

- *Go Down, Moses* by William Faulkner
 - Read through “The Bear”

Wednesday, July 17

- *Go Down, Moses* by William Faulkner
 - Finish novel
- “Faulkner’s Storied Novel: *Go Down, Moses* and the Translation of Time” by Ronald Schleifer

Thursday, July 18

- *Grey Gardens*, 1975 film (Directed by Albert Maysles, David Maysles, Ellen Hovde, Muffie Meyer)
- “‘Concentrated Ground’: *Grey Gardens* and the Cinema of the Domestic” by John David Rhodes

Friday, July 19

- Selections from Elizabeth Bishop
 - “At the Fishhouses”
 - “Questions of Travel”
 - “In the Waiting Room”
 - “One Art”
- “Elizabeth Bishop: Longing for Home—and Paradise” by Harriet Y. Cooper

Monday, July 22

DIGITAL PHOTO ESSAY DUE
FINAL PAPER WORKSHOP

Tuesday, July 23

LAST DAY OF CLASSES
FINAL PAPERS DUE

Wednesday, July 24

READING DAY

Thursday, July 25

FINAL EXAM : 11:30 A.M.-2:30 P.M.