

ENGL 128: Major American Authors

Section 003

Fall 2016

Instructor: Ben Bolling, Ph.D.

E-mail: bbolling@email.unc.edu

Classroom: Dey 303

Office: Dey 336

Office Hours: T, Th 1:00 PM- 2:00 PM

W 11:00 AM- 3:00 PM and by appointment

What Makes You So Major?

Course Description: In this section of Major American Authors, we will study resonant works of American literature from the early 19th century to the contemporary moment. Through our readings we will consider just what makes an author or a work of literature *major*. Central questions that will guide our inquiry this semester include:

- How do we, as a culture, adjudicate an author's *worth*?
- Is a text's cultural value determined by its *timeless* meaning or its changing meanings *through* time?
- Do *major* authors and their texts share common attributes such as style, content, or themes?

Course Objectives: In Major American Authors, you will learn to:

- Understand how historical context, genre, medium, and form shape a text's meaning;
- Identify significant developments in the history of American literature;
- Conduct primary and secondary research using a variety of academic resources;
- Compose clear and concise written and oral arguments
- Critically engage cultural narratives

Required Texts:

*****Please note that I don't care which editions of the required texts you acquire. Many of the 19th-century texts are available for free online or through e-book vendors. I don't care *how* you read these texts, just *that* you read them.*****

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass by Frederick Douglass

Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

Go Down, Moses by William Faulkner

The Complete Stories by Flannery O'Connor

Beloved by Toni Morrison

All other required reading will be provided via Sakai.

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, reading materials, resources, and important announcements/reminders. To sign into Sakai, go to: <https://sakai.unc.edu/welcome/>. Your username and password are your university Onyen and password. Please make sure that you are comfortable with Sakai's setup and functionality. Don't be afraid to ask for help with any Sakai-related issues. Discomfort/confusion are not valid excuses for failure to complete a Sakai assignment or for not completing an assignment on time.

Professionalism: Professionalism for ENGL 128 has five components – Community, Responsibility, Respect, Communication, and Collegiality— explained broadly below:

- **Academic Etiquette:** Group discussion is integral to our learning objectives in this class. Tolerance for diverse opinions voiced in class and online is essential. 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.
- **Cell Phones:** Before class begins, please turn your cell phones **OFF**. If your phone draws attention to itself during class, I will make every possible effort to embarrass you.
- **E-mail:** E-mail is the easiest and most professional way to contact your colleagues and me. My e-mail address is listed on the front of the syllabus. If you e-mail me during my office hours, I will usually respond immediately, unless I am with a student. **Otherwise, I will respond within 24 hours during the school week (M-F). Please do not e-mail a question about an assignment due in fewer than 24 hours. In all other cases, if you do not receive a response within 24 hours during the school week, please re-send the message.**
- **Attendance:** Your attendance, preparedness, and active participation are integral to our success. **Attendance is mandatory. Each absence beyond three (3) will result in a reduction of your final grade by one-third (1/3) letter grade** (e.g. a B becomes a B-, a B- becomes a C+, etc.). Seven or more absences will result in automatic failure of the class in accordance with UNC-CH policy. Incompletes will not be given.
- **Preparedness:** 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. You are always expected to have completed the day's reading when you arrive for class. With regard to papers and other assignments, please note that **I do not accept late work.**
- **Conferences:** My office hours are listed on the first page of this syllabus. Please see me during my regularly scheduled office hours if you have any questions, if you are struggling with an assignment, or if you would like to chat. You do not need an appointment to stop by during office hours, although those who have an appointment will take priority. If my office hours are not convenient for you, let me know and we will arrange another mutually convenient time to meet.

Evaluation:

Your grade in this course will be assigned based on your performance in the following areas:

Major Discussions	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 oral exams, 5% each and I will drop your lowest score 	
Response Papers	15%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 500-750 word personal response essays 	
Midterm Paper	15%
Final	20%

I will calculate your final grade according to the following scale:

A	95-100%	C+	77-79%
A-	90-94%	C	73-76%
B+	87-89%	C-	70-72%
B	83-86%	D	60-69%
B-	80-82%	F	0%

Each of these assessments will be detailed in assignment descriptions available on Sakai.

Participation: Participation includes, but is not limited to: constructive contributions to class discussions and activities, engagement with daily readings, and timely completion of papers and other homework assignments.

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 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.

Honor Code

The Honor Code is in effect in this class and all others at the University. I am committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at <http://instrument.unc.edu>.

Under the Honor Code provisions, you have four general responsibilities:

- Obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code.
- Refrain from lying, cheating or stealing.
- Conduct yourself so as not to impair significantly the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community.
- Refrain from conduct that impairs or may impair the capacity of University and associated personnel to perform their duties, manage resources, protect the safety and welfare of members of the University community, and maintain the integrity of the University.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial system for over 100 years. The system is the responsibility of students and is regulated and governed by them, but faculty share the responsibility. If you have questions about your responsibility under the honor code, please bring them to your instructor or consult with the office of the Dean of Students or the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. This document, adopted by the Chancellor, the Faculty Council, and the Student Congress, contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. Your full participation and observance of the honor code is expected.

Non-Discrimination: This university does not discriminate against its students or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. In this class we will strive to maintain an open atmosphere with shared respect for all differences.

Accessibility: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ensures that no qualified person shall by reason of a disability be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated by the University. In compliance with UNC policy and federal law, qualified students with disabilities are eligible to receive “reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to education opportunities, programs, and activities” (<https://accessibility.unc.edu/faculty>). If you anticipate such accommodations, please notify me as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Additionally, you may seek out student support services at the Department of Accessibility Resources and Service (<https://accessibility.unc.edu/>) or through the Learning Center (<http://learningcenter.unc.edu/>).

The Writing Center: The UNC Writing Center is an excellent resource if you would like to pursue 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://writingcenter.unc.edu/>.

My pledge to you:

I will be available for you as much as possible. I will strive to make this class engaging and intellectually stimulating, and your feedback will always be welcomed. Additionally, please communicate to me any extenuating circumstances and I will do my best to accommodate your needs. This classroom should be a welcoming environment that provides everyone with an equal opportunity for learning. I want you to let me know what I can do to ensure that it is, in fact, such a place. My ultimate goal for every course I teach is to provide you with skills necessary to confidently assert yourselves as the next generation of scholars and professionals representing the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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: _____

English 128: Major American Authors
Instructor: Ben Bolling, Ph.D.
Fall 2016

On the course calendar below, I've listed our reading schedule and important due dates for assignments. Be advised, however, that homework, additional reading, and other assignments may be added or adjusted throughout the term. Be sure to check Sakai announcements often and to see a classmate for updates if you are absent. Also, listen carefully in class for announced changes and check the calendar for updates.

Week 1

T 8/23 Course Introduction
What makes an author so major?

Th 8/25 William Cullen Bryant, "Thanatopsis"

Week 2

T 8/30 Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of...*
(Preface/Introductory Letters through the end of Chapter 9)

Th 9/1 Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of...*
(Chapter 10 through the end of the book)

Week 3

T 9/6 Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of...*
[Major Discussion #1: Frederick Douglass](#)

Th 9/8 Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
(Chapters 1-11)

Week 4

T 9/13 Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
(Chapters 12-18)

Th 9/15 Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
(Chapters 19-30)

Week 5

T 9/20 Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
(Chapter 31- end of novel)

Th 9/22 Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
[Major Discussion #2: Harriet Beecher Stowe](#)

Week 6

T 9/27 Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself"

Th 9/29 Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
(Chapters 1-11)

Week 7

T 10/4 Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
(Chapters 12-20)

Th 10/6 Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
(Chapters 21-30)

Week 8

T 10/11 Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
(Chapters 31- end of novel)

Th 10/13 Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
[Major Discussion #3: Mark Twain](#)

Week 9

T 10/18 MIDTERM

Th 10/20 **FALL BREAK: NO CLASS MEETING**

Week 10

T 10/25 William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses*
("Was," "The Fire and the Hearth," and "Pantaloon in Black")

Th 10/27 William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses*
("The Old People" and "The Bear")

Week 11

T 11/1 William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses*
("Delta Autumn" and "Go Down, Moses")

Th 11/3 William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses*
[Major Discussion #4: William Faulkner](#)

Week 12

T 11/8 Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find," "Everything that

Rises Must Converge”

Th 11/10 Flannery O’Connor, “Good Country People,” “The Artificial Nigger”

Week 13

T 11/15 Flannery O’Connor, “A Late Encounter with the Enemy,” “Parker’s Back”

[Major Discussion #5: Flannery O’Connor](#)

Th 11/17 Elizabeth Bishop, “One Art,” “At the Fishhouses,” “In the Waiting Room”

Week 14

T 11/22 Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
(Part I)

Th 11/24 **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY: NO CLASSES HELD**

Week 15

T 11/29 Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
(complete the novel)

Th 12/1 Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
[Major Discussion #6: Toni Morrison](#)

Week 16

T 12/6 Course Evaluations and Final Thoughts

FINAL EXAM: Saturday, December 10th at 12:00PM (noon)