

Sul Ross State University

Course Number: English 5304
Course Title: Contemporary Writing
Term and Year: Spring 2016
Professor: Dr. Ian Peddie
MAB 111
Office Hours: M, T, W, Th, 10-11
Professor's Contacts: Email: ian.peddie@sulross.edu
Phone: 432-837-8154

Required Texts: Allison, Dorothy. *Bastard Out of Carolina* (0452297753)
Banks, Russell. *The Sweet Hereafter* (0060923245)
Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickled and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*.
Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun* (0679755330)
Hughes, Langston. *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* (0679764089)
Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye* (0307278441)

There will also be online texts. These are free and I will supply URL information.

Course Description

In this course, we will explore the relationship between contemporary American culture and the world we live in. That is, and broadly speaking, we will examine how literature is affected by social concerns. In this sense, the class will address currently topical concerns such as injustice, exclusion, elitism, prejudice etc., especially how these concerns are portrayed, elucidated, disguised, championed and traduced through a variety of cultural lenses that include literature, history, film, music and social analysis. Needless to say, this course offers much scope for interdisciplinary enquiry.

Course Objectives: Students in English 5309 will:

- examine the processes of poetry, drama, fiction and other writing through the academic lens;
- analyze creative methodologies;
- understand the interaction between culture and society
- appreciate and comprehend interdisciplinary analysis and approaches
- understand and be able to analyze culture as part of a socio-political spectrum

ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act)

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartz, M. Ed., L.P.C., in Counseling and

Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203. E-mail: mschwartz@sulross.edu .

Persons with disabilities that may warrant academic accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that we may make arrangements to ensure the most hospitable and enhancing (cyber) learning environment as possible

First Class and Beyond:

On the first class day, I will post opening/welcoming remarks and suggestions for getting started in the course. On subsequent days, please check announcements for instructions on lectures and answers to class questions, which will be posted each class day (i.e. Monday-Friday) when necessary and/or appropriate. Much of my “lecturing” occurs in the announcements. I will be “off-line” on the weekends, which will begin by 12 p.m. Fridays and continue until 12 p.m. Mondays. Office hours follow those listed above. I will be “off-line” during the week after 3 p.m. daily (i.e. look for email responses within 48 hours—or check the announcements, as I often answer general course questions there).

Coursework

****Please note that you should write attached assignments in Microsoft Word to ensure we may all utilize them. Please contact Sandy Bogus at sbogus@sulross.edu (or 432.837.8523) if you have technical problems or questions.****

****Blackboard only works best in Firefox, Chrome, or Safari (rather than Explorer).**

You are expected to participate fully in a completely engaged manner and will be held accountable for your participation, both in formal and informal forums, throughout the completion of the session’s work. All of your participation must be thoughtful, sincere, and tactful. In the pursuit of these goals, we will write a position paper, a research essay, as well as utilizing discussion forums. You will also complete a course journal that will hold course materials generated this semester.

****I expect your coursework to mirror the time you would take with this course if it were an onsite course. Thus, you should spend the approximately three hours a week working on this course, with additional time for the actual reading and writing of the manuscripts, etc. determined by your personal reading and writing pace—just as you would for an onsite course.**

Detailed Assignment Description:

Discussion Boards: The discussion boards allow us to speak to one another. Think of the discussion boards as the “cyber” equivalent of sitting at the seminar table with one another and talking about our readings, writings, thoughts and reactions to the coursework. The first discussion boards will ask you to do just this. Please answer in detailed manners, using examples and analysis of the why and how of your answers. The posts must be approximately three to five hundred words. Responses to posts should be approximately one to two hundred words. You will respond to two posts. Respond to posts which have not already received two responses yet. DO NOT respond to a post with two responses already unless you have no other options. The topics for the discussion boards will be posted regularly and all in good time.

Course Journal: The course journal will consist of your thoughts, responses, questions, and ideas pursuant to the texts of elements generated by the texts. Your journal/weekly responses should be

about half to three quarters of a page, single spaced. Your responses could run from something that catches your eye to a problem or a concern, to a textual, social, political adumbration etc. Remember that you are not expected to have all of the answers but if you have then let us have them! Note that these responses are **not** summaries or descriptions. Be frugal with the use of “I” and be wary of “I think” and its variations too. **Do no research**; I am interested in what you have got to say rather than the opinions of another. Needless to say, correct syntax, grammar and so on is expected.

Assignments: Students in English 5309 will be required to follow the reading, writing, and discussion environment schedule as presented in the syllabus and be prepared to discuss assignments at the “class period” in which they are due. Students will be expected to write assignments consistently and timely, as this online course only works as well as the students completing the work. **Again, the online course works best if you do the work at the time it is assigned—I have found that the course works much, much better if we are all working in tandem.**

Discussion Boards	20% of the student’s final grade
Journal	20% of the student’s final grade
Research Paper	30% of the student’s final grade
Position Paper	20% of the student’s final grade
Final Exam	10% of the student’s final grade

Academic Integrity

Sul Ross students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and are expected to encourage others to do the same. Further, students are expected to take responsible action when there is reason to suspect dishonesty on the part of others. While it is not possible to list all acts of academic dishonesty, examples include knowingly performing, attempting to perform, or assisting another in performing any act of academic dishonesty; cheating; plagiarism; collusion; submitting previously submitted material; misrepresentation or falsification of material; misrepresentation of circumstances such as illness, conflicting responsibilities. Additional details on academic integrity are found in the college catalogue. Academic dishonesty carries severe penalties ranging from a grade of “0” on the affected assignment to dismissal from Sul Ross State University.

Attendance: As this is a web-format workshop course, consistent participation is absolutely necessary. Remaining current with the course schedule and taking part during the expected due dates will not only keep you personally engaged, but will ensure that other participants of the course can benefit from your thoughts, ideas, and reactions toward the readings and writing assignments. *If you miss due dates, I will not expect others in the class to consider your work in arrears. If you fail to participate in a discussion during the workshop timeline, you will miss out on a major component of your discussion board grade. Late work will result in an automatic ten points being taken off your grade; thus, if you received a B on an assignment, it will be reduced to a C. I do not accept any late work for this course after the final exam period has ended.*

****Please note that this course is a seminar which necessitates that students complete discussion boards and major assignments on the day on which the assignments are made. Thus, discussion**

boards must be posted by 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and responses be posted by midnight on Thursdays. This will ensure that the course's discussions move forward timely and with minimum inconvenience to your fellow students. Thus, if you miss the assignment, you will not be able to make it up and will lose the credit. Please move on to the next one.

Late Work: Assignments that are turned in late receive a 10-point deduction, regardless of how late the work is. Thus, an assignment that is graded at a B will be automatically reduced to a C, if the assignment is late. Assignments are due as listed in the schedule. Assignments turned in at any time after the posted due date and time are considered late. Please let me know in advance if you are experiencing a problem. I will not accept any late work after the final examination period for this course. It is completely the student's responsibility to make arrangements for and to turn in late work.

The Writing Center: The Writing Center is an academic support service available to all Sul Ross students. I strongly encourage you to make the center an integral part of your writing process by visiting the tutors frequently during the semester. The benefits of such visits are readily apparent in your work. The Center is located on the first floor of MAB, room 102, and its phone number is 432.837.8270.

Miscellaneous yet Important:

If, for any reason, you require accommodations for the successful completion of this course, please let me know as soon as possible so that we may make arrangements.

I require that all discussions of our creative/scholarly work remain tactful, sincere, and highly ethical. Take the time with one another's work that you would wish taken with your own. If you do not feel up to this challenge, please find another course.

My office hours are, of course, "cyber" hours, although I will be available on campus at Sul Ross during those hours as well. Please do not hesitate to call the office phone. Or, I can provide further numbers and arrange more convenient times to speak as necessary. I will answer emails within 48 hours of receiving them (with the exception of weekends), so please do not wait until the last moment to ask questions. Also, please check the announcements for the class each day—I often address course issues and give suggestions and directions there, as they affect all students.

Date	Assignment
Week One	*read course introduction and policies *read Lecture One * Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "Question," "To Certain Intellectuals," "Scottsboro," "Christ in Alabama," "Dark Youth of the USA," "Open Letter to the South," "Good Morning Revolution," "Goodbye Christ," "A New Song," "Let America Be America Again," "Snob," "Southern Negro Speaks," "Seashore Through Dark Glasses," *Read Wacquant and Wilson, "The Cost of Racial Exclusion in the Inner-City" (http://loicwacquant.net/assets/Papers/COSTRACIALCLASSEXCLUSION-1989.pdf)

Discussion Board 1: Introduce yourself to the class—give us a sense of who you are, what your interests are: What do you like to read? What do you hope to gain in the course? What type of writing do you plan to attempt (e.g. genre)? Tell us a bit about your life, personality, hobbies, studies. Respond to two other writers. Respond to 2 posts!

**Check Announcements!!

Week Two

- *read Lecture Two
- *Hughes “Theme for English B,” “Low to High,” “High to Low” “Lady’s Boogie,” “Harlem [2]”, “Good Morning,” “Island,” “Ask Your Mama: Twelve Moods for Jazz” (entire)

Discussion Board 2:

**Check Announcements!!

Week Three

- *read Lecture Three
- *read Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*
- *Listen, BBC, *Free Thinking*: Lorraine Hansberry

Discussion Board 3:

**Check Announcements!!

Week Four

- **read Lecture Four
- *watch any version of “A Raisin in the Sun”
- * Malcolm X: “The House Negro and the Field Negro” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kf7fujM4ag>)
- *Race and Politics: William Julius Wilson and Ta-Nehisi Coates: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XunV4vMj98>)

Discussion Board 4:

**Check Announcements!!

Week Five

- *Curtis Mayfield
Greatest Hits: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnH2OffNybs>
- *Marvin Gaye

What's Going On (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5Z-kjrSomw&list=PLG55-U1jq0ED0iYxb6TPw0p735DhGQ5nD>)

*Stevie Wonder

Innervisions (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmfPn-sY-8E&list=PLymM46aOVb8VOdtfNkTCTudPyqt1Ik0Nm>)

Fulfillingness First Finale (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RBX8EQKM6A&list=PL-UWPiRII68rfJS-EU_cHHgdhHthOMe5w)

Songs in the Key of Life

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9k3pYwFlr_I&list=PLJNbijG2M7OwTLs7uT8SQBzi_v2KZPTvN)

Discussion Board 5:

**Check Announcements!!

Week Six *Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (read roughly half)

Discussion Board 6:

**Check Announcements!!

Week Seven Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (half to end)

Discussion Board 7:

**Check Announcements!!

Week Eight *Read Lecture Five
*Allison, *Bastard out of Carolina* (read half)
Class in America, 1957:
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUgDbCZLPpY>)
People Like Us, Tammy's Story
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37ZpauS5Doo>)

Discussion Board 8:

**Check Announcements!!

Week Nine

SPRING BREAK

Discussion Board 9:

**Check Announcements!!

Week Ten

- * Allison, Bastard out of Carolina (half to end)
- * People Like Us, Update on Tammy's Story:
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqs4_Zs2GvI)

Discussion Board 10:

**Check Announcements!!

Week Eleven

- Read Lecture Six
- * Ehrenreich, Nickled and Dimed in America (1-121)

Discussion Board 11:

**Check Announcements!!

Week Twelve

- *Read Lecture Seven.
- * Ehrenreich, Nickled and Dimed in America (121-end)

Discussion Board 12:

**Check Announcements!!

Week Thirteen

- *Russell Banks: *The Sweet Hereafter* (1-130)

Discussion Boards 13:

****Check Announcements!!**

Week Fourteen

* Russell Banks: *The Sweet Hereafter* (130-end)

Discussion Boards 14.

****Check Announcements!!**

Week Fifteen

****Course Journal Due!!**
Read assignment for final examination

Discussion Board 15:

****Check Announcements!!**

Final Examination Due by