

**Policy Statement and Syllabus  
English 5307  
Southern American Novels  
Summer I 2017**

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### **Required Texts**

William Faulkner: *Go Down, Moses* ("The Bear")

Harper Lee: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

John Kennedy Toole: *A Confederacy of Dunces*

Ernest J. Gaines: *A Lesson Before Dying*

Toni Morrison: *Beloved*

Reynolds Price: *Kate Vaiden*

### **Course Expectations**

This is an intensive, graduate-level reading and writing course that exams the novels of the American South. We will read and discuss various examples by the masters of southern fiction, from early Twentieth Century writers through more contemporary writers, examining through the progression what cultural concerns have shifted and developed and what remains unchanged by the imprint of time and globalization. The American South is a culturally fascinating. This course seeks to trace the development of southern fiction as it reflects and informs an also ever-developing culture. To do so, we will determine how, indeed, authorship and its surrounding and informing culture developed a regional art form by carefully and historically tracing individual writers of fiction as they wrote their own world-views, thus helping us to develop our own.

English 5307 focuses on achieving key expectations including the following:

1. To improve writing using documented methodologies;

2. To apply documented methodologies to the critical examination of canonical literature;
3. To increase confidence in the students' abilities to teach literary analysis and writing in their professional lives.

## **Course Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to improve your knowledge of American literature through a close consideration of the history of southern American novels. The course will help you to improve your literacy through close readings, and it will aid your abilities to analyze and discuss your ideas about what you read. The course will also help develop your abilities to write clearly and concisely about and/or in the vein of what you read, especially in terms of higher analytic reactions. The course will help you to take part in a wider discussion of American letters, furthering your ability to also instruct future students in the advent of geographic and culturally significant American genre.

At the end of this course the students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the history of the southern American fiction;
2. Describe how to use the writers' techniques to understand the significance of southern literature;
3. Describe how to apply techniques and methodologies to create a successful class discussions and class writings;
4. Describe the foundations of the southern fiction and identify several masters of the novel form;
5. Discuss how the masters' own discussion of the writing craft can serve as openings for thoughtful and successful composition and revisions;
6. Establish pedagogical approaches to the topic for future use in professional lives, particularly education.

## **Course Requirements**

Assignments require:

- substantial individual readings from the text;
- substantial writings in both journal form and long essay form;
- detailed discussion boards;
- subjective testing.

In addition to the reading and writing assignments, coursework will consist of in-class discussions via discussion boards based on your understanding of what we read. You will be expected to keep up with the reading assignments for each class and then to freely discuss the reading assignments with your instructor and peers. You must complete satisfactory work and actively participate in class to complete English 5307; therefore, consistent online attendance is

required for you to pass this course. An online course is not an independent study—at your own pace. This course expects students to log onto the course and to participate daily in order to succeed. The entire course will only run smoothly if all students participate equally.

### **First Class and Beyond:**

I will post opening/welcoming remarks and suggestions for getting started in the course. On subsequent days, please check announcements for instructions, lectures, and answers to class questions/clarifications to the course, which will also be posted each class day when appropriate (i.e. Monday-Friday). I will be “off-line” on the weekends, which will begin by 12 p.m. Fridays and continue until noon Mondays.

### **Coursework:**

**\*\*Please note that you should write attached assignments in Microsoft Word to ensure we may all utilize them. Work may be submitted in “.doc, .docx, or .rtf. Please contact Sandy Bogus at [sbogus@sulross.edu](mailto:sbogus@sulross.edu) (or 432.837.8523) if you have technical problems or questions. Blackboard only works best in **Firefox, Safari, or Chrome** (rather than Explorer—I like Chrome as a platform best). It is free to download.\*\***

**Major Assignments:** Students are responsible for all assignments in this course and must satisfactorily complete all major assignments in English 5307 to receive a passing grade.

<b>Major Assignment</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>
Journal	20%
Primary Source Analysis	20%
Research/Creative Assignment	30%
Final Examination	10%
Discussion Boards	20%
Total Points	100%

The vast majority of this course will be completed via the writing and “discussion” of both short fiction and theoretical readings. We will read and write about selections from the required texts

for the course. 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 one brief, primary-source analytic essay and one long-form researched essay. You will also complete a course notebook that will hold course materials generated this semester. The course notebook will consist of only assigned writings in the form of "elements." You will participate in directed discussion boards, which will answer and/or bounce off discussion prompts as listed in the syllabus. These also serve as the class participation component of the course, as they mirror the reading schedule. Discussion boards will largely influence the course grade. Finally, you will turn in a final examination in essay form, which pulls together the work from the 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 approximately three hours a day working on this course, with additional time for formal reading and writing assignments determined by your personal pace.**

### **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 in a seminar room 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 four hundred words. Responses to posts should be approximately two hundred words. The discussion boards will improve our teaching and practice of methodologies of fiction and theories on and about fiction through improved abilities to articulate your growing knowledge-base and expertise in the field of American literature.

*Readings*—The readings for the course involve the assigned novel and then further ancillary and secondary materials to enhance your research and/or understanding of the subject. These may include theoretical and personal essays about fiction writing and the writing life by many of those same writers and/or scholars of those writers. Thus, we will be able to read great and varied examples of fiction as a way to model techniques while also glimpsing the craft of writing via the southern masters. This allows us to increase confidence in our writing and analytic abilities as a way into our writing and ultimate teaching of writing. Writing never occurs in a vacuum; it informs and is informed by its surrounding cultures. The readings will highlight this crucial fact.

*Primary Source Analysis*—The primary source essay is simply a reader-response essay. It is an analysis or close reading of one or more of the assigned novels. The intent of the assignment is for you to develop your own approaches to what you read and to be able to fully communicate them in a detailed manner. The essay will be typed, in Times New Roman font, double-spaced,

3-5 pages in length, and utilize MLA style. The detailed assignment is found under the assignments link in the course.

*Research Essay*—This assignment requires you to create your own analysis of fictions and/or concepts from the course readings and then research secondary sources to either concur, add to, or argue with your already-developed ideas. You may either write a primary/secondary research topic examining culture and its impact on, result of, or place within southern fiction (from this session), taking off from the starting point of the previous essay, or you may begin anew with a fresh topic. Either choice will be formatted and utilize the MLA, be typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman, and be 10-15 pages in length (not counting Works Cited pages). The detailed assignment is found under the assignments link in the course.

*Course Notebook*—The course notebook will consist of prompts which ask you to journal about what you read, analyze techniques authors use when writing short fiction, or to expand your own ideas for course writings. The goals of journal exercises are to facilitate clear understanding of the subject as well as develop your abilities to write freely and with confidence. Obviously, the responses are as valuable as the effort put into them. Please feel free to use any of the notebook exercises as inspirations for further, more formal assignments—they are meant to be such. **I will evaluate your effort on these exercises once, at the end of the course. It will be turned in as a single Word attachment.** But please write the exercises as they are due—this will maximize their success for your endeavors. Each entry should be a minimum of 300 to 500 words. The precise prompts are listed in the syllabus per selected class day.

*Final Examination*—The final examination will pull together the key ideas and aspects of the advent of the short story in American literature. That is, I will ask you to write fully-developed essay that explore key concepts and personal analyses of the session's work. The goal of this assignment is to apply our discussions and growing skills in analysis of the short story, the readings of such, and the cultural and historical impact of the short story in America. It will also measure your ability to pull together the session's significant ideas comprehensively and clearly. The detailed assignment is found under the assignments link in the course.

**Late Work:** All major assignments and/or projects, etc. are due on the dates assigned by midnight, unless otherwise noted. You are responsible for all assignments in this course and must complete all required work in English 5307 to receive a passing grade.

**Late assignments** will receive a full letter grade deduction for being late. This means, if you turn in your assignment late and it receives a B, it automatically will be reduced to a C.

**Attendance:** As this is a web-format literature 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 also will ensure that other participants of the course can benefit from your thoughts, ideas, and reactions toward the reading and writing assignments. *If you miss due dates, I will not expect others in the class to consider your work in arrears. 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. I do not allow for late discussion boards. If I have graded discussion boards, and you received a zero, please move on to the next assignment.*

**\*\*Please note that this course is an online format 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 midnight on the days listed on the syllabus and responses be posted by midnight on the following class day. This will ensure that the course's discussions move forward timely and with minimum inconvenience to your fellow students. After I have graded each discussion board, you may not redo or make it up. Thus, if you miss the assignment, you will not be able to make it up and will lose the credit.**

## **Grading Scale:**

Percentages and Grade Equivalents:

A= 90-100% B=80-89% C=70-79% D=60-69% F=59% or below

**Disabilities Statement:** 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.

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 Schwartze, 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: 432-837-8691. E-mail: mschwartze@sulross.edu.

**Distance Education Statement:** Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as Smartthinking, library resources, such as online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

**Academic Ethics:** It is the responsibility of students and instructors to help maintain scholastic integrity at the University by refusing to participate in or tolerate scholastic dishonesty. Any student who represents someone else's work as his or her own will automatically receive a zero for that assignment, which will likely result in a failure for the course. Plagiarism can be purposeful or inadvertent, but either results in an unacceptable and unethical academic performance. Plagiarism will most likely result in a failure for the course.

***A Writer's Reference***: I strongly recommend all students and instructors of writing and literature own and utilize Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*. It is a sound, credible, and particularly usable stylebook.

## Syllabus

Date	Assignment	Comments
Wed., 31st May	**Read Course Introduction, policy, syllabus	
Read: “The Bear”		
Discussion board 1: Answer the prompt as listed under the discussion board link in the course. Respond to all posts!!		
**Check Announcements!!		
Thurs., 1 <sup>st</sup> June		
Read: “The Bear”		
<i>Journal element 1:</i> Research Faulkner and his fictional world. Discuss how he created a multi-generational and geographically significant fictional world. What was his culture/time like, and what do you think Faulkner wished to explore and convey in his writing?		
**Check Announcements!!		
Fri., 2 <sup>nd</sup> June		
Read: <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>		
Discussion board 2: Answer the prompt as listed under the discussion board link in the course. Respond to all posts!!		
**Check Announcements!!		

Mon., 5<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

*Journal element 2:* Discuss the concept of initiation as a genre of fiction—how are “The Bear” and *To Kill a Mockingbird* examples of the initiation story? Discuss the similarities and differences in the narrative points of view and what the main characters discover about their worlds and the people they love.

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Tues., 6<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Wed. 7<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Discussion board 3: Answer the prompt as listed under the discussion board link in the course. Respond to all posts!!

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Thurs., 8<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *A Confederacy of Dunces*

*Journal element 3:* Louisiana is a different geographic area of the South. Research and explore its writers and literature. Write an entry in which you discuss Louisiana literature, and, specifically, Toole's life and legacy versus Gaines'.

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Fri., 9<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *A Confederacy of Dunces*

Discussion board 4: Answer the prompt as listed under the discussion board link in the course. Respond to all posts!!

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Mon. 12<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *A Confederacy of Dunces*

*Journal element 4:* What are your ideas for the primary-source essay? Write a brief abstract for the essay and an outline. Finally, explore the MLA and write some brief comments as to the requirements of the style.

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Tues., 13<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *A Confederacy of Dunces*

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Wed., 14<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *A Lesson Before Dying*

Discussion board 5:

Answer the prompt as listed under the discussion board link in the course. Respond to all posts!!

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Thurs., 15<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *A Lesson Before Dying*

*Journal element 5:* Write first draft of your analysis; comment on ideas for revisions.

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Fri., 16<sup>th</sup> June

**\*\*Primary Source Analysis Essay due!!**

Read: *A Lesson Before Dying*

Discussion board 6: Answer the prompt as listed under the discussion board link in the course. Respond to all posts!!

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Mon., 19<sup>th</sup> June

Read Assignment for Research

Read: *Beloved*

*Journal element 6:* Explore your ideas for the research, discussing the critical approach, the works which will be examined and/or modeled in great detail. Make a calendar plan for completion.

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Tue., 20<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *Beloved*

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Wed., 21<sup>st</sup> June

Read: *Beloved*

Discussion board 7: Answer the prompt as listed under the discussion board link in the course. Respond to all posts!!

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Thurs., 22<sup>nd</sup> June

Read: *Beloved*

*Journal element 7:* Discuss in detail the process for researching sources. What databases are you using? Research the authors of the secondary sources and discuss their credentials, as well as the legitimacy of the publication journal or text. Are the sources current or classic, and how will they enhance your scholarship?

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Fri., 23<sup>rd</sup> June

Read: *Beloved*

Discussion board 8: Answer the prompt as listed under the discussion board link in the course. Respond to all posts!!

**\*\*Check Announcements!**

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Mon., 26<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *Kate Vaiden*

*Journal element 8:* An annotated bibliography is simply a bibliographical entry with a following either summary or critical rendering of the source's meaning. Take either one of the one of the articles you will utilize in the research project and write a summary annotation of it (the summary annotation means that you only summarize the main focus, the points, the approaches of the article; the critical annotation would then assess the success of the article and presupposes our expertise in the field). Use the MLA as your style for the bibliographic entry.

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Tues., 27<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *Kate Vaiden*

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Wed., 28<sup>th</sup> June

**\*\*Research Project Due**

Read: *Kate Vaiden*

Discussion board 9: Answer the prompt as listed under the discussion board link in the course. Respond to all posts!!

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Thurs., 29<sup>th</sup> June

Read: *Kate Vaiden*

*Journal element 9:* Research academic conferences you might send your essay to in order to present your scholarship. In this entry, discuss the conference, why you might wish to attend and present, and then the application process, costs, etc., of attending.

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Fri., 30<sup>th</sup> June            Read Final Examination Assignment

Read: *Kate Vaiden*

Discussion board 10: Answer the prompt as listed under the discussion board link in the course.  
Respond to all posts!!

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

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Mon., 3rd July

*Journal element 10:* Much fiction comes in-part from the personal experiences of the writers. Think about a memory which has always stayed with you for some reason. With the fiction we've read in mind, explore the memory by rendering it as a short story--attempt full scenes, objectify yourself to the memory, fictionalize your own experience. This needn't be more than a scene, but it should attempt to capture the voice of your culture and community.

**\*\* Final Examination Due**

**\*\*Journal Due**

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