

Policy Statement and Syllabus
English 4303
Summer II 2018

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Required Text

- William L. Andrews, et.al. *The Literature of the American South, a Norton Anthology*

Course Expectations

What make the literature of the South unique? This is an intensive, advanced-level reading and writing course that examines and discusses the historical development of literature in the American South. We will trace the development of its literature as it reflects and informs an also ever-developing southern American culture; in doing so, we will uncover the complexities inherent in this region of the country. To do so, we will determine how, indeed, authorship and its surrounding and informing culture developed a geographically determined genre by carefully tracing southern writers in context with their historical surroundings as they wrote their own world-views, thus helping us to develop our own.

English 4303 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 southern American literature through a close consideration of the history of the American literary South. 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 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 American literature.

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

1. Identify and describe the history of southern American literature;
2. Describe how to analyze the literature to understand its cultural significance;
3. Describe how to apply techniques and methodologies to create a successful class discussions and class writings;
4. Describe the foundations of southern American literature and identify several masters of the genre;
5. Discuss how the readings 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 analytic 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 4303; 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, which will also be posted each class day (i.e. Monday-Friday). I will be “off-line” on the weekends, which will begin by 12 p.m. Fridays and continue until 12 p.m. Mondays.

Coursework:

****Please note that you should write attached assignments in Microsoft Word to insure we may all utilize them. Work may be submitted in “.doc, .docx, or .rtf. 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**, of **Safari** (rather than Explorer).****

Major Assignments: Students are responsible for all assignments in this course and must satisfactorily complete all major assignments in English 4303 to receive a passing grade.

Major Assignment	% of Final Grade
Journal	20%
Primary Source Analysis Essay	20%
Research Essay	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 literature and theoretical readings. We will read and write about selections from the required text 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 on the literature we have read. You will also complete a course journal that will hold course materials generated this semester. The course journal 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 hundred words. Responses to posts should be approximately one 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 short fiction, poetry, essays, and drama by masters of southern American literature. Thus, we will be able to read great and varied examples of various genres as a way to determine elements while also comparing and contrasting global cultures. This allows us to increase confidence in our writing and analytic abilities as a way into our life experiences as members of our own cultures. 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 Essay—The primary source essay is simply a reader-response essay. It is an analysis or close reading of one short story from the first half of the session. 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, 2-3 pages in length, and utilize MLA style.

Research Essay—This assignment requires you to write a primary/secondary research topic examining culture and its impact on, result of, or place within southern literature (from this course). The research essay will be formatted and utilize the MLA, be typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman, and be 7-10 pages in length (not counting Works Cited pages). You must include at least two secondary sources.

Course journal—The course journal 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 southern American literature 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 instructions are listed in the syllabus per selected class day.

Final Examination—The final examination will pull together the key ideas and aspects of southern American literature. That is, I will ask you to write fully-developed essays 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 literature, the readings of such, and its cultural and historical impact on us. It will also measure your ability to pull together the course's significant ideas comprehensively and clearly.

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 4303 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 insure 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 (specifically, here, discussion boards). 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 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 Tuesdays and responses be posted by midnight on Wednesday, and the same with Thursday posts by midnight with a Friday midnight response. This will insure that the course's discussions move forward timely and with minimum inconvenience to your fellow students. I will assign a 0 to missed discussion boards. If you receive a 0 in the grade book, move on to the next one. Thus, if you miss the discussion board 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: mschwartz@sulross.edu.

Distance Education Statement: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as Smarthinking, 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
Tues, 10 th July	**Read Course Introduction	
<i>If you haven't taken a Blackboard course, take the practice tutorial and exam; it's a great idea even if you've taken one before.</i>		
Discussion board 1:	Introduce yourself to the class--discuss your professional life, your reading and writing life, your personal bio. How familiar are you with southern American literature? Respond to all posts!	
<i>The Literature of the American South:</i>	“Beginnings to 1880” Thomas Jefferson, <i>The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson</i> (the “Declaration”) John Pendleton Kennedy, “Swallow Barn” William Gilmore Simms, “The Lazy Crow”	
**Check Announcements!!		
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Wed. 11 th July		
<i>The Literature of the American South:</i>	Edgar Allan Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher” “The History of Composition” Harriet Ann Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> , chapters I and X	
Journal element 1:	Consider “The Fall of the House of Usher” as a metaphor for the antebellum South. How could you make this persuasive analysis? Discuss “The History of Composition as the forefather of modern literary criticism.	
**Check Announcements!!		
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Thurs. 12th July

Discussion board 2: Discuss how pieces we have read (and indeed much of antebellum southern literature) functions as propagandist literature written largely to either preserve a way of life or to upend it. Cite specific works read thus far. Respond to 2 posts!

The Literature of the American South: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life....*, chapter XII
Mary Boykin Chesnut, from *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*

**Check Announcements!!

Fri. 13th July

The Literature of the American South: "The New South, 1880-1940"
Samuel Clemens, "A True Story"
George W. Cable, "Belles Damoiselles Plantation"
Kate Chopin, "Desiree's Baby"
Thomas Nelson Page, "Marse Chan"
Charles Chesnutt, "The Goophered Grapevine"

Journal element 2: Explore the meaning of the "Local Color" writing, especially as a significant (crucial) literary movement in the South. Can local color also function as great literature in terms of technique? Discuss at least two pieces read.

**Check Announcements!!

Mon. 16th July

The Literature of the American South: Ellen Glasgow, "Jordan's End"
Anne Spencer, "Letter to My Sister"
The Southern Agrarians, "I'll Take My Stand"
John Crowe Ransom, poems

****Check Announcements!!**

Tues. 17th July

Discussion board 3: The Southern Agrarians took a stand that proved controversial and largely reflects Jim Crow South and the “Lost Cause” as a recurring theme. Some so-called agrarians regretted the book; others, stood by the assertions therein. How is the “Lost Cause” developed in other pieces we have read? Respond to 2 posts!

The Literature of the American South: Zora Neale Hurston, “Sweat” and “How It Feels to Be Colored Me”
Jean Toomer, *Cane*

****Check Announcements!!**

Wed. 18th July

The Literature of the American South: William Faulkner, “Dry September” and “The Odor of Verbena”
Lillian Smith, “When I Was a Child”

Journal element 3: Research and report your findings on the Southern Renaissance period in literature. Discuss it in terms of Faulkner, specifically the pieces read here, although you may expand your discussion using other Faulkner pieces you may have read.

****Check Announcements!!**

Thurs. 19th July

Discussion board 4: With Hurston and Toomer, we see a rise of the Black writer and Modernism in southern letters. It may be noted that Toomer and Hurston also function as key figures in the Harlem Renaissance. Explore what

makes each writer unique, stylistically, and part of a larger collective voice of protest, culturally. Respond to 2 posts!

The Literature of the American South: Allen Tate, “Ode to the Confederate Dead” and “The Swimmers”
Thomas Wolfe, from *Look Homeward Angel*
Sterling Brown, “Remembering Nat Turner”

**Check Announcements!!

Fri. 20th July

The Literature of the American South: Robert Penn Warren, “Bearded Oaks,” “Heart of Autumn,” and “Blackberry Winter”
Richard Wright, “Long Black Song”
“The Contemporary South, 1940-present”

Journal element 4: “Blackberry Winter” is what I call a “quiet story,” one that subtly makes its point. Explicate this story for its themes based on character. How is it a bildungsroman?

**Check Announcements!!

Mon. 23rd July Read Primary-source Analysis Essay Assignment

The Literature of the American South: Katherine Anne Porter, “He”
Eudora Welty, “A Curtain of Green” and “Where Is the Voice Coming From?”

**Check Announcements!!

Tues. 24th July

Discussion board 5: Discuss the differences between analysis and summary in criticism. Discuss your own chosen subject for the primary-source analysis essay, why you chose it, what you hope to uncover. Respond to 2 posts!

The Literature of the American South: Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

**Check Announcements!!

Wed. 25th July

The Literature of the American South: Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Journal element 5: Explore your analysis in a freewrite; outline the essay; write first draft; comment on ideas for revisions.

**Check Announcements!!

Thurs. 26th July

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

Discussion board 6: *A Streetcar Named Desire* features a New South in conflict with the Old. Discuss how the play functions thematically, what Williams' message is based on your knowledge of the concepts of "New South" discussed in the text's introduction to the period. Respond to 2 posts!

The Literature of the American South: Randall Jarrell, "90 North"
Ralph Ellison, from *Invisible Man*

**Check Announcements!!

Fri. 27th July

Read Assignment for Research Project

The Literature of the American South:

Margaret Walker, "For My People," "We Have Been Believers," "Southern Song"
Walker Percy, from *The Last Gentleman*
Carson McCullers, from *The Member of the Wedding*

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

**Check Announcements!!

Mon. 30th July

The Literature of the American South:

Peter Taylor, "Venus, Cupid, Folly, and Time"
James Dickey, "The Lifeguard" and "Cherrylog Road"
Flannery O'Connor, "Revelation"

**Check Announcements!!

Tues. 31st July

Discussion board 7: We are in my favorite southern literature period, what I think of as post-Renaissance. Research Flannery O'Connor's definition of the southern grotesque and discuss how select pieces indeed feature the grotesque character. How is "Venus, Cupid, Folly, and Time" reflective of the South's continued inability to let go of the "Lost Cause," to wallow in a grotesqueness of humanity? Respond to 2 posts!

The Literature of the American South:

Maya Angelou, from *I know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Chapter I
Ernest J. Gaines, "The Sky Is Gray"

****Check Announcements!!**

Wed. 1st August

The Literature of the American South: Reynolds Price, "The Company of the Dead"
Henry Dumus, "Ark of Bones"
Bobbie Ann Mason, "Shiloh"

Journal element 7: "The Sky Is Gray" is considered a bildungsroman, and it also strongly serves as a thematic Postmodern piece. Explore the concept of Postmodernism and how it is developed in a southern piece concerned with post-War African-American experience and shifting cultural norms and expectations.

****Check Announcements!!**

Thurs. 2nd August

Discussion board 8: Discuss how the literature we have read in the past couple of assigned days has moved into a firmly contemporary and Postmodern ideal, both in terms of themes and techniques. You may wish to do some research on this. What makes contemporary southern literature different than its predecessors? Is it still uniquely southern and holding onto a past? What would Price, say, or Mason? Respond to 2 posts!

The Literature of the American South: Nikki Giovanni, poems
James Alan McPherson, "Why I Love Country Music"

****Check Announcements!**

Fri. 3rd August

The Literature of the American South: Lee Smith, "Between the Lines"
Alice Walker, all pieces (you will thank me later!)

Journal element 8: Discuss your secondary sources in terms of their place in your essay. Examine the credibility of the sources—talk about where you found them, the types of journals or websites in which they appeared. Research the authors of the sources—are they credentialed, experts in their fields? Is the research balanced or should you discover further secondary sources? Finally, draft the Works Cited page.

**Check Announcements!!

Mon. 6th August

The Literature of the American South: R.T. Smith, poems

**Check Announcements!!

Tues. 7th August

Discussion board 9: Alice Walker possesses the ability to write prolifically in three genres. Based on your reading of her work, which genre spoke to you the most? Explore the themes you discovered recurring throughout all her pieces. Does she resonate today? Why or why not? Respond to 2 posts!

The Literature of the American South:

**Check Announcements!!

Wed. 8th August

The Literature of the American South: Dorothy Allison, from *Trash*, “River of Names”
Henry Louis Gates, Jr., from *Colored People*, “In the Kitchen”

Journal element 9: 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 nonfiction pieces (even the introductions to periods or authors) we read from the text or one of the articles you utilized 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!!**

Thurs. 9th August

Discussion board 10: For our last discussion board, discuss which literary aspect (historical, elemental, authorial, geographical, etc.) you enjoyed the most this course. Why? Talk about the cultural effects on you, their artistic techniques, the writers, the socio-cultural impacts and/or influences. Respond to 2 posts!

The Literature of the American South: Andrew Hudgens, poems
Randall Kenan, "The Foundations of the Earth"

****Check Announcements!!**

Fri. 10th August

****Research Essay Due**

Mon. 13th August Read Final Examination Assignment

Journal element 10: With southern style in mind, write a brief memoir piece about a memory from your life that has stuck with you. Pay special attention to the landscape of the piece—landscape is when the setting becomes crucial to the theme and effect of a story, so much that the setting becomes almost a character. All southern literature possesses landscape. Have fun with this one!

****Check Announcements!!**

Tues. 14th August

Catchup Day

Wed. 15th August

****Journal Due**

Thurs. 16th August

**** Final Examination Due**