Course Description:
In this course, we will study a selection of contemporary fiction by authors of African descent. As we read these works and relevant literary criticism, we will consider the usefulness of the many "post" terms that scholars use to describe contemporary black cultural production (post-Civil Rights, post-racial, postmodern, and post-soul, to offer just a few examples). We'll also work to understand the function of genre in this contemporary period as we read texts we might classify as satire, science fiction, realism, magical realism, and/or hip hop novels. This course requires substantial reading and writing, as well as vigorous participation.

Required Readings
Books on the schedule below are at the UO Bookstore and on reserve at Knight Library. Items with an asterisk are posted on Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Policies:
This course requires regular and vigorous participation in discussion.

Assignments must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on the due dates listed below and formatted according to current MLA guidelines (1 inch margins, single-side print, stapled, correct citation and quotation, and a works cited page). Consult the MLA Handbook if you are uncertain of correct format. Late assignments will be marked down by 1/3 of a letter grade (B becomes a B-) for each day they are late. No assignments will be accepted more than one week after the due date.

Missing class more than once in the term will result in reduction of your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade for each absence.

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please meet with me soon. Please request that the Accessible Education Center (http://aec.uoregon.edu/) send me a letter outlining your approved accommodations.

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas). If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students’ obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act.
Grading:
Participation 10%
Presentation 10%
Symposium Response (2-3 pages) 10%
Close Reading (4-5 pages) 10%
Paper Proposal (3-4 pages) 10%
Final Paper (10-15 pages) 50%

Week One
Monday, April 1  David Bradley, *The Chaneysville Incident* (1981)
Klaus Ensslen, “Fictionalizing History: David Bradley’s *The Chaneysville Incident*” (*Callaloo* 2007)*
Toni Morrison, “Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation”*

Week Two
Arlene Keizer, *Black Subjects: Identity Formation in the Contemporary Narrative of Slavery* (2004), Selections*
Assignment Sheet*

Week Three
Monday, April 15  Trey Ellis, *Platitudes* (1988)
Close Reading Handout*

Week Four
Kevin Young, *The Grey Album: On the Blackness of Blackness* (2012), Selections*
**Close Reading Due (4-5 pages)**

Friday, April 26  Symposium, "Racial Representations: African American Literature Since 1975," Gerlinger Lounge, 10am-6pm.

Week Five
Edwidge Danticat, Interview with Junot Díaz (*Bomb* 2007)*
Ramón Saldívar, “Historical Fantasy, Speculative Realism, and Postrace Aesthetics in Contemporary American Fiction” (*ALH* 2011)*
Week Six
Monday, May 6  
Alice Randall, *Rebel Yell* (2009)
Symposium response due (2-3 pages)

Week Seven
Monday, May 13  
Kenneth Warren, *What Was African American Literature?* (2012), Selections*
Marlon Ross, review essay on *What Was African American Literature?* (2012)*

Week Eight
Monday, May 20  
Mat Johnson, *Pym* (2011)
Paper proposal due (3-4 pages)

Week Nine
Monday, May 27  
Memorial Day, No Class

Week Ten
Monday, June 3  
Zadie Smith, *NW* (2012)

Exam Week
Monday, June 10  
Final paper due (10-15 pages) to Professor Thorsson's office (521 PLC) by 5pm