SYLLABUS

ENGLISH 104: INTRODUCTION TO FICTION
CRN 12098
FALL 2019
T, R 1200-1320, 255 LILLIS

INSTRUCTOR
AVINNASH P. TIWARI
APT@UOREGON.EDU
541 346-0061
PLC 444: T, R 1400-1530 & BY APPOINTMENT
**Course Information**

**Course Overview**
Through this course, students develop analytical skills that will allow them to think, write, and speak about fiction. The course addresses basic questions about the nature of prose narrative and the interrelated activities of reading, writing, and interpretation. What is a story, and what role do stories play in our cultural and political lives? Can the act of interpretation be a just act? Weekly readings are substantial in scope and difficulty, and students will be asked to compose critical writing of varying length. We’ll focus primarily on the writings of Black authors throughout the past 150 years or so. Even a cursory immersion into these stories quickly upsets any progressive narrative concerning race, gender, sexuality, and other facets of identity and power in the U.S. Equally important, we will explore the ways in which these stories and authors craft fiction in order to tell the all-too real story of the U.S. itself.

Needless to say, we will do a heavy amount of reading in this class. **Discussions** are crucial to our work and students will be responsible for **thoughtful engagement** (read carefully, identify questions). I will provide important social and historical contexts necessary for thinking about our particular texts. Student assignments will consist of regular, short writing assignments and a longer piece of writing for the end of the term.

**English Department Learning Outcomes**
*Upon completion of this course, students should be able to achieve the following outcomes:*
1. The ability to read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension.
2. To draw on current cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts.
3. To perform formal analyses of literary, cinematic, and other cultural texts.
4. To write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose.
5. To employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments.
6. To employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation.
**READINGS**

All readings will be provided as PDFs or links via Canvas. There is simply no way to get around the violence (physical, sexual, psychic) that exists all around us, everyday, whether witnessed or not. Our readings do not avoid the violent truths of life in the United States for too many people. As scholars, as much as we like creating new ideas and practicing them in the world we live in, such things as “safe spaces” are simply illogical constructions that fail to reflect the dynamics of power embedded within the United States, including and especially institutions of (higher) education.

**DISCUSSIONS**

Our discussions are crucial to this class. Failure to prepare thoroughly for discussion simply means you will not do well on your assignments. Words, themselves, can be violent. This is a crucial concept to understand for this class. Let me be clear: we may come across derogatory, demeaning, and dehumanizing language, both historically and contemporarily, that are expressions of anti-black racism and sexism. It is in no way acceptable, or even necessary, to appropriate the use of that language into our class discussions. This does not mean we ignore the violence present in our means of communication, knowledge, and reason (language); rather, this means we must interrogate its place within its specific context, historically, culturally, and socially.

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**ON READING**

*YOU MUST get into the habit of reading literature multiple times when engaging in scholarly work!*

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**GRADING BREAKDOWN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short writing assignments</th>
<th>75%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Longer writing assignment</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Course Work & Readings

Short Writing Assignments (75%)
Every week, I’d like you to write 500 words based on the readings, small-group discussions, and class-wide discussions. On Rs, we’ll fine tune each week’s range of options for writing, and you’ll turn in your 500 words by M via Canvas.

Final Writing Assignment (25% each)
We’ll decide together on a few options for the final assignment, such as a scholarly literary analysis (paper), a creative option, and a take-home “exam”-type assignment.

Course Policies

Academic Honesty
All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please consult the Student Conduct Code on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. In cases where academic misconduct has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is the standard practice of the Composition Program. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Access
The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.
Week 1
Class intro (T). Tiffany King talk (R: Knight Library Browsing Room)

Week 2
Toni Morrison and James Baldwin

Week 3
Pauline E. Hopkins

Week 4
more Hopkins

Week 5
Ann Petry

Week 6
Petry

Week 7
Revisit Morrison and Baldwin

Week 8
Beyoncé (watch on T; discuss on R)

Week 9
no classes

Week 10
Wrap-up

Finals Week

Long Writing Assignment due 13 December