

English 468/568
Black Rebellions
TTh 10:00-11:20am
201 Condon

Instructor: Dr. Faith Barter (she her hers)

Office: PLC 320

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:45-4:45pm. Sign up [here](#) (link also available on the Canvas home page)

E-mail: fbarter@uoregon.edu

Course Description:

Wherever slavery existed, there were those who resisted it, many of whom paid with their lives. This course examines the literature and theory of Black rebellions in the African Diaspora from the 1700s and 1800s. By reading accounts by and about Black rebels and revolutionaries, we will consider how the literature and discourse of Black rebellion shaped traditions of Black radicalism as well as U.S. American notions of democracy and civil rights. Our work will include the study of rebellions and revolts ranging from the Haitian Revolution to Nat Turner's Southampton Rebellion. We will consider literature and journalism documenting these events as they occurred, as well as some contemporary fiction, graphic novels, and film that re-imagine and re-mediate these narratives. The culmination of the class will be a collaborative digital project on a rebellion of the class's choosing.

A Note on Content:

This course will examine texts that document, describe, and grapple with issues of racial and sexual violence. The material may be graphic, and class discussions will frequently take up issues that many people consider controversial. Please consider whether this content will be disturbing or triggering to a degree that will interfere with your learning in the course. No one in this class will say the n-word, regardless of whether that word appears in our course texts. See the Canvas site for additional information on language practices around slavery.

Learning Outcomes:

Through reading, written assignments, and in-class discussion, this course will help you:

- Arrive at a deeper historical, legal, cultural, and literary understanding of Black rebellions in the African Diaspora, including how rebellions have shaped discursive traditions including U.S. American civil rights discourse, Black radicalism, and Black feminism.
- Generate a deeper knowledge of the relationship between Black radicalism and Black feminism.
- Establish facility with digital archival research methodologies through sustained and self-driven exploration of Accessible Archives.
- Establish literacy with basic digital humanities skills through contribution to a collaborative digital project.
- Refine, through written expression, close reading skills, critical thinking, and critical argumentation skills;
- Identify other places in which to use these skills—other coursework, daily life, personal reading, etc.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

The following texts are required. Use of laptops is discouraged unless necessary to access a digital document. Note that some of the books are being read in excerpted fashion – if you prefer to access this content using other means, you might not need to buy every text that

has been ordered through the Duckstore. Do try to obtain the below editions if possible, however. Please note that you will be required to obtain access to two films.

- C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (ISBN: 9780679724674)
- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (ISBN: 9780807080535)
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (ISBN: 9780802141323)
- Sutton Griggs, *Imperium in Imperio* (ISBN: 9780812971606) or Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (ISBN: 9780140186864) – we will vote as a class on which text to read
- Kyle Baker, *Nat Turner* (ISBN: 9780810972278)
- Brittney Cooper, *Eloquent Rage* (ISBN: 9781250112880)
- *Daughters of the Dust* (film, dir. Julie Dash; available to rent through Amazon Prime)
- *Burn!* (1969 film, dir. Gillo Pontecorvo; available to rent through Apple)
- You will also be required to read the following course texts. PDFs or links will be provided to you:
 - Excerpts from *None Like Us* (Stephen Best)
 - Excerpts from *Lose Your Mother* (Saidiya Hartman)
 - Excerpts from *Black Marxism* (Cedric Robinson)
 - The Haitian Declaration of Independence
 - *Benito Cereno* (Herman Melville)
 - Readings from the Black Radical Tradition free online reader

GRADING DISTRIBUTION:

For students enrolled in ENG 468:

Canvas Posts (10 total)	15%
Close Reading Paper (3-4 pages)	15%
Accessible Archives Research Log & Presentation of Archival Object	20%
Proposal/outline for final project	10%
Final paper/project (6-8 pages or equivalent)	25%
In-class participation	15%

For students enrolled in ENG 568:

Response Papers (10 total; 1-2 pages each)	10%
Close Reading Paper (4-5 pages)	15%
Accessible Archives Research Log & Presentation of Archival Object	10%
Proposal/outline for final project	10%
Final paper/project (12-15 pages or equivalent)	25%
In-class presentation	15%
In-class participation	15%

COURSE POLICIES:

Class participation: Active classroom participation is an integral part of your success in this course. On a practical level, I expect you to come to class having read and thought about the assigned readings, and therefore having prepared to discuss them. You are unable to participate effectively if you have not brought the text(s) we are discussing that day. Laptop use should be kept to a minimum and only to access digital course content. If you are observed using your laptop or other electronic

device for non-class purposes, you may or may not receive a warning in class – but such behavior will inevitably degrade your participation score for the term.

Your classroom participation grade will be based on my assessment of your regular contributions to class discussion and a self-evaluation of your in-class performance that you will complete at the end of the term.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and essential to your success in the course. You are allowed two absences during the term. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences except for religious observances. Each absence over two will result in 1/3 of a letter grade penalty off your final grade in the course. **Attendance is taken each day, but only tallied at the end of the term. It is your responsibility to keep track of your attendance and to be aware of how many absences remain available to you without a penalty on your final grade.**

What to do if you miss a class: Most of the time, nothing. I do **not** need or want to know why you miss individual classes unless it is for a religious observance or a school-sanctioned absence. If you are experiencing serious personal issues that cause repeated absences, I do encourage you to speak to me as early as possible so that we can strategize together how to navigate the situation. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes and information from a classmate. Do not ask me to summarize content you have missed. You are welcome, however, to come to office hours with specific questions about missed content *after* you've consulted with a classmate.

Tardiness: Class begins promptly at 10:00am; late entries are disruptive and are strongly discouraged. If you are more than 20 minutes late (or leave more than 20 minutes early), I will mark you absent.

Electronic devices: As stated above, electronic devices/e-readers should be used sparingly. Phones should be turned OFF (not on vibrate or silent) before entering the classroom and should remain off for the duration of class. You should not be talking or texting during class using *any* electronic means, including your watch.

Academic Honesty: I take very seriously our shared obligation to academic integrity, and all of your work in this class—including informal papers and paper proposals—should be entirely your own.

Access: The Accessible Education Center (uoacc@uoregon.edu) handles requests for accommodation of disabilities. I and the University want this class to be an inclusive learning environment. Please notify me as soon as possible if aspects of the course are creating barriers to your participation or if you need to share an accommodations letter from the AEC.

Correspondence: Allow 48 hours for responses to emails. If you are requesting information that is already available in the syllabus or on Canvas, you are likely to receive a response to that effect. Please make sure you consult those resources *before* contacting me.

Deadlines: I take deadlines extremely seriously. For formal papers, submitting even one minute past the deadline counts as a late submission and will result in a penalty of 10% for each day that it is late. Please avoid this scenario by seeking out extensions early – I grant them quite readily, but you must request them at least 24 hours before the due date. Late Canvas posts (for 468 students) receive zero credit.

Extra Credit: I offer extra credit for attendance and brief write-ups on relevant campus events. You may submit up to four extra credit assignments this term. Events eligible for extra credit will be

added to the course calendar in Canvas. See the Canvas page on Extra Credit for detailed information about how to complete a write-up and how I apply extra credit points.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Detailed assignment instructions are posted on Canvas – you should never submit an assignment without carefully reviewing the instructions posted on Canvas.

Canvas posts (468 only): Over the course of the quarter, you must submit a total of 10 Canvas posts. Posts are due each day that we have a class meeting between January 9 and March 5, and posts are due by 9:30am that day (i.e., 30 minutes before class starts). Posts should be 150-200 words and should outline a topic or aspect of that day's reading that you would like to suggest for our class discussion. You will receive full credit for posts submitted by the deadline that are at least 150 words long and make a good faith attempt at engaging the reading thoughtfully. You will only receive partial credit for responses that summarize, paraphrase, or merely recite observations about the day's reading. You are strongly encouraged to use your post to practice close reading a portion of the reading. You must submit 10 Canvas posts by March 5. That schedule leaves you 7 freebies (the rough equivalent of one per week). It is up to you how you use them. Scores will be entered in Canvas and tallied at the end of the term.

Response papers (568 only): Over the course of the quarter, you must submit a total of 10 reading response papers. Papers are due by the start of class each day, should be 300-500 words long, and can take any shape/format. However, each paper should engage (deeply) at least one of that day's readings. Response papers are great opportunities to begin a close reading, to pose questions that you attempt to answer, to identify common patterns or relationships among readings, etc. These papers are intended to be informal but rigorous – they should move your and our thinking forward, rather than simply demonstrating your comprehension/mastery of a text or engaging solely in critique.

Accessible Archives Research Logs (468 and 568): Throughout the term, you will be responsible for exploring Accessible Archives in a self-driven and self-directed way to consider how the relevant journalism of the period reported and narrated the rebellions we study. Using a template I provide, you will need to maintain a research log that 1) documents search terms you used, and 2) identifies and annotates individual records you reviewed. You might find it useful to use this research in connection with your first paper and/or your final project, or you might use it to compare it with the other readings we do. By the end of the term, your log should contain a minimum of 20 entries. I will ask you to submit at least your first 10 entries by Week 4. You will also sign up for a time to deliver an informal (MAX 5-minute) description of an interesting item you find in the archive.

Paper 1 (468 and 568): You will write a brief close reading paper. You are strongly encouraged to generate a close reading based on a topic you begin to develop in your Canvas posts or response papers.

Final project/paper: Your final project in the course will be a collaborative digital project on a rebellion of the class's choosing. We will talk about this more in the coming weeks, but you may find it useful to know that you will not be working in groups – rather, you will be responsible for conceiving and executing your own individual contribution to a collaborative site/platform. For undergraduates, this assignment should be the general equivalent of a 6-8 page paper; for graduate students, this assignment should be the general equivalent of a 12-15 page paper. You will submit a (separately graded) proposal several weeks before the final project is due. We are lucky to have a GE, Czander Tan (czandert@uoregon.edu), who will be assisting us with the creation of the platform we use for this collaborative endeavor. Czander will occasionally attend class and will be available for assistance on the digital project toward the end of the term.

In-class Presentation (568 only): Each graduate student will sign up to lead a class discussion/activity for one of our class sessions. As part of this presentation, you will need to 1) submit a lesson plan to me at least 48 hours in advance; and 2) prepare/execute a classroom discussion or other activity that should last for approximately 30 minutes. The choice of format is up to you. I will ask you to submit three choices for which day you would like to present, so make sure you review the reading schedule carefully.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1		
T	Jan. 7	Introductions
Th	Jan. 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C.L.R. James, <i>The Black Jacobins</i> (READ Chapter 1, SKIM Chapter 2, READ Chapter 10, GUT as much of the rest of the book as you can) • Haitian Declaration of Independence: available at https://today.duke.edu/showcase/haitideclaration/declarationstext.html
Week 2		
T	Jan. 14	Michel-Rolph Trouillot, <i>Silencing the Past</i> (Read Foreword, Preface, Chapter 2)
Th	Jan. 16	Michel-Rolph Trouillot, <i>Silencing the Past</i> (Read Chapter 3, Chapter 5, and Epilogue)
Week 3		
T	Jan. 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cedric Robinson, <i>Black Marxism</i> (Read Chapters 6 and 7: available at https://libcom.org/files/Black%20Marxism-Cedric%20Robinson.pdf) • Angela Davis, “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves,” (in <i>Black Radical Tradition</i>, available at https://libcom.org/files/The%20Black%20Radical%20Tradition_0.pdf)
Th	Jan. 23	Kyle Baker, <i>Nat Turner</i> (read first half). If you have never read Turner’s Confessions, read that text as well: available at https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/turner/turner.html
Week 4		
T	Jan. 28	Kyle Baker, <i>Nat Turner</i> (read second half)
W	Jan. 29	***Research Log: First 10 entries due via Canvas by 8pm***
Th	Jan. 30	Herman Melville, <i>Benito Cereno</i> (Read first half)
Week 5		
T	Feb. 4	Herman Melville, <i>Benito Cereno</i> (Read second half)
Th	Feb. 6	Frantz Fanon, <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> (Chapter 1)
Week 6		
T	Feb. 11	Frantz Fanon, <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> (READ Chapter 3; skim Chapter 4)
W	Feb. 12	***Close Reading Paper due via Canvas by 8pm***
Th	Feb. 13	<i>Burn!</i> (watch the film on your own before class)
Week 7		
T	Feb. 18	Sutton Griggs, <i>Imperium in Imperio</i> or Charles Chesnutt, <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i> (Read first 1/3)
Th	Feb. 20	Sutton Griggs, <i>Imperium in Imperio</i> or Charles Chesnutt, <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i> (Read second 1/3)
Week 8		
M	Feb. 24	***Final Project Proposal/Outline due via Canvas by 8pm***
T	Feb. 25	Sutton Griggs, <i>Imperium in Imperio</i> or Charles Chesnutt, <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i> (Read final 1/3)
Th	Feb. 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combahee River Collective Statement (in <i>Black Radical Tradition</i>)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the images and descriptions on Rebecca Hall's Kickstarter page for <i>Wake</i>: https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/694426471/wake-the-hidden-history-of-women-led-slave-revolts/description
Week 9		
T	Mar. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen Best, excerpts from <i>None Like Us</i> (on Canvas) Saidiya Hartman, excerpts from <i>Lose Your Mother</i> (on Canvas)
Th	Mar. 5	<i>Daughters of the Dust</i> (watch the film on your own before class)
Week 10		
M	Mar. 9	***Research Log: Final 10 Entries Due via Canvas by 8pm***
T	Mar. 10	Brittney Cooper, <i>Eloquent Rage</i> (read as much as possible)
Th	Mar. 12	Evaluations, Reflections
Th	Mar. 19	***Final Projects Due by 11:59pm***