

[(For information only: complete details are available in Blackboard and from the instructor).]

Louisiana Literature

LIT C405:051

Spring 2005

Office: Stallings 122

Office hours: Mon/Tues 3:30-6:00 p. m.

Website: <http://loyno.edu/~bewell>

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TEXTS

Required:

Butler, Robert. *Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*. 1992; New York: Grove, 2001.

Chopin, Kate. *At Fault*, 1890. Ed. Bernard Koloski, Penguin 2002.

Gaines, Ernest. *A Lesson Before Dying*. 1993; New York: Vintage, 1997.

Gautreaux, Tim. *The Clearing*. New York: Vintage, 2004

Nathup, Solomon, *Twelve Years a Slave*. 1853; New York: Dover, 2000.

Saxon, Lyle. *Children of Strangers*. 1937; New Orleans: Pelican, 1989.

Warren, Robert Penn. *All the King's Men*. 1946; New York: Harcourt 1996.

Williams, Tennessee. *A Streetcar Named Desire*, 1947. Signet Book, 1989

Wells, Rebecca. *Little Altars Everywhere*. New York: Perennial, 1996.

Other texts may be provided.

Recommended

Instant Access: The Pocket Reference for Writers. Michael L. Keene and Katherine H. Adams. Eds. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This course will examine the rich literary heritage of Louisiana, including the many works that draw on its resources. The early settlement of the state, with its diverse linguistic and cultural elements, laid the foundations for a unique literary tradition. Louisiana has been shaped by many cultural forces, including the slave-holding history of the south, the rural Acadian refugees, and the complex perspectives of the state's major port city, New Orleans. In recent times, those primary cultures have been overlaid by twentieth-century tensions of industrialization, especially in the exploitation of oil and gas. Writers and audiences have found this confluence of cultures irresistible, and the writings about the state include works by some of American literature's most significant figures.

To understand better this diverse literary tradition and its relationship to American literature generally, we will read a number of short stories and novels, as well as some poetry and non-fiction, relying on careful reading and discussion to clarify the texts and their contexts. The writing assignments will provide further opportunities to focus our understanding of this literary tradition.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Credit for Composition 119 and Introduction to Literary Forms (LIT C260) or equivalent. This course will be taught primarily over the internet, using Blackboard.com as well as this website and email. To take this course you must have an email account and a graphics browser (e.g., Netscape or Explorer), and a Blackboard.com account.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Comments

Weekly discussions using Blackboard.com. Comments will be evaluated on a contractual basis: 14 comments (with 27+ responses) = A; 13 (with 25+) = B+; 12 (with 23+); 11 (with 21+) = B/C+; 10 (with 19+) = C+/C; 9 (with 17+) = D+/D; 8 or fewer (with fewer than 15 responses) will represent an F. Pluses and minuses will be awarded for originality, thoughtfulness, coherence

and relevance to the themes of the course; the timeliness of comments will be evidence of class participation. (30-35%).

Writing Assignments (25-30%)

The formal writing in this course will be a series of assignments based on one or more works by Louisiana writers among those covered in the course or from a list I will provide. These assignments, due throughout the semester and involving various degrees of research, will provide some of the basic content for a final electronic (webpage) presentation.

Website Presentation of Research (15-20%)

One of the ways that we'll reflect and take advantage of the online nature of this course will be a final electronic presentation of your research on a Louisiana writer. Some details and criteria will be established together, and we can organize some special classes for learning the basics (or sharing techniques) for creating webpages and presenting your work effectively. Collaboration with other members of the class is strongly encouraged, but not required. The websites will be presented at our final meeting on Friday evening, May 6.

Final Examination (25-30%).

Extra Credit Options

Extra credit of up to 5% of your grade is available for attending and writing a short report about a literary or other intellectual event during the semester.

College Policies on Intellectual Honesty

Intellectual honesty is simply acknowledging, through documentation, all those sources that the writer has used in preparing any written work. Any material that neither originates with the student nor is common knowledge among educated persons must be formally acknowledged. The penalties for plagiarism are severe: a student who is found to have plagiarized or to have assisted another student in plagiarizing may be given a failing grade for the course on the first violation; a second offense may result in exclusion or dismissal from the university. For the complete details on standards and penalties, see "Integrity of Scholarship and Grades," Undergraduate Bulletin.

SYLLABUS

N.B. A syllabus is merely a plan from which to deviate; keep yourself informed..

Week #1 Introductions; Louisiana backgrounds

Week #2 Antebellum Louisiana

Solomon Northrup, Twelve Years a Slave (1853) [excerpts]

Selections from Les Cénelles (1845)

Week #3 Local Color Louisiana

Kate Chopin, At Fault (1890)

Week #4 Kate Chopin, Ruth Stuart, George W. Cable, Alice Dunbar-Nelson

Week #5 Lyle Saxon, Children of Strangers (1937); first essay due.

Week #6 Lyle Saxon, Children of Strangers (1937);

"Redbone," Ada Jack Carver.

Week #7 Robert Penn Warren, All the King's Men (1946); midterm exam.

Week #8 Robert Penn Warren, All the King's Men (1946)

Week #9 Ernest Gaines, A Gathering of Old Men (1983)

Week #9 Ernest Gaines, A Gathering of Old Men (1983)

Week #10 Robert Olen Butler, A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain (1992)

Week #11 Robert Olen Butler, A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain (1992);
second paper due

Week #12 Tim Parrish, Red Stick Men (2000)

Week #13 Selections from Tim Gautreau, James Lee Burke, Yusef Koumenyakaa

Week #14 Lalita Tademy, Cane River (2002)

Week #15 Lalita Tademy, Cane River (2002)

FINAL EXAMINATION