English 3863/5723/6723: The Multicultural South

Fall 2011
T/Th 2:00—3:20PM
Walton College of Business 339
Professor Lisa Hinrichsen
English Department
Office Kimpel Hall, Room 231
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Office Hours: Wednesday 2–4 or by appointment

Course Overview
This course will examine multicultural contemporary literature that situates southern identity within a postmodern, diverse, and international context. In foregrounding cultural similarities between the U.S. South and the Global South, these texts process complicated questions of historical trauma, diasporic identity, and cultural assimilation, and reconceptualize exclusionary and exceptionalist notions of nation and region by placing the U.S. South in a transnational perspective. How does multicultural literature challenge the long-standing assumption that one must be born in the South to understand it? What does it mean when we understand the U.S. South in solidarity with other “Global Souths,” or developing countries with similar economic histories of belated capitalist modernization, slavery, and exploitation of labor and raw materials? How do texts by Asian, Latino, and Native American writers in the U.S. South realign racial histories previously thought of in terms of black–white binaries? This course will examine these and other questions as we explore how recent multicultural southern literature plays a key role in a field of study increasingly challenging its own dominant fictions. Note that this course will situate primary texts in relation to recent critical and theoretical work in southern studies and related fields; we will examine how (and if) southern studies has been enriched rather than threatened by the influx of global identities and capital to the South, and we will examine new methodologies for understanding and reconceptualizing memory, history, place, and community.

Required Textbooks (Please buy these particular editions)
Monique Truong, Bitter in the Mouth (Random House)
V.S. Naipaul, A Turn in the South (Vintage)
Dave Eggers, Zeitoun (Vintage)
Linda Hogan, Power (Norton)
LeAnne Howe, Shell Shaker (Aunt Lute)
Roberto Fernandez, Holy Radishes (Arte Publico Press)
Erna Brodber, Louisiana (University Press of Mississippi)
Cynthia Shearer, The Celestial Jukebox (University of Georgia Press)

Not Required
Mississippi Masala (video); Displaced in the New South (video)

Short stories and critical readings will be distributed on the course’s Blackboard site. Additional theoretical and critical readings may be introduced in class.

Class Participation and Attendance
You are expected to have completed all assigned readings and to come to class with questions and insights to share. Active participation in the course is essential and expected. Please prepare responses to the readings: expect to be called on in class. More than three unexcused absences will lower your course grade. Absences over this limit will only be excused with a doctor’s note. Please notify me before class begins if you will be unable to attend a course meeting due to illness or emergency. Being late twice will be considered equivalent to one absence. In case of inclement weather, classes will be held as long as the University is open; please notify me if you commute from out of the area and have trouble coming to campus.

Written Assignments
Think carefully about the distinction between observation and analysis before writing. All papers should be word-processed, double-spaced, and in Times New Roman 12-point type. Proofread and spell-check your assignments thoroughly. Keep a file with all your notes, drafts, and outlines throughout the semester. All assignments are due at the beginning of class and should be submitted in a hard-copy format. If you miss class on the day of a deadline, please contact me as soon as possible. Late papers will lose one-third of a letter grade a day (e.g., A to A–). Assignments not turned in during class (i.e., put in my department mailbox) will also lose one-third of a letter grade.

Grading
Class Participation (attendance, discussion, in-class writing, short quizzes) 15%
Class Presentation 10% (undergraduates: 10 minutes; graduate students: 15 minutes)
Short Response Paper 10%
Analytical Paper (5–8 pages) 20%
Midterm 20%
Final 25%

It is required that you meet with me at least once over the course of the semester. If you fail to do so, your participation grade will be lowered.
Graduate students will complete the short response paper plus a 15–25 page final research paper, which will be preceded by an annotated bibliography and prospectus due November 10.

**On Plagiarism**
Although you may spend time reading and commenting upon each other’s work in class, your written words should be your own—they should not be taken from online or other sources. If you are uncertain about how to avoid plagiarism, make an appointment to discuss it with me.

**Disability**
University of Arkansas Academic Policy Series 1520.10 requires that students with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact me privately at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these accommodations through the Center for Educational Access (contact 479–575–3104 or visit [http://cea.uark.edu](http://cea.uark.edu) for more information on registration procedures.

**SCHEDULE**

**August 23** What is “the South”? What is southern literature?


**August 26** Last day to register, add a course, or change from credit to audit

**August 30** V.S. Naipaul, A Turn in the South

**September 1** V.S. Naipaul, A Turn in the South
September 2 Last day to drop without a mark of “W” or change from credit to audit

September 5 Labor Day Holiday

September 6 V.S. Naipaul, A Turn in the South


September 13 Erna Brodber, Louisiana (55–94)


September 20 Roberto Fernandez, Holy Radishes

September 22 No Class: At Conference


September 29 Roberto Fernandez, Holy Radishes FIRST PAPER DUE
October 4 Linda Hogan, Power (1–82)

October 6 Linda Hogan, Power (83–176)

October 11 Linda Hogan, Power (177–end)

October 13 LeAnne Howe, Shell Shaker (1–79)

October 18 Fall Break: No Class

October 20 LeAnne Howe, Shell Shaker (80–143)

October 25 LeAnne Howe, Shell Shaker (144–end) TAKE HOME MIDTERM (Open Book)

October 27 Video: Mississippi Masala TAKE HOME MIDTERM DUE IN CLASS

November 1 Video: Mississippi Masala

November 3 Cynthia Shearer, The Celestial Jukebox (1–107)

November 8 Cynthia Shearer, The Celestial Jukebox (108–199)

November 10 Cynthia Shearer, The Celestial Jukebox (200–300)
Annotated Bibliography and Prospectus Due (Graduate Students)

November 15 Cynthia Shearer, The Celestial Jukebox (300–end)

November 17 Video: Displaced in the New South FINAL PAPERS DUE

**November 18 Last day to drop a full semester class**

**November 22** Monique Truong, Bitter in the Mouth

**November 24 Thanksgiving: No Class**

**November 29** Monique Truong, Bitter in the Mouth

**December 1** Monique Truong, Bitter in the Mouth

**December 6** Dave Eggers, Zeitoun


**December 8** Dave Eggers, Zeitoun


**December 9** Dead Day

**December 12–16** Final Examination Period

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**Recommended Resources For Further Reading in Southern Literature**


Ayers, Edward L. The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction. New


Jones, Suzanne W., and Sharon Monteith. South to a New Place: Region, Literature, Culture.
——-. The South That Wasn’t There: Postsouthern Memory and History. Baton Rouge:
October 2005. No. 5.
Volume 120. pg. 1628–1639.
——-. Nationalism and the Color Line in George W. Cable, Mark Twain, and William Faulkner. Baton Rouge:
Louisiana State UP, 1996.
——-. Resisting History: Gender, Modernity, and Authorship in William Faulkner, Zora Neale Hurston, and
Levander, Caroline Field and Robert S. Levine, eds. Hemispheric American Studies. New Brunswick:
University Press, 2011.
MacKethan, Lucinda H. The Dream of Arcady: Place and Time in Southern Literature. Baton Rouge:
McPherson, Tara. Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South. Durham, N.C.:
Odem, Mary, Ed. Latino Immigrants and the Transformation of the U.S. South. Athens: University
Painter, Nell Irvin. Southern History Across the Color Line. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina,
2002.
Peacock, James L. Grounded Globalism: How the U.S. South Embraces the World. Athens: University of
206, 222.
Twelve Southerners, I’ll Take My Stand: The South and Agrarian Tradition. Baton Rouge: Louisiana