

**Professor:** Erich Nunn  
**Class meets:** TTh 11:00-12:15, Haley Center 3328  
**Office hours:** TTh 1-3:15, Haley Center 9076, or by appointment  
**Email:** erich.nunn@auburn.edu  
**Phone:** 334.246.1409 (emergencies only, please)

## Overview

Representations (including self-representations) of the South in the nineteenth century revolved around plantation slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Similarly, we might think about the twentieth century as being defined by Jim Crow segregation, the out-migration of both blacks and lower-class whites, and the civil rights movement and its aftermath. What are the issues, then, that structure the twenty-first-century southern imaginary? To what extent does it make sense to talk about “the South” as a unified conceptual, ideological, or geographical place? Through what cultural forms is the South represented? The course will take a cultural studies approach to these questions, examining recent literary texts by southern writers alongside a range of other media, including television shows, films, magazine, music, etc. Our investigations of these texts and media will draw on recent interdisciplinary work in southern studies.

## Materials

The primary texts we will use in this class are available from the Auburn University bookstore. Films and episodes of television shows will be available via Canvas, Netflix, Amazon Prime, or other online sources.

### Novels and short story collections

- Skip Horack, *The Southern Cross: Stories* (Mariner, 2009)
- Karen Russell, *Swamplandia!* (Vintage, 2011)
- Michael Farris Smith, *Rivers: A Novel* (Simon & Schuster, 2013)
- Jesmyn Ward, *Salvage the Bones* (Bloomsbury, 2011)

### Films and TV shows

- *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (2012)
- *Django Unchained* (2012)
- *Duck Dynasty* (2012)
- *Spring Breakers* (2012)
- *Swamp People* (2010)
- *True Detective* (2014)

### Critical texts

The following essays and book chapters will be available in PDF format via Canvas or online:

- Deborah E. Barker and Kathryn McKee, “Introduction: The Southern Imaginary.” In *American Cinema and the Southern Imaginary*. (University of Georgia Press, 2011): 1-25.
- Christopher Lirette. Something True about Louisiana: HBO's *True Detective* and the *Petrochemical America* Aesthetic. *Southern Spaces* (Aug 13, 2014). <http://bit.ly/1tFS9FU>.
- Sarah Nicole Prickett and Malcolm Harris, eds. “Spring Break Forever.” *The New Inquiry* (April 17, 2013). <<http://thenewinquiry.com/features/spring-break-forever/>>
- Scott Romine, “Introduction.” In *The Real South: Southern Narrative in the Age of Cultural Reproduction* (Louisiana State University Press, 2008): 1-26.
- Marc Smirnoff, “G&G Me With a Buccellati Silver Spoon! The *OA* Editor Objects to Media-Falsifications of the South.” *Oxford American* (Feb 23, 2012). <<http://bit.ly/1u60Fl0>>

- Jon Smith, “Introduction: What *Does* an American Studies Scholar Want?” In *Finding Purple America: The South and the Future of American Cultural Studies*. (University of Georgia Press, 2013): 1-27.
- Riché Richardson, “Gangstas and Playas in the Dirty South.” In *Black Masculinity and the U.S. South* (University of Georgia Press, 2007): 197-227.
- Patricia Yaeger, “Beasts of the Southern Wild and Dirty Ecology.” *Southern Spaces* (Feb 13, 2013). <http://bit.ly/1prQlwZ>.

Other critical texts may be added throughout the semester.

## Classroom policies

This course is discussion-based. This means that you are expected to engage actively and respectfully with me and with your classmates. Please note that the use of laptops and cellphones is not permitted in the class. Please keep these items out of sight (i.e., in a pocket or a bag). If you text or engage in any other disruptive behavior, I will ask you to leave.

## Attendance

I expect you to attend every class meeting, with reasonable allowances for illness, extracurricular activities, accidents, injuries, family emergencies, etc. As a general rule, missing more than a week of class (two class meetings) will adversely affect your participation grade.

Please be on time for class. Students arriving more than ten minutes after the start of class will be considered absent.

Students who miss a class, for whatever reason, are responsible for any material covered and assignments made. This means that you will need to get notes from a classmate. Do not email me asking me to recap a class for you. (See <http://bit.ly/jgK4N>.)

## Participation

Participation is not the same thing as attendance. This means that showing up to class every day and keeping generally mum will earn you an F in participation. It's a small class, all running by discussion, so you'll have no choice but to get involved. Hence it is imperative for you to be ready for class—you will need to do the reading in advance, carefully and invariably. Most students earn a B- in participation, making insightful comments in many discussions but staying uninvolved in others. Earning a B in participation means that you have come to class prepared every day, making meaningful contributions and responding to your classmates; the B involves participating heartily almost every day. A-range grades in participation are reserved for those who consistently offer true insight, read and argue rigorously, draw their classmates into thoughtful discussion in an inviting and considerate way, and situate their comments within the larger conversation the class is having. The A-range participator does this in nearly every class. Class participation counts for 10% of your grade in the course.

## Assignments

All assignments should be completed by the relevant due date. Grades on late assignments will be reduced by one letter grade for each day they are late (including Saturdays and Sundays). All assignments must be completed in order for you to pass the course.

## Response papers

You will be expected to produce a total of four one- to two-page (250- to 500-word) response papers during the course of the semester. You may submit no more than one response paper on any given day, and each response must address readings from the current week. Together, the response papers comprise 15% of your final grade.

### Research papers

You will write two longer papers of six to eight pages. These essays will follow MLA formatting guidelines, and be submitted electronically via Canvas. Late papers are marked down one letter grade for every day late. Together, these papers accounts for 30% of your final grade.

### Quizzes

Quizzes will be given periodically (as often as twice a week) to check your close reading skills. These quizzes will comprise short answer questions on the texts being read at that time. Quizzes comprise 10% of your final grade.

### Presentation/Class discussion

You will be expected to help lead one hour-long class discussion (each student should take responsibility for about twenty minutes). This presentation/discussion will comprise 15% of your final grade.

### Final Exam

The final exam will be cumulative—that is, it will reflect all the material covered in the course. The final exam constitutes 20% of your final grade.

### Students with Disabilities

Students who need accommodations should arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. Bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need accommodations, you will need to make an appointment with The Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TI).

### Plagiarism

I will not tolerate plagiarism. For a detailed description of what Auburn considers to be plagiarism and cheating as well as your rights and responsibilities when witnessing either of these actions, please see the Student Academic Honesty Code at <http://bit.ly/nwql7z>.

### Schedule

Week	Dates	Readings and Activities
1	Tue, Aug 19 Thu, Aug 21	Introduction to the course Marc Smirnoff, “G&G Me With a Buccellati Silver Spoon!” Selections from <i>Southern Living</i> , <i>Garden &amp; Gun</i> , and <i>The Oxford American</i>
2	Tue, Aug 26 Thu, Aug 28	Romine, from <i>The Real South</i> Smith, from <i>Finding Purple America</i>
3	Tue, Sep 2 Thu, Sep 4	Ward, <i>Salvage the Bones</i>
4	Tue, Sep 9 Thu, Sep 11	Horack, <i>The Southern Cross</i>
5	Tue, Sep 16 Thu, Sep 18	Russell, <i>Swamplandia</i>
6	Tue, Sep 23 Thu, Sep 25	Barker and McKee, “Introduction: The Southern Imaginary” <i>Beasts of the Southern Wild</i> Yaeger, “ <i>Beasts of the Southern Wild</i> and Dirty Ecology” <b>Guest lecture: Dr. James A. Crank, University of Alabama</b>

7	Tue, Sep 30	<i>Spring Breakers</i>
	Thu, Oct 2	Readings from “Spring Break Forever”
8	Tue, Oct 7	<b>Paper workshops</b>
	Thu, Oct 9	
	Tue, Oct 14	<b>Paper 1 due; no class meeting</b>
	Thu, Oct 16	<b>FALL BREAK</b>
9	Tue, Oct 21	<b>No class meeting (away at conference)</b>
	Thu, Oct 23	Country: Readings by Karl Hagstrom Miller, Adam Gussow, and Nadine Hubbs
10	Tue, Oct 28	Southern Hip-Hop:
	Thu, Oct 30	Readings by Roni Sarig, Ben Westoff, Regina Bradley, Brittney Cooper, Riché Richardson
11	Tue, Nov 4	<i>Django Unchained</i>
	Thu, Nov 6	
12	Tue, Nov 11	Smith, <i>Rivers</i>
	Thu, Nov 13	
13	Tue, Nov 18	<b>No class meeting (away for talk)</b>
	Thu, Nov 20	<i>True Detective</i>
	Tue, Nov 25	<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>
	Thu, Nov 27	
14	Tue, Dec 2	<i>Duck Dynasty, Swamp People</i>
	Thu, Dec 4	<b>Paper 2 due; no class meeting</b>
<b>Final Exam Thursday, Dec 11, 12 noon – 2:30 p.m.</b>		