

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Instructor: | Dr. Erich Nunn |
| Class meeting times: | MWF 11:00-11:50, Haley 2226 |
| Office hours: | MW 10:00-10:50, 1:00-2:00, Haley Center 9076, or by appointment |
| Email: | erich.nunn@auburn.edu |
| Phone: | 334.246.1409 (emergencies only, please) |

Overview

This course considers how the South has been imagined in speculative fiction, from the nineteenth century to the present. We will read texts that imagine alternate histories of slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction, as well as those that map imaginary Souths onto fictional worlds. Topics may include Afrofuturism, science fictions of the global South, utopias, and dystopias.

Materials

The printed texts we will use in this class are available from the Auburn University bookstore. Out of concern for the substantial financial burdens many students face, I have endeavored to assign inexpensive editions of these works. You may opt to acquire eBooks for some or all of these, but if you do so, please be aware 1) that various editions may not have the same contents and 2) that course discussions and lectures will be keyed to the page numbers in the assigned print editions. That said, where high-quality electronic editions are available freely and legally, I have included links below. Additional materials will be available online via Google Books and/or Canvas. Items on Canvas items are marked with an asterisk (*) below.

Novels, short stories, and other prose narratives

- Edgar Rice Burroughs, *A Princess of Mars*, 1917. (<https://www.amazon.com/Princess-Mars-Edgar-Rice-Burroughs-ebook/dp/B0084BMGJU/>)
- Octavia Butler, *Kindred*, 1979
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*, 1915. (<https://www.amazon.com/HERLAND-Wisehouse-Classics-Original-1909-1916-ebook/dp/B01BQ1A3AI/>)
- Jewelle Gomez, *The Gilda Stories*, 1991
- Stephen Graham Jones, *Mongrels*, 2016
- Randall Kenan, *A Visitation of Spirits*, 1989
- Kiese Laymon, *Long Division*, 2013
- Alan Moore, *Saga of the Swamp Thing*, 1987
- Karen Russell, *Swamplandia!*, 2011
- Michael Farris Smith, *Rivers*, 2013
- Harry Turtledove, *The Guns of the South*, 1992
- Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, 1889. (<https://books.google.com/books?id=d2haAAAAMAAJ>)
- Jeff VanderMeer, *Annihilation*, 2014

Films

The following films are available via online streaming services (Netflix, Youtube, Amazon, etc.). You are responsible for watching them before our class meetings. When possible I will also put DVDs on reserve at the library:

- *CSA*
- *2000 Maniacs*
- *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*

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 (three 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. I will not respond, other than to send you a link to this poem: <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 10% 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 35% of your final grade.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be given periodically (as often as every day) to check your close reading skills. These quizzes will involve 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 are asked to 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, make an appointment with The Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are serious violations of the Student Academic Honesty Code (Title XII) and will be treated according to the procedures outlined in the Student Policy e- Handbook (www.auburn.edu/student_info/student_policies) or on the University Policies website (<https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universypolicies/default.aspx>). You are responsible for asking me any questions you may have about honest use of sources or proper documentation.

Schedule*

* N.b., the schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and/or via email.

| Week | Dates | Readings and Activities |
|------|---|---|
| 1 | Wed, Aug 17 Fri, Aug 19 | Introduction to the course Twain, <i>A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court</i> , ch. I - XVII |
| 2 | Mon, Aug 22 Wed, Aug 24 Fri, Aug 26 | Twain, ch. XVIII – XXX Twain, ch. XXXI – XLIV Gilman, <i>Herland</i> , ch. 1 – 6 |
| 3 | Mon, Aug 29 Wed, Aug 31 Fri, Sep 2 | Gilman, ch. 7 – 12 Burroughs, <i>A Princess of Mars</i> , ch. I – XIV Burroughs, ch. XV – XXVIII |
| 4 | Mon, Sep 5 Wed, Sep 7 Fri, Sep 9 | Labor day; no class meeting Butler, <i>Kindred</i> Butler (continued) |
| 5 | Mon, Sep 12 Wed, Sep 14 Fri, Sep 16 | Turtledove, <i>The Guns of the South</i> Turtledove (continued) Turtledove (continued) |
| 6 | Mon, Sep 19 Wed, Sep 21 Fri, Sep 23 | <i>2000 Maniacs</i> <i>The Texas Chainsaw Massacre</i> <i>C.S.A.</i> |
| 7 | Mon, Sep 26 Wed, Sep 28 Fri, Sep 30 | Moore, <i>Saga of Swamp Thing</i> Moore (continued) Russell, <i>Swamplandia!</i> |
| 8 | Mon, Oct 3 Wed, Oct 5 Fri, Oct 7 | Russell (continued) Paper workshops No class meeting (away at a conference) Paper 1 due |
| 9 | Mon, Oct 10 Wed, Oct 12 Fri, Oct 14 | Vandemeer, <i>Annihilation</i> FALL BREAK |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 10 | Mon, Oct 17 Wed, Oct 19 Fri, Oct 21 | Kenan, <i>A Visitation of Spirits</i> |
| 11 | Mon, Oct 24 Wed, Oct 26 Fri, Oct 28 | Laymon, <i>Long Division</i> |
| 12 | Mon, Oct 31 Wed, Nov 2 Fri, Nov 4 | Jones, <i>Mongrels</i> |
| 13 | Mon, Nov 7 Wed, Nov 9 Fri, Nov 11 | Gomez, <i>The Gilda Stories</i> |
| 14 | Mon, Nov 14 Wed, Nov 16 Fri, Nov 18 | Smith, <i>Rivers</i> No class meeting (away at a conference) No class meeting (away at a conference) |
| | Mon, Nov 21 Wed, Nov 23 Fri, Nov 25 | THANKSGIVING BREAK |
| 15 | Mon, Nov 28 Wed, Nov 30 Fri, Dec 2 | Research and paper workshops Paper 2 due |
| | | Final Exam Monday, Dec 5, 12 noon – 2:30 pm |
