

English 2173
Louisiana State University
Spring Term, 2011

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9-12W and by appointment
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LOUISIANA LITERATURE

Schedule of Assignments

Louisiana literature offers a unique perspective on our state's fascinating culture and history, which has figured so vitally in the unfolding drama of the story of America. New Orleans, "the town that care forgot," is often the locale for the most dramatic stories and events, but Cajun Country, the prairies and the backwoods have also had their turn in contributing to the big gumbo pot of our dynamic culture, which nourishes both the body and the soul. Literature has functioned in a doubled way, at times seemingly papering over the dark realities of the state's social fissures, or conversely, as a spectacular means for exposing them. Our writers have also painted a glorious portrait of our state's exceptional people, customs, and natural beauty, while simultaneously offering a fascinating melange of artistic strategies for dealing with issues such as race, class, politics, spirituality, and corruption.

JANUARY

W 19 Introduction: Kate Chopin, "Desirée's Baby" and "The Story of an Hour" (on MOODLE)

M 24 Native American Literature; journals of early explorers; poetry of Les Canelles (on MOODLE)

W 26 George Washington Cable, Old Creole Days*

FEBRUARY

W 2 Old Creole Days

M 7 Victor Sejour, "Le Mulâtre"; Grace King, "Monsieur Motte" and "The Little Convent Girl" (on MOODLE); Kate

W 9 Solomon Northrup, Twelve Years a Slave*

M 14 Twelve Years a Slave

W 16 Kate Chopin, "At the 'Cadian Ball'; "A Pair of Silk Stockings"; "The Storm"; "Athenaise"; "La Belle Zoraïde" (on MOODLE)

M 21 Robert Penn Warren, All the King's Men*

W 23 Robert Penn Warren, All the King's Men*

Optional screening of the movie, All the King's Men, Friday, February 25

M 28 All the King's Men

MARCH

W 2 Ernest Gaines, The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*

M 7 *Mardi Gras Holiday*

W 9 Miss Jane Pittman

First paper is due by 5:00 p.m., Friday, March 11

M 14 Miss Jane Pittman

W 16 *Midterm Examination*

M 21 Robert Harling, Steel Magnolias*

Th 15 Steel Magnolias
W 23 Walker Percy, The Moviegoer*
M 28 The Moviegoer
W 30 Ellen Gilchrist, “Rich”; “In the Land of Dreamy Dreams” (on MOODLE)

APRIL

M 4 John Kennedy Toole, A Confederacy of Dunces*
W 6 NO CLASS
M 11 A Confederacy of Dunces
W 13 A Confederacy of Dunces

Second paper is due by 5:00 p.m., Friday, April 15

-Spring Break-

M 25 Poetry of Brenda Marie Osbey, Pinkie Gordon Lane, Yusef Komunyakaa (on MOODLE)
W 27 Stories by Robert Olen Butler from A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain
(on MOODLE)

MAY

M 2 Tim Gautreaux, Same Place, Same Things*
W 4 Same Place, Same Things

Note: Texts accompanied by an asterisk are book-length selections, and all students are expected to purchase a copy of each. Some texts, as noted, will be posted on MOODLE. All book-length texts are available at the Barnes and Noble Campus bookstore in the LSU Union.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Midterm Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 20%
First Essay: 20%
Second Essay: 20%
Quizzes: 10%
Class Participation: 10%

Exams: The midterm and final exams will consist of a series of short answer and essay questions asking you to demonstrate your knowledge of the texts, your analytical ability, and your ability to make connections from one author to another (all essay questions will involve comparison and contrast of texts).

Essays: Each student will write two 5 page essays that demonstrate an ability to analyze texts and to make connections between texts. You should at all costs avoid simply summarizing the plots of the works under discussion. Rather, a successful essay will be organized around a strong *thesis*—a central argument about theme, character, ideology, and so on - that you support through close analysis of your primary text(s). The second paper will involve research. Full details about these exercises will be provided in the “Course Information” document.

