

FALL 2021
GRADUATE COURSE OFFERINGS
Department of English ▪ Florida Atlantic University

AML 6938.003 | Professor Sika Dagbovie-Mullins

Contemporary African American Literature

Tuesdays, 4:00–6:50 pm | CRN 21016

What, if anything, characterizes twenty-first century African American literary production? In her essay and introduction to a special issue of *American Literary History*, Stephanie Li identifies African American “twenty-first-century writers’ wide-ranging determination to claim their dead and envision a home for the living.” This observation contrasts with Kenneth Warren’s assertion that African American literature came to an end when Jim Crow ended. This course will focus on the diverse array of African American literary texts published since 2000, many of which confront what Saidiya Hartman calls the “afterlife of slavery” in their work. We will ask ourselves: what cultural, social, and political movements and events have shaped African American literary production in the new millennium? How does one define a black aesthetic? Texts will likely include Paul Beatty’s *The Sellout* (2015); Brit Bennett’s *The Vanishing Half* (2020); Kaitlyn Greenidge’s *We Love You, Charlie Freeman* (2017); Danielle Evans’ *The Office of Historical Corrections* (2020); Percival Everett’s *Erasure* (2001); Mat Johnson’s *Pym* (2011); T. Geronimo Johnson’s *Welcome to Braggsville* (2015); Kiese Laymon’s *Long Division* (2013); Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014); Danez Smith’s *Don’t Call Us Dead* (2017); Colson Whitehead’s *Underground Railroad* (2016); Jesmyn Ward’s *Salvage the Bones* (2012).

Historical Period: 1900–present

AML 6938.002 | Professor Shelby Johnson

Plantationocene in Early American Literature

Thursdays, 7:10–10:00 pm | CRN 20329

The conquest of the New World set into motion the consumption of labor, land, and raw materials that created the conditions for our current environmental catastrophe. This course explores literature from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries as a way to understand the intertwined origins of capitalism and climate change. We will look at non-fiction texts (such as journals, letters, treaties, wills), as well as literary representations (myths, poetry, novels) of early hemispheric American histories as a way to map the emergence of global capitalism as an imagined and material form of life. In particular, this course is framed through the concept of the Plantationocene, and interrogates the past and present of plantations, their materialities, the economic, ecological, and political transformations they wrought, and their significance to the making of human bodies, capital, and land over the course of four centuries. We will also consider other ways of naming our epoch (cene) that have recently been proposed, including Capitalocene (conceiving the Anthropocene as a result of ecological regimes inherent to capitalism) and Chthulucene (a term that suggests the multispecies becomings that make up the storied histories of human and nonhuman lives). In doing so, we will aim to come to terms with the plantation as a transformational moment in human and natural history on a global scale, while also remaining attentive to structures of power embedded in colonial formations, the erasure of forms of life within such formations, and the enduring legacies of plantation capitalism. At the same time, we will aim to make visible forms of resistance, where Native and African

diasporic ways of being, sustained by different economies and forms of knowledge, have flourished. In this way, we will see how early American literature transforms our awareness of our location in ecologies *with histories*, and invites us to reconsider how encounters with the past may help us understand our environmental present.

Concentration: 1700–1900

CRW 6726.002 | Professor Anthony Stagliano
Literary Publishing and Editing

Wednesdays, 4:00–6:50 pm | CRN 19984

This course will provide a combination of theoretical background and practical, hands-on experience in the field of literary editing and publishing. Graduate and undergraduate students will work together to produce *Coastlines*, the undergraduate literary journal of Florida Atlantic University. Graduate students will work together to produce *Swamp Ape Review*, FAU's new, national literary magazine. Duties involved in the production of both of these journals include soliciting and evaluating submissions, editing, proofreading, marketing, publicity, research, fundraising, web design, public relations, and more.

Concentration: Rhetoric and Composition

ENC 6700.002 | Professor Jeff Galin
Studies in Composition Methodology and Theory

Fridays, 4:00–6:50 pm | CRN 18715

What do we value about writing? How do we learn to write? How do we teach others? These are the questions we will keep coming back to as we read, analyze, and critique current scholarship on composition, and as share ideas and experiences about teaching writing. This course invites you to situate your own practices within the context of current discussions and debates within the field of composition. This is a required course for all incoming GTAs and recommended for all MA students pursuing a Rhetoric and Composition focus. Textbook is provided at no cost.

Concentration: Rhetoric and Composition

ENL 6455 | Professor Clarissa Chenovick
Renaissance Reading Material: Voicing/Touching Texts and Imagining Matter in Early Modern England

Tuesdays, 4:00–6:50 pm | CRN 20333

This course will consider the “matter” of early modern English literature in several different senses of the word. First, we will consider the material dimensions of reading in a pre-modern context, from early modern belief in the quasi-magical materialism of words themselves (and the usage of words in healing practice and magic) to the creation of manuscript and print books through techniques of writing, printing, and collage, to the material embodiment of texts in the form of graffiti, consumable objects, and sung or voiced performance. We will also consider the status of texts as relics in the underground Catholic culture of early modern England and the role of poetry in material practices of devotion by Catholics and Protestants alike.

On another level, we will consider the relationships of early modern texts to the material world, and their role in imagining and defining relationships between England and the rest of the globe. For example, we might ask how early textual representations of other lands (including maps and travel accounts) and “literary” texts such as Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and the inescapably colonialist proto-science fiction novella, *The Man in the Moone: Or a Discourse of A Voyage Thither* (1638) constitute and shape English understandings of the relationships between their own and “other” lands – and how the discourses within these texts helped shape material interactions between England and other countries.

Finally, we will consider literary approaches and contributions to the science of matter in the early modern period, examining literary representations of matter and the merging of literary and scientific writing in the early science fiction and poetry of the eccentric seventeenth-century author and natural philosopher Lady Margaret Cavendish and the supposed inventor of the scientific method, Francis Bacon. Across the course, we will trace how understandings of “matter” (whether the materiality of the text, the material places and objects it describes, or its literary investigation of matter itself) enables writers to imagine different kinds of encounters between readers (or hearers) and texts and to imagine and/or create alternative material realms.

Our literary texts will include poetic works by Edmund Spenser, John Donne, George Herbert, Elizabeth I, Ann Lok, Mary Sidney, and Richard Crashaw, plays by Shakespeare, Christopher Marlow, and John Webster, and prose works including William Baldwin’s bizarre and aurally overwhelming proto-novel *Beware the Cat* and the proto-science fiction texts of Godwin, Cavendish, and Francis Bacon. We will consider these texts alongside ephemeral and mixed media texts such as emblems, anatomical foldouts, maps, sermons, charms/spells, and ballads.

If social distancing guidelines permit, this course may include opportunities to engage with the printing workshop and art book collections at the Jaffe Center for Book Arts.

Historical Period: pre-1700

LIN 6107.001 | Professor John Leeds

History of the English Language

Mondays, 4:00–6:50 pm | CRN 17120

Why do you see the letter “e” so much in throwback signs like “Ye Olde Taverne”? Why can we no longer construct sentences like “They love him not”? Are expressions like “She drive a truck” peculiar to African American Vernacular English, or do they occur elsewhere in global English? Why do you see signs like “can food” and “mix vegetables” in the grocery store? How long has English used idiomatic phrases like “make up” (to reconcile after an argument) or “work out” (to exercise)? Learn the answers to these and other linguistic curiosities in *HOTEL*, which follows the development of English pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and syntax from their ancient Germanic beginnings to their most recent and popular forms.

Students will be asked to master a considerable amount of both linguistic and historical detail in support of a few key concepts: the distinction between synthetic and analytic languages, the relation between oral and written usage, and the impact of political, economic, and social history on the history of language.

Philological reference tools like the *Oxford English Dictionary* will provide an important basis for classroom discussion.

Note: This course fulfills the foreign language requirement for the English MA program.

Superheroes

Wednesdays, 4:00–6:50 pm | CRN 20373

Conventional wisdom dates the birth of the superhero to 1938, with the publication of Action Comics #1, and the introduction of the character of Superman. In fact, the archetype of the superhero predates Superman in a variety of iterations. One can turn to mythic figures like Heracles and/or Gilgamesh, to historical figures like Napoleon Bonaparte, to the Byronic Hero in drama or fiction, to the early science-fiction heroes of Wells and Verne, or to characters with dual identities like Stevenson's Jekyll and Hyde. Most predictive of superheroes, perhaps, were (for ill) the masked vigilantes in the Ku Klux Klan Baroness Orczy's *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, masked men like Johnson McCulley's Zorro, and the less well-remembered folkloric Spring-Heeled Jack. Penny-dreadfuls, dime novels, and pulp magazines all contained heroes that we might retrospectively call superheroes (The Shadow, Tarzan, John Carter of Mars, Doc Savage, The Clansman, etc.). The idea of the "superman" even arises in serious philosophical and political discourse in the work of Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche and George Bernard Shaw. Nevertheless, the appearance of Superman spawned an explosion of imitators, particularly in comics, but later in television, film, and prose, of characters with super powers, dual identities, and the strange propensity to wear their underwear on the outside of their clothes. Recently, superheroes have all but taken over the summer blockbusters released by the Hollywood movie-machine. This course will focus primarily on the medium in which superheroes came into their own as a pop culture phenomenon, comics, while exploring a variety of related questions. What is the mass attraction of superheroes? Why are they so popular, particularly in America, and why have they had such staying power? How are they related to the Cold War and other "current events"? How are they, inexorably, "queer"? What kinds of ideological problems do they present? What are their gender and racial politics? What do they tell us about ourselves and our society? In what ways are they a symptom of modernity? What are the differences between legality, morality, and ethics? In what ways was the comics medium particularly suited for superheros and how did the medium develop in concert with and around this storytelling genre? These issues and more will direct our discussion and our reading over the course of the semester. Though a class in superhero comics should, by definition, be fun, it will also be rigorous, and include substantial reading of history and theory, in addition to the comics themselves. More than anything, we will attempt to determine what the significance the superhero and superhero comics in American and world culture.

Readings will include many of the following: Siegel and Shuster's Golden Age Superman comics, William Moulton Marston and Harry Peter's Golden Age Wonder Woman comics, a variety of other Golden Age comics, Silver Age Spider-Man (Stan Lee, Steve Ditko, Gerry Conway, Gil Kane, and John Romita) and Fantastic Four (Stan Lee and Jack Kirby), Bronze Age X-Men (Chris Claremont and John Byrne), 1980's classics *Watchmen* (Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons), *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (Frank Miller), and *Animal Man* (Grant Morrison, Chas Truog, and Doug Hazlewood), and a variety of important/interesting comics from the 1990's through the present day: *Sailor Moon* (Naoko Takeuchi), *Truth: Red, White, and Black* (Robert Morales and Kyle Baker), *The Life and Times of Savior 28* (J. M. DeMatteis and Michael Cavallaro), *Ms. Marvel* (G. Willow Wilson and Adrian Alphona), *Batwoman: Elegy* (Greg Rucka and J. H. Williams III), and *Black Panther* (Ta-Nehisi Coates and Brian Stelfreeze). Students will also read secondary and supplementary material. We may watch and discuss some Superhero films in lieu of some of the listed comics readings.

Most of the above books have been ordered from the bookstore, but can often be acquired much more cheaply elsewhere (including your local public library) as well as digitally (Comixology).

Historical Period: 1900–present

Concentrations: Science Fiction & Fantasy

Eroticism: East and West

Mondays, 4:00–6:50 pm | CRN 20181

Although a biological universal throughout human culture, sexuality is not limited to a single form of expression. Individuals and social groups inhabit, display, and perform their sexuality in different ways; and the distinctive ways that erotic desire is expressed, restrained, or encouraged significantly shape the identities of different cultures and of the people who belong to them. Recognizing how sexual practices help form identity, some cultures have developed elaborate theoretical accounts of how best to cultivate and deploy eroticism in a systematic way (albeit sometimes by repressing or sublimating it) in order to stylize sexual behavior in the hope of enriching both personal experience and improving social life. Such discursive explorations have structured what is known as *ars erotica*. This seminar examines some of the most historically influential texts relating to the erotic, considering sources from both Asia and the West, while exploring their relationship to the broader philosophical and cultural contexts from which these writings emerge. We also consider some of the ideological background hostile to eroticism, whose very resistance helps shape erotic expression.