

## ENGLISH 2025-8 INTRODUCTION TO FICTION SPECIAL TOPIC: THE MANY SOUTHS

Fall 2013  
1:30 - 3:00, Tuesdays and Thursdays  
123 Allen Hall

Instructor: Ms. Monica Miller  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays,  
12:00 - 1:30, or by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended to introduce you to the study of fiction through a focus on a variety of writing that falls under the heading of “southern literature.” What do we mean when we talk about the South? Is it a place, a culture, an idea? In this course, students will investigate the heterogeneity of the American South through the literature it has produced. We will look at some of the dominant themes addressed and motifs employed as well as the place of this work in the larger framework of U. S. literary history. This course will involve students in an investigation of the ways in which factors such as race, class, and region intersect with gender and sexuality in the assigned texts and what those intersections can teach us about literary history and social justice. Students will increase their proficiency in textual analysis, literary research, and argumentation skills.

Our objectives include sharpening our abilities to read often and well, as well as learning to effectively communicate about what we’ve read. As we work to develop our analytical and interpretive faculties, we will engage a wide variety of texts, employ a wide variety of reading strategies, and deepen our experiences of the texts by writing about and discussing with one another how we gather meaning from each work. We are aiming to learn to value reading and writing as lenses through which we can see the world around us and our place in it, which means we will work to stretch our thinking in new directions.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of their requirements in introductory literature courses, students should be able

- to paraphrase passages accurately,
- to read closely in order to explicate the literal and figurative meaning of passages,
- to identify larger themes, structures, and patterns in a literary work as a whole,
- to begin to relate a literary work to relevant discursive contexts, such as generic conventions and literary traditions, and
- to begin to understand the larger cultural contexts of a literary work, both diachronic and synchronic.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

- ❖ Ernest J. Gaines, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*
- ❖ Jack Butler, *Jujitsu for Christ*
- ❖ Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina*
- ❖ Lee Smith, *Oral History*
- ❖ Gloria Naylor, *Mama Day*
- ❖ Monique Truong, *Bitter in the Mouth*
- ❖ Supplemental readings on Moodle.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The following is the University’s official statement on Academic Integrity: “Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student.”(Sec. 5.1, C. of the *LSU Code of Student Conduct*). For more specifics, see:

<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/AI.htm>

**I expect all of the work you turn in to be your own. If you submit work to me which I determine to be plagiarized, the work will be turned over to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability for possible further sanctions.**

## DISABILITY CODE

According to the our *General Catalogue*,

The *Office of Disability Services* assists students in identifying and developing accommodations and services to help over-come barriers to the achievement of personal and academic goals. Services are provided for students with temporary or permanent disabilities. Accommodations and services are based on the individual student's disability-based need. Students must provide current documentation of their disabilities. Students should contact the office early so that necessary accommodations can be arranged.

## OTHER STUDENT RESOURCES

If you need assistance at any stage of the writing process for this class (or any other), I encourage you to take advantage of the CxC Center's Writing Support program. It's free to LSU students—simply go to [www.cxc.lsu.edu](http://www.cxc.lsu.edu) to schedule a free appointment.

Mental Health Services (MHS) offers a range of mental health and other support services for LSU students. I encourage you to contact them at 225-578-6271 or consult their webpage at [www.shc.lsu.edu](http://www.shc.lsu.edu) for more information on the services they provide. Other useful phone numbers include the STAR (Sexual Trauma and Awareness) Hotline—225-383-7173 (available 24 hours a day for support, information, and referrals) and the LSU Crisis Hotline—(225) 924-5781 (also available 24 hours a day).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

- ❖ **Daily Participation (10%)**—Students will demonstrate competency in written and oral communication through organization, clarity, and consciousness in written and spoken English. Active engagement in the class is key for high participation grades. Completion of QHQs each week in a timely manner will be considered as part of your course participation grade. I reserve the right to dock participation grades for use of cell phones, other electronic devices, or other non-class related activities.
- ❖ **QHQs**—Once a week, each student will post a 300-word (minimum) Question-Hypothesis-Question (QHQ) articulating a specific analytical question about the reading for that day, then offering one or two hypotheses supported by specific textual evidence, and closing with another question pointing toward further analysis. Post these QHQs on the appropriate Moodle forum by midnight before the relevant reading is to be discussed.  
The tone of the postings ought to be conversational. Develop your idea with clarity and simplicity. Be mindful of the public nature of this community of discourse and of the responsibility that entails. Be respectful and generous. *Never be personal.* Discussion forum postings will not be graded individually; however, my assessment of the general quality of your postings will be included in your course participation grade. The Moodle discussion forum is an important place in which to begin to develop final paper ideas. (Note: You will not receive credit for QHQ's that (a) do not fulfill the minimum requirements as stated above or (b) are late.)
- ❖ **Quizzes (10%)**—Un-announced quizzes and in-class writing assignments will be given from time to time during class. These may not be made up.
- ❖ **Group Presentation (10%)**— Students will participate in a group project in which they will give a short (approximately five minutes) presentation on the author being read for that day. Presentations should include a handout for the class.
- ❖ **Annotated Bibliography (10%)**—As part of the final research project, you will compile a five-entry annotated bibliography on the work of one of the authors we're reading this semester. This annotated bibliography should build toward your final paper.
- ❖ **Final Paper (20%)**—Students will write an analytical, research paper of 1200-1700 words (~5-7 pages) on one of the works we cover in class, using their annotated bibliography and possibly QHQ writing as starting points. Topics must be pre-approved with preliminary research. The final grade for the paper will include successful completion of paper checkpoints (the topic proposal is an example of such a checkpoint) which will be specified in the assignment sheet.
- ❖ **Midterm (20%) and Final Exam (20%)**—Twice this semester, students will be tested in an in-class exam covering key content and ideas. We will discuss the format as the exam draws nearer, but expect an in-class essay and quotation identification questions.

## GRADING SCALE

Daily Participation	10%	A: 100-90
Quizzes	10%	B: 80-89
Group Presentation	10%	C: 70-79
Annotated Bibliography	10%	D: 60-69
Research Paper	20%	F: Below 60
Midterm Exam	20%	
Final Exam	20%	

## ESSAYS: FORM

All formal essays and proposals must be typed in 12-point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, submitted electronically to me by the start of the class period in which it is due. Along with your name, date, and the title of the assignment in the upper left-hand corner of the first page, each subsequent page should contain a header with your last name and the page number. Any citations should be use MLA style formatting, which we will go over in class.

*Final copies of these papers, paper proposals, and all other writing checkpoints should be submitted electronically to me unless I specify otherwise. These should be submitted via Moodle by class time on the day it is due.*

## IMPORTANT DATES

Midterm Exam	Tuesday, 10/15
Paper Proposal Due	Tuesday, 11/12
Annotated Bibliography Due	Thursday, 11/21
Research Paper Due	Thursday, 12/5
Final Exam	<b>Thursday, 12/12, 5:30-7:30pm</b>

***Any assignments received after the due date and time will automatically lose 10%. Major assignments turned in more than twenty-four hours late will automatically lose 20%. Any work done in class—including quizzes and exams—cannot be made up under any circumstances.***

***No classwork or extra credit work will be offered or accepted after the last day of class.***

*Note: This syllabus is subject to change; any changes will be announced in class. You are responsible for noting these changes and for turning in all assignments on time to avoid penalization.*