

# ENGL. 215–Contemporary Literature: “Free Black Women” in U.S. Lit.

Section 003  
Section 006

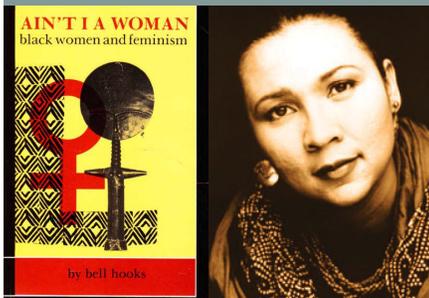
TTh 8:00 a.m. – 9:15 p.m.  
TTh 9:30 p.m. – 10:45 p.m.

Daniel Hall 213  
Daniel Hall 213

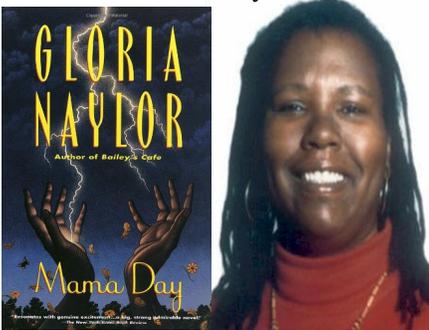
Fall 2016 Clemson University  
Professor C. Wiley  
wiley2@clemson.edu

Office Location: Strode 517  
Office Hours: TTh 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
and by appointment via Skype or in person

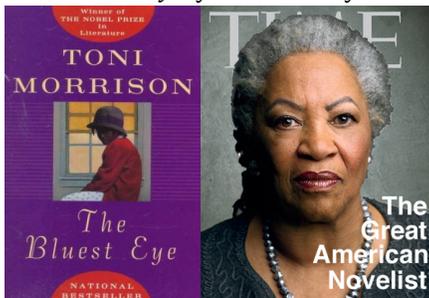
## Required Material



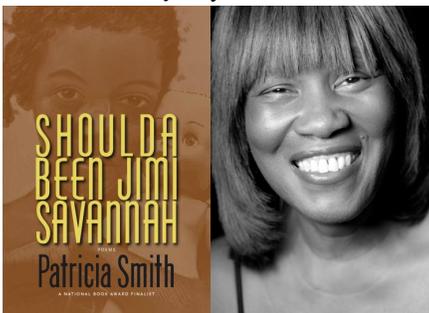
*Ain't I a Woman* by bell hooks



*Mama Day* by Gloria Naylor



*The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison



*Shoulda Been Jimi Savannah*  
by Patricia Smith

## Course Overview

This course is an introduction to major contemporary cultural movements via selected authors in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century literature, primarily American, with attention to poetry, fiction, and dram since World War II.

*We will take an in depth focus on texts by or about African American females defining and pursuing freedom in the U.S. context.*

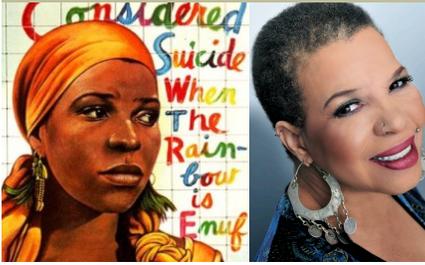
We will examine a wide range of genres including speeches, letters and other primary documents, nonfiction essays, autobiographical excerpts, poetry, novels, and plays. As we navigate the course, we will see a larger picture of contemporary U.S. history through African American women’s literature.

We will analyze varying definitions of freedom and progress, critique how these definitions are formed and developed, examine social, legal, and familial environments of African American women and how these are altered by gender, race, and location, and we will interrogate the ways that these identities intersect and create liminal spaces. Our readings will cover diverse interests, political stances, genres, and literary movements and will help create a more complete snapshot of the popular debates of time. This course will be an entry point for reading, thinking, speaking, and writing critically and persuasively about literature. Our major (though not the only) approach to interpreting the texts will be close reading. This course will hone your ability to read critically, write critically,

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## Cont'd. Required Material



For Colored Girls who...  
by Ntozake Shange



The Book of Phoenix  
by Nnedi Okorafor



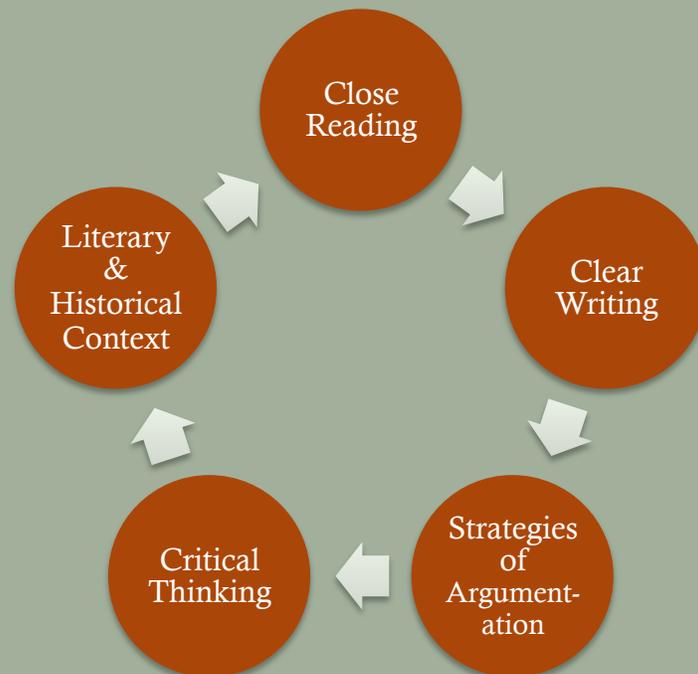
Teaching my Mother...  
by Warsan Shire



Lemonade (visual) by Beyoncé

## Competencies and Outcomes

Your active participation in this course will build your competency in the arts, humanities, and critical thinking, and enhance transferable skills that are highly desirable for employers.



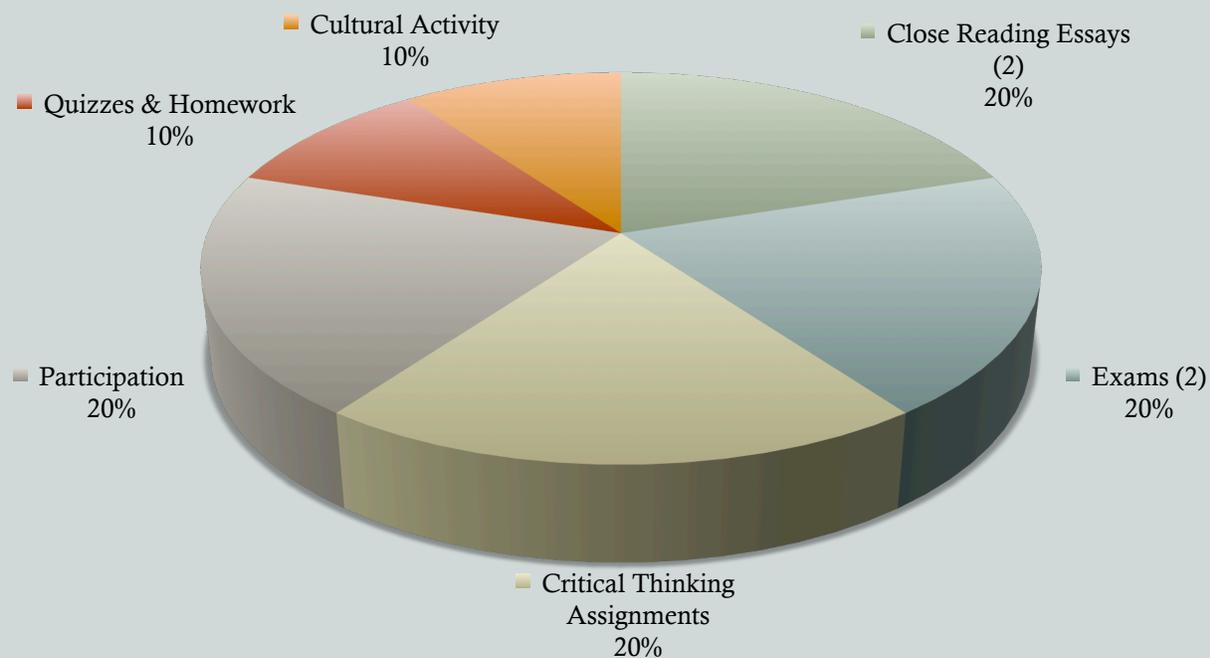
Throughout the course, students will

- demonstrate understanding of the literary arts and their connection with their historical contexts.
- perform close readings on texts from a variety of genres and time periods.
- formulate provocative, analytical how or why questions.
- use strategies of argumentation to analyze and produce clear interpretation of a literary text.
- identify connections among texts, authors, and arguments, especially ones that aren't readily noticeable.
- explain history's influence on current questions, norms, conflicts, movements, and victories.

## Clemson Thinks<sup>2</sup>

*This class is participating in the Clemson Thinks<sup>2</sup> (CT<sup>2</sup>) campus-wide Quality Enhancement Plan that focuses on undergraduate critical thinking, a skill that is invaluable for your success in college and in your career pursuits after graduation. All course assignments are designed to significantly enhance your critical thinking skills.*

## Grading Scale



**Close Reading Essays**—These 2 major essays require you to use your knowledge of claims, evidence, analysis, and fallacies to present an interpretation of (new way of understanding) a course text. All papers must be submitted on Canvas before class on the day that they are due.

**Critical Thinking Assignments**—As part of the Clemson Thinks<sup>2</sup> component, students will complete writing assignments that help them engage their critical thinking skills, build logically constructed arguments, and prepare for their longer essay assignments. Students will also take two diagnostic tests—one near the beginning and one near the end of the semester.

**Quizzes & Homework**—Some classes will begin with quizzes. Homework includes a variety of assignments, including peer reviews and responses to classmates in Canvas assignments, which will sometimes be paired with Critical Thinking Assignments. Quizzes and Homework do not appear on the course schedule below, but

**Word Counts**—A paper that is turned in on time but does not meet the minimum word requirement will automatically fail. Late assignments that do not meet the minimum word count will not be accepted and will be graded as zero.

**Exams**—These 2 exams will be proctored near the midpoint and at the end of the course. The midterm exam will cover text from the first half of the semester. The final exam will cover texts from the second half. Both will test your knowledge of the texts, terms, theories, and concepts covered in course readings and discussions.

**Participation**—Students are required to vocally participate in collaborative analysis throughout the course. In addition, several times in the semester, students will upload critical questions or analytical paragraphs to Canvas before class.

**Cultural Activity**—Write a 600 to 800-word critique of a cultural activity whose themes are closely related to the course's themes. The critique must contain 1) a summary of the event, 2) a critical analysis of the event, 3) an interpretation of (new way of understanding) the event, and 4) an in-depth explanation of how the event relates to the course's

**Late Work**—Assignments are due on Canvas by the date and time specific there. Assignments turned in after this time are late and will be penalized one letter grade per day, including weekends. Extensions must be requested at least two weeks in advanced. I do not accept e-mailed assignments.

## Specifications Grading

Assignments will receive All or Nothing scores according to each assignment rubric (also known as Specifications Grading or Specs. Grading). This is not to be mean: it is to help you work more strategically and with clarity toward your minor and eventually major assignments.

Example:

Paragraph #*x* Rubric

- 20% Claim Statement follows the class formula
- 20% Warrant follows course standards is fully fleshed out with no fallacies or assumptions
- 20% Evidence follows course requirement
- 20% Conclusion Statement follows course standards
- 10% Each sentence logically flows from the previous
- 10% No grammatical errors

Possible Score= 100%

With Specs. Grading, if a student completes all of these rubric points, but the second bullet point is unclear, generic, vague, broad, etc., the student will receive no credit for the second bullet point. The total score will be 80%.

A “C” is the lowest passing grade in English classes. I grade on a 10-point scale (A=90-100; B+=88-89; B=80-87; C+=78-79; C=70-77; D+=68-69; D=60-67; F=50).

## Ways to Improve Your **Grades**

### ...Understanding of the Material and Analytical Approach

#### Before the Assignment is Due

- Read the directions, grading criteria, and rubrics provided for each assignment to understand how you will be graded. (In other words, do not assume that all English papers are the same.)
- Meet with me via Skype or in person before the assignment is due. **I love brainstorming with students!**
- Be sure to carefully read all course materials and participate in class.
- Complete small assignments with focus and intensity because they build the necessary skills for larger assignments.

#### After the Assignment is Due

- Read the graded rubric and any accompanying comments from me or your peers.
- Compare the rubric and comments to the directions, grading criteria, and rubrics provided for the assignment.
- Compare the rubric and comments to feedback on previous assignments.
- Meet with me via Skype or in person to discuss your grade.

#### Grade Disputes

To dispute a grade, you must conference with me about that assignment after receiving the grade. If you still disagree with grade, you may submit a dispute in writing (polite, letter form) to [wiley2@clemsun.edu](mailto:wiley2@clemsun.edu) within 10 days of receiving the grade in question (only after conferencing with me about that assignment). Be sure the subject line is “Grade Dispute: [Assignment Name].” If grade disputes are not submitted within those parameters, the student accepts the grade received as a fair and just assessment of the work.

# Absence Policy

0-3

•Students are allowed up to 3 absences without penalty. These are great for planned trips, court dates, meetings, appointments, and unexpected absences.

4

•Upon the 4th absence, students lose one letter grade on their final participation grade.

5

•Upon the 5th absence, students lose two letter grades on their final participation grade

6

•Missing 6 classes will result in an automatic failure. This is the equivalent of 3 weeks of class.

**FACT**

If you miss class, get class notes and updates from at least three of your classmates and then after you have read through those notes and updates, follow up with me for questions or clarification.

**FACT**

3 Tardies = 1 Absence

**FACT**

For this class, I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. An absence is an absence.

**FACT**

Missing more than 15 minutes of class (at the beginning, middle, or end of class) = 1 absence

If 15 minutes passes and I have not arrived and there isn't a note on the door or board, consult the syllabus, check for an e-mail, and leave. It is not necessary to take roll. Prepare for the next class.

## E-mail Policy

**E-mails Format**

Dear Professor Wiley,  
  
Blah, Blah, Blah (Use paragraph breaks when you change topics.)  
  
Sincerely,  
  
Jamie Doe  
Engl. 21#0.00#  
8:00 –8:50 a.m. MWF

**Response Time**

I check e-mail regularly on Tues., Thurs., and Sun. (and occasionally more often).

**Check Canvas**

Check Canvas "Announcements" and your e-mail for updates and responses. When it's useful, I address an individual inquiry generically to the entire class.

**Don'ts**

- ⊘ Don't use excessive exclamation marks.
- ⊘ Don't use bold lettering.
- ⊘ Don't use CAPS.
- ⊘ Don't use improper or unprofessional e-mail format.

## Grading Criteria

Writing assignments will be graded on the strength of the argument, the structure in which that argument is conveyed, the use of evidence to support the argument, and the clarity of the essay's style. A "C" paper reports, reviews, or summarizes. A "B" paper makes an argument (in other words, it has a thesis, with a sustaining antithesis). An "A" paper reveals the author's prior engagement with the issue in the essay, or it is so informed or persuasive that it creates the impression of the author wanting to continue thinking about the topic, with only time or space constraints preventing him or her. A poorly structured attempt to report, review, or summarize is unlikely to get as high as a "C." By the same token, an "A" essay not only shows how the essay participates in a pre-existing argument: it must do so with confident self-awareness as an expository essay.

## Privacy Statement

For any publicly accessible student-created content (e.g., social media, multimedia posted in YouTube) included in the course assignments, an alternate activity will be offered upon student request. This option ensures students have a choice to meet learning outcomes (students are given an option on how to meet the learning outcomes) when there is any potential risk to student privacy resulting from applications that may be discoverable outside of the Learning Management System. Students may perform and display their multimedia projects for educational uses in the course for which they were created or may use them in their own portfolios as examples of their academic work. Students are reminded to credit the sources and display the copyright notice (©) and copyright ownership information, if this is shown in the original source for all works incorporated as part of

## Academic Support

Students may access a variety of academic support services to support your learning in the online classroom. Here are links to services available:

- **Academic Success Center**  
<http://www.clemson.edu/asc/>
- **The Writing Center**  
<http://www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/writing/>
- **Clemson Library**  
<http://www.clemson.edu/library/>
- **Clemson Online Library Resources**  
<http://libguides.clemson.edu/distanceed>
- **CCIT (Tech Support)**  
[http://www.clemson.edu/ccit/help\\_support/](http://www.clemson.edu/ccit/help_support/)  
[CCIT e-mail ithelp@clemson.edu](mailto:ithelp@clemson.edu) or call (864) 656-3494
- **Academic Advising**  
<http://www.clemson.edu/academics/advising/index.html>
- **Registrar-Student Index**  
<http://www.registrar.clemson.edu/html/indexStudents.htm>

## Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather, all course work is due as specified on Canvas and in the syllabus, unless otherwise stated in an e-mail or Canvas "Announcement."

## Integrity

As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a "high seminary of learning." Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.

When, in the opinion of a faculty member, there is evidence that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall make a formal written charge of academic dishonesty, including a description of the misconduct, to the Associate Dean for Curriculum in the Office of Undergraduate Studies. At the same time, the faculty member may, but is not required to, inform each involved student privately of the nature of the alleged charge. If you have any questions whatsoever about what constitutes plagiarism, see me before you turn in final drafts of your work. Students are not allowed to submit work from other classes for credit in this course. Students are not allowed to submit work from other classes for credit in this course.

## Accessibility

Clemson University values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary injuries/conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities, course design, technology used for curricular purposes, or other campus resources. Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let the professor know, and make an appointment to meet with a staff member in Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. You can make an appointment by calling 864-656-6848, by emailing [studentaccess@lists.clemson.edu](mailto:studentaccess@lists.clemson.edu), or by visiting Suite 239 in the Academic Success Center building. Appointments are strongly encouraged – drop-ins will be seen if at all possible, but there could be a significant wait due to scheduled appointments. Students who receive Academic Access Letters are strongly encouraged to request, obtain and present these to their professors as early in the semester as possible so that accommodations can be made in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to follow this process each semester. You can access further information here: <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/sds/>.

## Copyright

The materials found in this online course are strictly for the use of students enrolled in this course and for purposes associated with this course; they may not be retained or further disseminated. Clemson students, faculty, and staff are expected to comply fully with institutional copyright policy as well as all other copyright laws.

## Title IX & Harassment

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.) in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. [Mr. Jerry Knighton](#) is the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator, and is also the Director of Access and Equity. His office is located at 111 Holtzendorf Hall, 864.656.3181 (voice) or 864.565.0899 (TDD). [More on Title IX policy](#) <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix/>

*Tuesdays**Thursdays*

(subject to change as needed)

**23** hooks, Introduction and Ch. 1 (book or temporarily on Canvas)  
Sojourner Truth (Canvas)  
Frederick Douglass (Canvas)  
Last Day to Add or Audit

**30** *Mama Day* (41-90)  
Last Day to Add or Audit

**6** Meet in Cooper 204 for CT<sup>2</sup> Testing  
*Mama Day* (141-165)

**13** *Mama Day* (201-260)

**20** hooks, Ch.2  
Model Essays

**27** *The Bluest Eye* “Winter” (58-93)  
Turn in Paper 1 Draft (Canvas)

**August**

**18** Introductions, Syllabus, Critical Thinking, Interpretation, Logical Fallacies, Paragraph/Paper Structure

**25** hooks, Truth, Douglass Continued  
*Mama Day* (1-40)

**September**

**1** *Mama Day* (91-140)

**8** *Mama Day* (166-200)

**15** *Mama Day* (261-312)

**22** *The Bluest Eye*, “Autumn” (1-58)  
Bring 3 color highlighters and your printed paragraph

**29** *The Bluest Eye* “Spring” (93-163)  
Peer Review due (Canvas)

# Tuesdays

# Thursdays

## October

(subject to change as needed)

**4** *The Bluest Eye* “Spring” (164-187)  
*The Bluest Eye* “Summer” (187-206)

**11** hooks, Ch. 3  
*Shoulda Been Jimi Savannah*, Section 1 (1-26)

**18** *Shoulda Been Jimi Savannah*, Section 4 (57-90)

**25** hooks, Ch. 4  
*For Colored Girls who Considered Suicide when the Rainbow was Enuf* (1-30)

## November

**1** *The Book of Phoenix* (1-50)

**FALL BREAK**

**8**

**15** *The Book of Phoenix* (175-232)  
Paper 2 Draft due (Canvas)

**22** Meet in Cooper 204 for CT<sup>2</sup> Testing  
Film Discussion: *Lemonade*

**29** Continued Film Discussion

**6** Continued *The Bluest Eye*  
**Midterm Exam** on material covered from the beginning of the semester to October 4.

**13** *Shoulda Been Jimi Savannah*, Sections 2-3 (27-56)  
**Paper 1 due**

**20** *Shoulda Been Jimi Savannah*, Section 5 (91-115)  
Model Essays

**27** *For Colored Girls who Considered Suicide when the Rainbow was Enuf* (31-64)  
Paragraph Exercise

**3** *The Book of Phoenix* (51-93)  
Last day to turn in **Cultural Activity**

**10** *The Book of Phoenix* (94-174)

**17** *Teaching my Mother How to Give Birth* (all)  
Peer Review due (Canvas)

**24** **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

## December

**1** **Final Exam** on material covered from the midterm to November 29.

Finals week exam times:

Section 003 – Friday, December 9, 2016, 7:00-9:30 p.m. **Paper 2 due**

Section 006 – Wednesday, December 7, 2016, 8:00-10:30 a.m. **Paper 2 due**