

ENGL 2160:**African American Literature**

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

8:00-8:50 (003); 9:05-9:55 (002) Daniel 213

11:15-12:05 (004) Daniel 408

Dr. Allison Harris

Drop-In Hours in Strode Tower 502:

Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:00-11:00

and by appointment

Email: anh3@clemson.edu

African American Literature

This class uses literature and film from black American authors to interrogate institutional racism and systemic inequality in the United States. This course will introduce you to methodologies of literary and cultural studies and develop skills of analysis, communication, and critical thinking. We will examine the creative literary and theoretical engagement with various social and historical movements in American history and African American letters, investigating intersectional identities and intra-racial, inter-gender and -generational tensions. This course is meant to expose students to new texts and critical conversations and provide a foundational understanding of African American literature and history.

This course will require careful individual introspection related to one's privilege and complicity in systems of power. The course will employ dialogue as its main form of meaning-making. Dialogue involves exploring ideas, cumulative questioning, responding to the ideas of others and building more fully collective understanding (Alexander, 2008). The pedagogical goal of this course is to develop empathy as a tool for critical understanding.

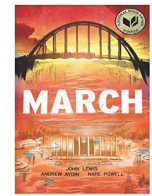
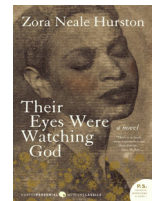
Things You Will Need For This Class:

Required Texts

Files available on Canvas and materials at Cooper Library

Access to Clemson Gmail and Gsuite

Laptop computer

Required Texts:**Assignments and Grading:**

Reading Response	50 pts.
Midterm Exam	10 pts.
DUE OCTOBER 11	
Final Exam	10 pts.
DUE IN FINAL PERIOD	
Close Reading Paper	15 pts.
DUE OCTOBER 4	
800 words.	
Multi-Media Project	15 pts.
DUE DECEMBER 6	
Total Points Possible:	100 pts.

Grading Scale:

A 100 - 90.00	B 89.99 - 80.00	C 79.99 - 70.00
Grades WILL NOT be rounded.		
F 59.99 or below		D 69.99 - 60.00

Professor reserves the right to apply policies as she sees fit and change policies and schedule if necessary.

Course Learning Outcome	Clemson Thinks Learning Outcome	General Education Competency	Corresponding Assignment
Understand key concepts, themes, tropes, and aesthetics of African American literature	Explore complex challenges	Analyze, interpret, and employ aesthetic, ethical, linguistic, and/or philosophical discourse in relevant contexts	Reading response; class discussion; exams
Discuss literature metacognitively using skills of literary analysis, research, and close reading		Demonstrate the ability to assemble information relevant to a significant, complex issue, evaluate the quality and utility of the information, and use the outcome of the analysis to reach a logical conclusion about the issue	Reading response; class discussion; close reading paper
Engage in critical questioning	Analyze multi-dimensional problems	Demonstrate an ability to identify, comprehend, and deal with ethical problems and their ramifications in a systematic, thorough, and responsible way	Reading response; class discussion
Use texts as invitations and opportunities for writing and thinking about history and the world	Extrapolate from one conceptual context to others	Create, perform, interpret, reinterpret, and/or criticize artistic works	Reading response; class discussion; close reading paper; multi-media project
Learn to use effective communication strategies to present well-reasoned, written, oral, and multi-media arguments	Communicate complex ideas effectively	Demonstrate competence in communication through organization of a central message with supporting materials in the chosen medium	Reading response; class discussion; close reading paper; multi-media project
Develop a methodology of inquiry to consider how creativity and literature reinforces empathy and broadens worldviews	Synthesize alternative solutions to multi-dimensional challenges	Explain how aspects of culture are integrated into a comprehensive worldview; and then demonstrate how culture influences human behavior	Reading response; class discussion; multi-media project

This course is designated as a Clemson Thinks² critical thinking seminar. CT² is a campus-wide initiative developed to increase and enhance students' critical thinking skills. In this class, we will define critical thinking as the metacognitive reflex of analyzing thought processes in order to achieve better understanding. We will use self-reflexive writing, dialogue, and reflection as tools to develop critical thinking.

The primary goal of sophomore literature classes at Clemson is to provide students with the critical thinking skills necessary to engage closely and critically with any given text. As a result of practicing these skills, students should become more confident in their abilities to analyze literature, both formally (in written essays) and informally (in class discussion).

This course will meet the mission of the College of Architecture, Arts, and Humanities: Collaboration, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication. Students will practice skills of collaboration to understand interpretation and argumentation as a interconnected process of dialogue between each other, between themselves and the text, and between the text and the world. Students will expand their perceptions of literature to think creatively about what counts as literature, how to approach and respond to literature, and how creativity develops worldviews. Students will develop a methodology of inquiry through critical thinking in order to posit interpretations, responses, revisions, and arguments regarding course material. Students will use effective communication, both traditional and digital, formal and informal, written and oral to develop their ideas regarding the course material and their worldviews.

Major Assignments:

YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS LISTED BELOW TO RECEIVE A GRADE IN THE COURSE. Completion will be defined as at least 50% of the requirements stated on the rubric.

Reading Response:

These will be required responses reflecting on themes in the reading, thinking through particular prompt activities, and incorporating some secondary research. Each response will be at minimum 200 words, uploaded via Canvas by at 8 AM on the day of the reading. These responses will also count as a portion of your attendance and participation for the day. Responses may be made up only in the case of excused absences with documentation. These assignments will be a key artifact to demonstrate your critical thinking skills through complex problem solving and strategic communication. You will be asked to write in a self-reflexive mode and use these reflections in class discussion.

Midterm Exam:

This exam will cover material from the first half of the semester. It may include objective information questions, short answer and interpretive questions, skills mastery questions, and brief essay. It will be completed online. Due by 10 pm on the date listed on the syllabus schedule.

Final Exam:

This exam will cover material from the midterm to the end of the semester. It will follow a similar format as the midterm exam. It will be completed online before the end of the university scheduled exam period.

Close Reading Paper:

This paper will use keywords from African American Studies discussed in class as a lens for understanding one of the novels from the beginning of the semester. This paper will require close reading, analysis and interpretation, and argumentation. The paper will trace the chosen concept through a passage from the novel of your choice and make an argument regarding the purpose of this theme in the novel. The paper will be 800 words at minimum but will not require outside research beyond the keyword, and will be uploaded via Canvas by 10 pm on the due date listed on the syllabus schedule. This paper will demonstrate critical thinking through modes of objective argumentation based on carefully-reasoned evidence, synthesis and analysis of information, and strategic communication.

Multi-Media Project:

This assignment will develop an argument regarding one of the guiding principles from the Black Lives Matter movement in multi-media. The project will be evaluated on how creative, compelling, and effective the composition is. The project will also include a 500-word reflection on the authorial choices and effectiveness of execution for relaying the author's message. Project will be uploaded via Canvas by 10 pm on the due date listed on the syllabus schedule. This project will demonstrate critical thinking through synthesis and metacognition through self-reflective writing.

Mapping Project:

This in-class project will incorporate primary source research and digital humanities. This activity will use mapping software to plot out the journeys that the novels' characters take in order to spatially understand the plot, setting, and narrative form.

Class Discussion:

This course will be dialogue-based, and participation will be understood as respectful engagement with others' ideas and perspectives and illustration of careful introspection. Students should demonstrate preparation for each class by having the text available, having completed any response or homework required, and engaging active interaction with classmates. Discussion is the most significant method of developing critical thinking in this class.

Attendance Policy:

Reading responses will provide a portion of your attendance and participation. They must be posted onto Canvas by 8 AM on the day of the reading. However, active participation in class discussion is still expected. Completing a response but not attending class will not earn points.

Excused absences: Reading responses can only be made up for excused absences with appropriate documentation, and alternative assignments may be given. In the event that you must be absent, you should contact me by email before class time. *Deadlines will not be extended due to absence and must be completed preemptively.*

Unexcused absences: 3 unexcused absences will result in the loss of a letter grade. 5 unexcused absences will result in failing the course even in the case that the student has successfully completed all assignments required. *Per the university policy, if students reach the limit of absences (3) by the drop date, the instructor may drop them from the class for excessive absences. The instructor also reserves the right to drop any student who has missed half or more of the total number of classes before the last day to withdraw without final grades.*

Tardies: Tardiness is disruptive and will not be tolerated. Tardiness is defined as arriving more than 5 minutes from the beginning of the class period. Leaving class before dismissal will count the same as tardiness. 2 tardies will count as equal to one unexcused absence. Students should wait for fifteen minutes in the event of a professor's tardiness.

Athletes or Participants in University-Sanctioned Activities and Religious Holidays: Before the drop date, I must be informed in writing about the dates that you will miss because of your sport, activity, or religious practice. We will discuss how to make up missed class time and assignments.

Inclement Weather: We will follow the University's directives pertaining to class cancellation in the event of inclement weather or other circumstances. Assignments, readings, or in-class activities will be due when classes resume, unless otherwise contacted by me.

Class Participation:

I expect you to be prepared for class, having done all reading and assignments, and engage with me and your peers. If you find it difficult to speak in class, there will be opportunity to engage in small groups or partner work. You should always bring a copy of the reading(s)/homework assigned on the day we discuss them. **Sufficient participation is decided at the discretion of the professor. Using cell phones or any electronic device for non-classroom related purposes (e.g. Instagram, iMessage, Snapchat, stock reports), working on material for other courses or beyond the scope of the daily discussion, or failure to complete reading assignments will result in being marked as an unexcused absence for the day. I reserve the right to record absences without direct notification. Showing up does not equal being present.**

Assignment Submission:

Major assignments are due by 10 pm on the day of the deadline unless otherwise stated. Failure to upload your assignments before the deadline will result in late penalties, which will be assessed starting at 12:01 am the following calendar day. Anticipate technology problems and take care of this early, as they are not an acceptable excuse for missing a deadline.

Late Work:

If your work will be late, you must contact me by email in order to submit it. **Your grade will be reduced by 1 points for each calendar day past the assignment due date.** *After one calendar week, your assignment can no longer be turned in for a grade, but can be submitted for my written feedback.* If you know in advance that you will miss a deadline, contact me about possible accommodations. You can make assessments as to whether a late penalty might be less detrimental than a poorly finished project.

Grading Policy:

Your grades can reflect your learning and amount of effort in the course, though not your intrinsic value as a student. I will make every effort to grade and return assignments quickly with appropriate feedback. Any discussion of grades or grading policy must take place in my office during office hours or by appointment; **I will not discuss grades before, during, or after class, or over email. Grades in the Canvas gradebook may not reflect the most up-to-date calculation reflecting all homework, participation, etc. Final grades will not be rounded.**

Grades are not a negotiation, and requests for extra credit or leniency at the end of the semester reflect poorly on you. If you are aiming for a specific grade in this class, the beginning of the semester is the proper time to strategize about ways to meet your goal. If you anticipate difficulty, come to my office hours early and often and I'll do my best to help.

A: Represents excellent participation in all course activities (including attendance and promptness); all assigned work completed on time, with very high quality in all work produced for the course. Evidence of significant and sustained development across the learning outcomes. Excellent indicates work of a very high character, the highest grade given.

B: Represents good participation in all course activities (including attendance and promptness); all assigned work completed on time, with consistently high quality. Evidence of marked and above average development across the learning outcomes. Good indicates work that is definitely above average, though not of the highest quality.

C: Represents average participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with generally good quality overall. Evidence of some development across the learning outcomes. Fair indicates work of average or medium character.

D: Represents weak and uneven participation in course activities; some gaps in assigned work completed, with inconsistent quality. Evidence of development across the learning outcomes is weak or unclear. Pass indicates work below average and unsatisfactory, the lowest passing grade.

F: Represents minimal participation in course activities; serious gaps in assigned work completed, or very low quality. Evidence of development is not available. Failed indicates that the student knows so little of the subject that it must be repeated in order that credit can be received.

W: The student withdrew from the course or was withdrawn by the instructor after the first two weeks of classwork and prior to the last five weeks of classes, not including the examination period. For financial aid purposes, enrollment is defined and satisfactory academic progress levels are established as of midnight on the last day to drop without a W grade. Withdrawal can negatively impact financial aid eligibility if a student does not complete a sufficient number of hours.

Email:

Even with the immediacy of technology, I cannot be on-call at all times because of my other obligations. I will be checking my Clemson University email three times during the day: immediately before our class, around noon, and at the end of the business day. Therefore, I will not necessarily see or respond to a last-minute email, nor will I respond immediately to your emails, but I will be sure to respond to all email within 24 hours. I may also use email and Canvas to contact you with reminders, changes, or other concerns, so please actively check your university email as well (but it may be a good idea to set limits on your own standards of communication as a way to manage the pressure of constant contact). Remember in all correspondence with your professors that you should consider the audience: include salutations, use the proper tone, and do not ask for things they cannot provide (i.e. according to FERPA laws, we cannot discuss grades through email).

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

The following is Clemson's official statement on "Academic 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."

See the Clemson site below for information about Academic Integrity and procedures regarding the violation of Clemson policies on scholastic dishonesty: <http://www.clemson.edu/academics/academic-integrity/>

Plagiarism is an academic crime, and it is punishable by academic death.

-- Tommy Lee Jones, *Man of the House* (2005)

Plagiarism is the use of intellectual property or product of someone else without giving proper credit. The undocumented use of someone else's words or ideas in any medium of communication (unless such information is clearly recognized as common knowledge) is a serious offense and violation of Clemson University's position on academic dishonesty. **Willful plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action at my discretion; the minimum penalty for plagiarism will be 0 points on the assignment.** Repurposing work from previous courses constitutes plagiarism. Any of the following forms of plagiarism can carry the same penalty as willful plagiarism at the professor's discretion.

Excessive Collaboration: To write more effectively, students (like most writers) may discuss their ideas and plans for papers with others or may read a paper (or a section of a paper) to friends, making revisions based on their responses. Normally such collaboration improves writing. Excessive collaboration will be defined as the effacement, wittingly or unwittingly, of a student's own words and authorial voice and the adoption, claiming them as their own, of the ideas or exact phrasing of their collaborator.

Insufficient Documentation: Honesty and courtesy require that writers acknowledge their debt for information and opinions they draw from other sources. Documentation provides both an acknowledgment of this debt and a kind of support for the ideas expressed in a paper. Appropriate documentation may range from the mere mention of a name or title to the extensive footnotes and bibliography required in a fully documented paper. Insufficient or inaccurate documentation constitutes a serious weakness in a paper and normally results in a lowered grade.

Inadequate Paraphrase: In paraphrasing, students should carefully change the words and sentence structure of the original source while retaining the original sense of the source's meaning. Students must learn the ability to paraphrase. Usually inadequate paraphrase represents a lack of knowledge and skill on the part of the student rather than a deliberate attempt to deceive. Professors treat inadequate paraphrase like any other writing deficiency, provided it does not also involve insufficient documentation.

Other Forms of Cheating: Examples of other forms of cheating include (1) padding a bibliography by adding resources not actually used in the paper, (2) copying another student's work on an exam, (3) giving answers to another student during an exam, and (4) working on the same assignment with other students when the professor does not allow it. **Any of these forms of academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary action.**

Writing Center (307 Academic Success Center):

The WC is free. The tutors are trained. They don't bite. They can work with you at any point of your writing process -- brainstorming, organizing, grammar, citing --- anything. They can also work with you on any time of assignment, not just writing for humanities courses. **THEY WILL NOT PROOFREAD YOUR WORK.** They will, however, help you do it. You don't have to have an appointment, but time slots fill up very quickly, so scheduling online is the best way to make sure you can be seen. You can make an appointment with a tutor by visiting the Writing Center's website (<https://clemsun.mywconline.com>), by calling them at 864-656-3280, or by simply stopping in. **WRITING CENTER HOURS GET FULL AROUND DEADLINES, SO GO EARLY.**

Accessibility and Accommodations:

If you have received accommodations from Clemson's office of Student Accessibility Services, please let me know. You should have a letter from the office outlining strategies for us to work together to accommodate your needs. It is university policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services to discuss their individualized needs for accommodation. Please be aware that accommodations are not retroactive and new Faculty Accommodation Letters must be presented each semester. For more information visit <http://www.clemson.edu/academics/studentaccess/>.

Whether or not you have documentation, I hope to make our learning experience as accessible as possible to all. Please let me know early in the semester if you have any concerns regarding your learning potential, participation, or general access in this course. Please visit my office hours if you fall behind or have any additional questions.

Title IX Statement:

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. This policy is located at <https://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix/>. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding sexual harassment or discrimination, contact Alesia Smith, Executive Director of Equity Compliance/Title IX Coordinator, Office of Access & Equity, alesias@clemson.edu, 110 Holtzendorff.

Clemson's Counseling and Psychological Services:

While our intellectual pursuits will consider argumentation and composition as a transferrable skill of communication, this course may deal with material that can be emotionally difficult. Learning to communicate in an increasingly contentious global environment adds an emotional weight to the content of this course. Moreover, the pressures of university studies can cause anxiety and stress that can be difficult to deal with alone. CAPS provides free or cost-reduced mental health services with utmost discretion and confidentiality. Their mission is to create a campus climate that provides a safe and optimal learning environment for all students. During normal business hours, CAPS can be contacted by calling 864-656-2451. For emergencies after hours and on weekends, call 864-656-2222 and ask for the CAPS on-call counselor.

Classroom Code of Conduct:

Because we all experience embodied identity in different ways, the concepts that we discuss in this class can be quite personal to individuals in our course. Moreover, events happening outside of the purview of our course but concerning the greater University community may well create tension and anxiety in you, your classmates, and myself. One of the purposes of this class is to learn how to communicate effectively; respect plays a significant role in that skill. Therefore, in our class we will all abide by a code of mutual respect and dignity. I will respect you and your ideas, beliefs, work, and contributions, and you will respect me, yourself, and your peers.

Classroom discussion should be civilized and respectful to everyone and relevant to the topic we are discussing. Everyone is entitled to their opinion. Classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints. This can only happen if we respect each other and our differences. This policy extends to any online communication and discussion, including email, we may incorporate into our class as well. One's words and use of language should be temperate and within acceptable bounds of civility and decency. Rude, sarcastic, obscene, or disrespectful speech and disruptive behavior have a negative impact on everyone's learning. Aggressive, demeaning, discriminatory, or otherwise hostile behavior will not be tolerated and will result in removal from class, as well as contact by the CUPD and disciplinary action if necessary.

Everyone who registers for this class is an adult. You are legally able to marry without parental consent, buy a home, pay taxes, vote, work, budget your money, defend your country in military service, etc. You should also be adult enough not to disturb others and to treat yourself and others with civility and respect. Moreover, your work here at Clemson, with the steadily increasing costs of higher education and your enrollment in a public institution, has been subsidized by you, your parents, the state of South Carolina, and the federal taxpayers. Take yourself and your work seriously to reflect that level of investment and faith in you.

I understand that the syllabus is a contract between myself, my peers, and my professor. I have read and understood all policies laid out in this syllabus and agree to abide by all policies herein. I also understand that the professor reserves the right to revise such policies as she sees fit throughout the course of the semester. I understand that there may be consequences to my failing to abide by these policies, including but not limited to loss of grade points, disciplinary action, and failure.

Student Signature

Professor Signature

Student Print Name

Date Signed