

SOUTHERN STUDIES 101: THE LITERARY SOUTH

course description

SOST101 is a whirlwind introduction to the literature of the American South, featuring works from the colonial period and moving forward, focusing on the 19th and 20th centuries. We'll consider multiple genres of literature by southern writers of various races, classes, ideological positions, and genders. While it's in no way comprehensive, the course will introduce students to many of the major southern writers and several less-familiar writers. To organize our thoughts about the multivocal and multifaceted southern literatures we will consider, we will keep five themes in mind: religion, race, gender, land, and family. These course themes will help us consider the varying, often contradicting ways that the South has been imagined. We will analyze and question the myths that made the region and, using both literature and cultural experience, try to locate our own "South."

required texts

1. Most importantly, reliable access to the internet and Blackboard. Many course texts are in the public domain and will be provided for you on Blackboard for free.
2. Ernest Gaines – *A Lesson Before Dying* (1993) ISBN: 9780375702709
3. Eudora Welty – *Collected Stories of Eudora Welty* (1980) ISBN: 9780156189217
4. Komunyakaa, Yusef – *Magic City* (1992) ISBN: 9780819512086
5. Geary Hobson (editor) – *The People Who Stayed: Southeastern Indian Writing After Removal* (2010) ISBN: 9780806141367

assignment overview

1. Reflections (25%) – Ten 1-1.5 page single spaced responses to a particular reading. You can choose which reading you write on and when you turn in your responses.
2. Paper 1: Close Reading (25%) – A 4-5 page double-spaced, MLA format paper that engages in a close reading of a single literary work from the first half of the semester. A detailed assignment sheet will be forthcoming.
3. Paper 2: Comparative Theme Paper (25%) – A 5-7 page double-spaced, MLA format paper that traces a particular theme of southern identity as it appears in three works from the semester. At least one of the texts you analyze must come from a different century from the other two (ex: one 19th and two 20th century texts, two 21st and one 20th, etc)

4. Final Exam (25%) – A take-home, open book exam featuring short-essay questions, distributed on the last day of class and due by 3pm on our final exam day, **December 7**.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTIONS

First day of class

Readings: Syllabus

Lecture: Expectations, Understanding “the South”

“Region” from *Keywords in Southern Studies* (BB)

WEEK 2: PRECOLONIAL AND COLONIAL ROOTS

Day 1: Cherokee creation myth (Blackboard)

Anderson, “Native,” essay in *Keywords in Southern Studies* (BB)

Introduction: The South Seldom Seen (*People Who Stayed* 1)

Gloyne, “Life Among the Catawba” (*People Who Stayed* 85)

Saunooke, “Why the Turkey is Bald” and “The Story of Corn” (PWS 92-3)

Day 2: Pocahontas Stories (BB)

Excerpts from John Smith’s journals (BB – please feel free to skim this. I just want you to see what it looks like)

Long, “Virginia Dare” (PWS 89)

Powhatan, “Surviving Document Genocide” (PWS 23)

You can begin turning in reflections on or after this date

WEEK 3: BUILDING SOUTHERN IDENTITY

Day 1:

Excerpts from Jefferson’s Notes on Virginia (BB)

New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture entries “Garden Myth,” “Colonial Heritage” (BB)

Introduce Paper 1: Close Reading

Day 2: Selections from Kennedy, *Swallow Barn* Vol 1 chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 26 and Vol. 2 chapters 15 and 18 (BB)

New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture entries “Mythic South,” “Plantation Myth” (BB)
Lecture: The Imagined South

WEEK 4: PLANTATION SOUTH

Day 1: Selections from Hentz, *The Planter’s Northern Bride* chapters 1, 4, and 13(BB)

Lecture: Plantation “Family” Structures

Day 2: Selections from Harper, *Iola Leroy* chapters 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 (BB)

WEEK 5: CIVIL WAR AND MEMORY

Day 1: Selections from Father Ryan’s Poems, “The Conquered Banner” (BB)

Poems by Henry Timrod, “Ethnogenesis” (BB)

Selections from the diary of Mary Boykin Chesnut, p. 1-6 (BB)

Day 2: Charles Chesnutt, “The Goophered Grapevine” and “Po’ Sandy” (BB)

Thomas Nelson Page, “Marse Chan” (BB)

WEEK 6: WRITING REGIONAL IDENTITY

Day 1: Kate Chopin, “Desiree’s Baby” and “Story of an Hour” (BB)

Garney, “A Time to Heal” (PWS 144)

Day 2: *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* entries “Fugitives and Agrarians” (BB)

Davidson, “Lee in the Mountains” (BB)

Introduction to *I’ll Take My Stand* (BB)

WEEK 7: ZORA NEALE HURSTON

Day 1: Hurston, “Spunk” (BB)

Russell, "Mights and Gots..." (PWS 155)

Day 2: Hurston, "Sweat" (BB)

Russell, "Pocket Watch" and "Anybody..." (PWS 155, 157)

Paper 1 Due

WEEK 8: FAULKNER AND HIS LEGACY

Day 1: Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (BB)

Faulkner, "Barn Burning" (BB)

Day 2: Faulkner's Legacy

Owens, "Yazoo Dusk" (PWS 217)

Welty, "The Burning" (Complete Stories of Eudora Welty)

WEEK 9: EUDORA WELTY

Day 1: Welty, "Why I Live at the P.O." (Complete Stories)

Welty, "A Worn Path" (Complete Stories)

Day 2: Welty, "Where is the Voice Coming From?" (Complete Stories)

Welty, "Death of a Traveling Salesman" (Complete Stories)

Before you leave for midterm break, make sure you know how many responses you've turned in and/or what your plan is for getting all 10 responses written.

WEEK 10: O'CONNOR AND THE CHRIST-HAUNTED SOUTH

Day 1: O'Connor, "Everything that Rises Must Converge" (BB)

Introduce Paper 2: Comparative Theme Paper

Day 2: Pettigrew, all poems included (PWS 150-152)

Walker, “Everyday Use” (BB)

WEEK 11: CONTEMPORARY SOUTHS

Day 1: Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying* chapters 1-8

Day 2: Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying* chapters 9-15

WEEK 12

Day 1: Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying* chapters 16-23

Day 2: Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying* chapters 24-end

WEEK 13

Day 1: Novel Wrap-Up and Introduction to Contemporary Poetry

Day 2: Komunyakaa's *Magic City*, beginning to “History Lessons”

WEEK 14

Day 1: Komunyakaa, *Magic City*, “History Lessons” to end

Final Day to Turn in Responses

Day 2: contemporary poetry conclusion

Paper 2: Comparative Theme Paper Due

WEEK 15

Final Exam week: Beyoncé's *Lemonade* (2016) and final exam prep