

AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES 525
MAJOR AUTHORS
Sandy Adell, Professor
Office Hours: M (11:00am-12:30pm) TWTh (3:30-5:30)
4115 Helen C. White (263.0425)

Course Description

This is an advanced level course on African American novelists since 1970. Our approach will be thematic, theoretical, and structural. This is, we will engage in close readings of the texts, discuss the narrative techniques the novelists used, the choices they made to create their characters and to move their plots along, and the theoretical concerns of the critics who write about their works. This class will be conducted as part lecture and part discussion. Therefore, you each will be expected to prepare topics for discussion and lead discussion sessions over the course of the semester. Also, graduate students will be required to do a fifteen minute presentation. The presentation topic must be approved by me no later than week three of the semester.

Course Requirements

This course meets a week. You are expected to attend all sessions. More than one absence, *for any reason*, could lower your final grade. In addition to classroom assignments, there will be three short written assignments, a mid-term exam (undergraduates only), and a final paper of ten pages for undergraduates, fifteen pages for graduates. You must make an appointment with me to discuss your final paper topic no later than week six.

Required Readings (The books are at the University Bookstore. You should also check the numerous used bookstores in the area. You are also required to purchase a course reader from the copy shop at 627 State Street)

Bradley, David. *The Chaneyville Incident*.
Jones, Gayl. *The Healing*.
Morrison, Toni. *Paradise*.
Reed, Ishmael. *Mumbo Jumbo*
Parks, Suzan-Lori. *Getting Mother's Body*.
Walker, Alice. *The Strange Life of Grange Copeland*

(over)

SYLLABUS

September

11—Introduction: Alice Walker, The Third Life of Grange Copeland.

18—Alice Walker, cont.; Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?”, Philip M. Royster, “In Search of Our Fathers’ Arms: Alice Walker’s Persona of the Alienated Darling”; Robert James Butler, “Alice Walker’s Vision of the South in The Third Life of Grange Copeland”(Course Reader).

25—Walker and critics, cont. (**assignment #1 due: critique of one of the essays**).

October

2—David Bradley, The Chaneyville Incident, pgs. 1-205.

9—The Chaneyville Incident, pgs. 206-end. (**assignment #2, due: book review**)

16—Edward Pavlic, “Syndetic Redemption: Above-Underground *Emergence* in David Bradley’s The Chaneyville Incident,” Klaus Ensslen, “Fictionalizing History: David Bradley’s The Chaneyville Incident” (Course Reader). (**Lecture: first half; hour long mid-term for undergrads; grads dismissed for second half**).

23—Bradley and critics, cont. (**grad student panel**)

30--Toni Morrison, Paradise.

November

6--Paradise, cont.; Katrine Dalsgard, “The One All-Black Town Worth the Pain” (Course reader).

13—Ishmael Reed, Mumbo Jumbo.

20--Mumbo Jumbo, cont.; Beth McCoy: “Paratext, Citation, and Academic Desire in Ishmael Reed’s Mumbo Jumbo” (Course Reader). (**assignment #3 due: topic to be announced**)

27—Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text,” (Course Reader); Gayl Jones, The Healing.

December

4—Gayl Jones, cont; Suzan-Lori Parks, Getting Mother’s Body

11—Suzan-Lori Parks, cont., summary.