

The Black Arts/Aesthetics Movement

Professor Gibson
ENG 364 (Spring 2014)
Buckman Hall 330: TR ~ 2-3:15pm
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Office: 302 Palmer Hall, 901.843.3445
Office Hrs: TR ~ 12:30-1:30pm & By Appointment

Teaching Philosophy

- Pedagogical Creed: *I am convinced that the act of learning can be likened to that of travel. If the student is in the same position at the end of the semester as where he/she began at the beginning, the professor has failed to lead, the student has failed to follow or the material has failed them both.*
- Student Objective: *To become **SOPHISTICATED READERS** of text, culture and experience!*

Course Description

- This is a **READING INTENSIVE** course that will examine the popularly conceived artistic arm of the Black Power Movement - the Black Arts Movement (BAM) of the 1960s and 1970s. As an inadvertent response to the New Negro Movement of the 1920s, and cultivated by the “re-emerging” tensions of American race relations, BAM represents one of the richest moments within literary history. This course will examine the art, politics, and theories that characterized the movement. It will pay particular attention to the ways in which “Black Art” redefines itself, the aestheticism that shapes various modes of expressions, and the movement’s contribution to a new philosophy of black subjectivity.

Required and Supplementary Texts

- Bambara: *The Black Woman: An Anthology (BW)*
- Baraka & Neal (eds.): *Black Fire: An Anthology (BF)*
- Kelley: *dem*
- Killens: *The Cotillion*
- Williams: *The Man Who Cried I Am*
- There will also be several PDFs posted to Moodle

- All required texts are available at Rhodes College Bookstore
 - 901.843.3535
 - Rhodes@bkstr.com

Course Requirements

- **Literary Criticisms:** One-page (single-spaced) responses to the longer texts within the course that critically assess an authorial intentionality or literary subtext based upon the student's careful and **complete** reading of the work. Not individually graded.
- **Thematic Essay:** A five-page essay surveying an identifiable theme/idea within the literature covered up to the date of assignment. It is designed to evaluate the student's ability to articulate a sophisticated *reading* of the text(s). Professor will provide selection of literary concepts or prompts from which the student must choose. All essays must be in acceptable MLA format and submitted in hardcopy as well as via Moodle in a MS-Word document.
- **Critical Essays (2):** Student is required to produce two papers of varying lengths. Both must be in acceptable MLA format and submitted in hardcopy as well as via Moodle in a MS Word Document.
 - Critical Essay One: A ten-page essay engaging a specific element covered within the course. This paper should be a close reading and/or thematic treatment of a text or multiple texts and should critically examine salient elements within the work. In particular, the essay should highlight how the texts covered within the class speak to a particular theme, trope, motif, symbol, construction, et cetera. Paper length is non-negotiable.
 - Critical Essay Two (Final Paper): A twenty-page essay exploring a central idea, theme, trope, symbol, motif, construction, et cetera. This paper should be inspired by one or more of the readings from the course and should effectively make use of an identifiable critical lens. Outside research is required (acceptable scholarly texts, articles, and criticisms). Paper length is non-negotiable.
- Consult MLA handbook or <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/> for writing/literary assistance.
- **Engagement/Quizzes:** Although this course is reading intensive, class sessions rely heavily on classroom discussion. The student is expected to show up for class prepared to engage his/her colleagues, the text, and the professor in serious dialogue. After one week of absences, one-third letter grade will be dropped; anything in excess of two weeks of absences may result in a withdrawal or failing

of the course. <http://www.rhodes.edu/collegehandbook/10372.asp> Quizzes will be administered if class appears to not have done the reading.

- **Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:** All work submitted in this course must be original to the student and to the class. There is no tolerance for recycled or plagiarized work. If the student engages in any act of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, he/she will fail the assignment/class and be reported to the honor council. <http://www.rhodes.edu/studenthandbook/2175.asp#DisVio>
- **Late Assignments:** Not accepted without legitimate and verified excuse.
- **Assignment Weights:**
 - Engagement – 10%
 - Literary Criticisms – 10%
 - Thematic Essay – 20%
 - Critical Essay – 25%
 - Final Essay – 35%
- **Professor retains the right to change this syllabus.**

Course Schedule

January 9th

Introductions, Syllabus

Contextualizing/Historicizing the Black Arts and Aesthetics Movement

January 14th

✘ Fuller (PDF – Moodle)

✘ Stewart / Cruse (*BF* – Essays)

January 16th

✘ Hernton / Carmichael (*BF* – Essays)

January 21st

✘ Barrett / Spellman / Hare (*BF* – Essays)

January 23rd

✘ Baraka (*Dutchman*, PDF – Moodle)

✘ **Literary Criticism (1)**

January 28th

✘ Garrett / Patterson / Jones (*BF* – Drama)

January 30th

✘ Jones / Neal (*BF* – Poetry)

✘ Neal (PDF – Moodle)

February 4th

✘ Williams (novel)

February 6th

✘ Williams (novel)

February 11th

✘ Williams (novel)

✘ **Literary Criticism (2)**

February 13th

✘ Williams (novel)

February 18th

✘ Williams (novel)

✘ **Thematic Essay**

February 20th

✘ Anderson / Stewart / Hernton (*BF* – Poetry)

February 25th

✘ Spellman / Jeffers / Sanchez (*BF* – Poetry)

February 27th

✘ Giovanni / Lincoln / Sanders (*BW*)

✘ Smith (*BF* – Fiction)

March 4th

✘ Lorde / Marshall (*BW*)

✘ **Literary Criticism (3)**

March 6th

✘ Beale / Cade / Stokes / Bond & Perry (*BW*)

March 8-16th – *Spring Recess*

March 18th

✘ Williams (*BW*)

✘ Fields (*BF* – Fiction)

March 20th

✘ Bullins (*BF* – Drama)

✘ Film

March 25th

- ✘ Kelley (novel)
- ✘ **Critical Essay One**

March 27th

- ✘ Kelley (novel)

April 1st

- ✘ Kelley (novel)

April 3rd

- ✘ Kelley (novel)
- ✘ **Literary Criticism (4)**

April 8th

- ✘ Killens (novel)

April 10th

- ✘ Killens (novel)

April 15th

- ✘ Killens (novel)
- ✘ **Literary Criticism (5)**

April 17th

- ✘ Dumas (*BF* – Fiction)
- ✘ Neal (*BF* – Afterword)

April 22nd

- ✘ **Final Essay Discussion**

April 24th

- ✘ **Course Discussion and Evaluations**

April 27th

- ✘ ***Final Essay Due***