

ENGLISH 7474 CULTURAL TEXTS: NARRATING APARTHEID

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Department of English
University of Memphis, Fall 2001

DESCRIPTION

This course examines texts from the US Southeast and from South Africa, focusing on the ways in which literary texts represent experiences and understandings of apartheid—the ideologies that support and occlude it, the events that foreground it, and the actions and interactions that test or challenge it. We will consider, particularly, the narrative configuration of relationships between consciousness and social structure, and the degree to which such configurations reflect or respond to contexts of rigid state-sponsored racial segregation and those of social and cultural transformation.

GRADING

- Your grade will be determined according to a +/- scale. When the university averages your GPA, it will assign an A- 3.84 out of 4 possible points; all other +/-s indicate a .33 distance from the nearest integer (i.e., a B+ = 3.33, and a B- = 2.67).
- Your grade will be determined by a weighted average:
 - Class participation 30%
 - Short papers 25%
 - Final paper 45%
- You **must** fulfill all requirements for this course according to schedule in order to pass.

PAPERS

- **Short essays (2-3 pages):**
 - a. You will each be assigned to a group, and will write submit three short papers on the dates assigned to your group. (You may not arbitrarily switch weeks. If you can find someone willing to swap with you, that's fine, but you are responsible **both** for the writing of three short essays **and** for the submission of an appropriate number of papers on the date your group's papers are due.)
 - b. These essays provide an opportunity for you to reflect on the text(s) specified for that week in relation to the development of the course. You may specify your own purpose in writing the essay: you may, for example, wish to question the assumptions of the text or of the class, or you may wish to discuss the effect of the text on your own thinking or the direction of the course. You may prefer to present your discussion in a formal, analytic style, or you may want to foreground a more subjective, impressionistic response.
 - c. Though you are welcome to choose among multiple options in formulating your paper, you must express yourself clearly. Your paper will be graded on the degree to which it engages with issues raised by the text or the class and to which it communicates to readers.
- **Substantial essay (12-15 pages):**
 - a. You will develop your own topics for this final paper. You are highly encouraged to discuss these topics with me, and are required to submit a prospectus by November 19. These papers must demonstrate engagement with a theoretical, critical, or historical archive, and cite these materials using MLA style.

- b. You are **required** to submit one draft of the final paper by December 3 for peer review and my commentary. This process is intended for your benefit, but is not optional.
- c. Grading criteria include clarity and coherence in prose, argumentation, and methodology.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Available at University Bookstore
 - Course Packet (indicated on syllabus with *)
 - Mark Behr, *The Smell of Apples*
 - J. M. Coetzee, *Age of Iron*
 - William Faulkner, *Light in August*
 - Bessie Head, *A Question of Power*
 - Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*
 - Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*
 - Alice Walker, *Meridian*

SYLLABUS

- M, 8/27** Introduction
- W, 8/29** Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull*, chap. 3 *
- M, 9/3** **LABOR DAY—NO CLASS**
- W, 9/5** Dori Laub, selection from *Testimony* *
- M, 9/10** Lillian Smith, *Killers of the Dream* *
Eudora Welty, "Keela, the Outcast Indian Maid" *
- T, 9/11** **GROUP ONE PAPERS DUE**
- W, 9/12** Bhabha, "The Other Question" *
Welty, "Powerhouse" *
- M, 9/17** Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" *
- T, 9/18** **GROUP TWO PAPERS DUE**
- W, 9/19** Gordimer, "Not for Publication" and "Six Feet of the Country"*
- M, 9/24** Behr, *Smell of Apples*, pp. 1-99
- T, 9/25** **GROUP THREE PAPERS DUE**
- W, 9/27** Behr, pp. 99-end
- M, 10/1** Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, chaps. ---
- T, 10/2** **GROUP ONE PAPERS DUE**
- W, 10/3** Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, chaps. ---
- M, 10/8** **FALL BREAK/NO CLASS**

W, 10/10 Faulkner, *Light in August*, chaps. ---
M, 10/15 Faulkner, chaps. ---
T, 10/16 **GROUP TWO PAPERS DUE**
W, 10/17 Faulkner, chaps. ---
M, 10/22 Lefebvre, "Social Space" *
T, 10/23 **GROUP THREE PAPERS DUE**
W, 10/24 Hurston, *Mules and Men* *
 Breytenbach, *Return to Paradise*, *
M, 10/29 Moody, chaps. 7-15
T, 10/30 **GROUP ONE PAPERS DUE**
W, 10/31 Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue* *
 Wright, "Bright and Morning Star" *
M, 11/5 Cabral, "National Liberation and Culture" *
 Ndelebe, "Actors and Interpreters" *
T, 11/6 **GROUP TWO PAPERS DUE**
W, 11/7 Magona, stories *
 Modisane, *Blame Me on History* *
M, 11/12 Head, *A Question of Power*, chaps. ---
T, 11/13 **GROUP THREE PAPERS DUE**
W, 11/14 Head, chaps. ---
M, 11/19 Coetzee, *Age of Iron*, chaps. ---
 Prospectus for final paper DUE
W, 11/21 Coetzee, chaps. ---
M, 11/26 Walker, *Meridian*, chaps. ---
W, 11/28 Walker, chaps. ---
M, 12/3 Writing seminar
 Final paper drafts DUE
W, 12/5 Writing seminar
FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY, 12/10!