

AML4311/AFA4931/WST4930: 05H7/1E73/09H9  
Fall 2014

Professor: Dr. King

Office Hrs.: M 6-8<sup>th</sup> periods  
M 9<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> periods (4:05-7:05pm)  
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Dept.

### TONI MORRISON

**Description:** This course introduces students to an extraordinary woman whose work, both fictional and critical, has shaken the foundations of American literature (and criticism) to reconstitute both it and the boundaries of its canon. Students will investigate why critics herald Toni Morrison as the “most formally sophisticated novelist in the history of African-American literature” while also discovering why she is its most renowned. Morrison’s work has earned the highest accolades in contemporary literary circles: the National Book Critics Circle Award and the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award for *Song of Solomon* in 1977, the Pulitzer Prize and the Robert F. Kennedy Award for *Beloved* in 1988 and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993 (among others). Her novels explore themes of naturalistic fiction while also engaging the more dramatic themes of modernism: death, love, rebirth, responsibility, and memory. They are lyrical prose memorials to suffering and loss that move beyond characters’ victimization towards rectification, reconciliation, renewal and revival.

**Focus:** Toni Morrison has published ten novels, a play, short stories, children’s books and several critical pieces. This semester we will read most of her fiction, focusing on several themes. Among them are the relationship of the sacred to the secular, history and heritage, identity and subjectivity, language and rhetorical strategy, motherhood and self, life and love. We will evaluate what critics have to say about Morrison (how they construct and reconstruct the artist and her work) as well as evaluate the author’s own critical perspectives on art and society.

**Required Texts and Materials:** • *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

- *Sula* (1974)
- *Song of Solomon* (1977)
- *Tar Baby* (1981)
- *Beloved* (1987)
- *A Mercy* (2012)
- *What Moves at the Margin*
- *Jazz* (2004)

• **Pack of 3x5 index cards** **Grade Distribution and Grading Method**

Participation	100 points
Preparation	100 points
Oral Reports	100 points
Final Paper	100 points
Tests, Quizzes & Other	100 points

All papers and short essay quizzes are evaluated on content, originality, creativity, connections to course objectives, and form (grammar, spelling, bibliography, etc.). Grades will be calculated in terms of possible score percentages with no curve. You are guaranteed an A or A- if you earn 450 points or more out of 500 possible points (90 %+).

435 to 449 (87% <sup>+</sup> ) to 363 (67% <sup>+</sup> )	B <sup>+</sup> D <sup>+</sup>	385 to 399 (77% <sup>+</sup> )	C <sup>+</sup>	335
415 to 434 (83% <sup>+</sup> ) to 334 (63% <sup>+</sup> )	B D	365 to 384 (73% <sup>+</sup> )	C	315
400 to 414 (80% <sup>+</sup> ) to 314 (60% <sup>+</sup> )	B <sup>-</sup> D <sup>-</sup>	350 to 364 (70% <sup>+</sup> )	C <sup>-</sup>	300

### GRADING CRITERIA

**Assignments will be graded on how proficiently they meet expectations in the key areas of content, organization, and grammar/mechanics.**

#### STRONG CONTENT INCLUDES:

- A clearly delineated and/ or interpreted topic
- A strong, clear, and logically developed thesis that is supported by fully developed ideas in the form of relevant textual evidence and research
- Ideas that show evidence of independent thinking
- Commentary that explains how the concrete details support the thesis. Commentary may include interpretation, analysis, argument, insight, and/or reflection.
- Research supporting materials (note: Google searches are fine for starters, but please use academic journals and books for strong research effort)

#### STRONG ORGANIZATION INCLUDES:

- The effective arrangement of points that reveals itself in very good incorporation of evidence (use of summary, paraphrase) and the sparing and judicious use of quotations
- Rounded and well-connected paragraphs
- The use of appropriate transitions

#### STRONG GRAMMAR, MECHANICS, AND PROSE STYLE IS CHARACTERIZED BY:

- Mature sentence structure, syntax, and diction
- Strong audience awareness as evidenced in the use of appropriate style, register, tone, and vocabulary
- Little to no errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation,
- The formatting of document in keeping with prescribed guidelines
- No more than assignment permissible “fatal errors” (see description of these errors below)

### RUBRIC

The “A” submission has strong content, strong organization, AND strong grammar/mechanics. To receive an “A,” work needs to offer support in the form of textual evidence and secondary research materials (using direct quotes and paraphrase), present original insight in argumentation, and be organized clearly and logically with sources documented using MLA style guidelines.

A “B” submission is notably weak in ONE of the above key areas.

A “C” submission, albeit promising, is notably weak in TWO or more of the above key areas.

A “D” submission is significantly weak in TWO or more of the above key areas.

### COURSE POLICIES

1. “FATAL ERRORS” POLICY: Students must meet high standards in writing. To this end, all written assignments must meet minimal presentation criteria to be acceptable. These standards address spelling, punctuation, format and basic grammar. The term *Fatal Errors* refers to formal writing errors of form. Specifically, they include the following and will be identified in evaluated written assignments by error number:

-  1. Each different word misspelled,
-  2. Each sentence fragment,

- 3. Each run-on sentence or comma splice,
- 4. Each mistake in capitalization,
- 5. Each serious error in punctuation that obscures meaning, including errors in the use or failure to use italics and quotation marks,
- 6. Each error in verb tense or subject/verb agreement,
- 7. Each instance of ending a sentence with a preposition,
- 8. Each improper citation, or lack of citation, where one is needed
- 9. Each misuse of words (*who* for *that* or unwarranted use of clichés, for instance),
- 10. Poor Paragraphing or lack of paragraphing,
- 11. Lack of conformity with assignment format.

Papers with more than **three (3) fatal errors on any one page** or more than **seven (7) for the entire document** will be returned to the student and will suffer a half letter grade deduction. Only one resubmission is allowed. Penalties for final course papers (where there is no time for a resubmission) will be based on the relative importance of the assignment to the determination of the final course grade. This policy applies to all assignments, excluding entrance cards.

1. CELL PHONES AND COMPUTERS: Cell phones must be muted or turned off during the class session. If an emergency occurs and you have to respond to calls or texts, please leave the classroom. Computers (iPads or other electronics) are allowed for note taking, access to eBooks, and presentations only. Anyone using a computer for any other purpose will be asked to deliver the device to me for retrieval after class. You may record the class (presentations, for instance) with my permission only.
- 2.
3. PAPERS / PORTFOLIO: All papers must be typed and double spaced using the 8 1/2 x 11 page layouts with one inch margins all around. Use Courier or New York Times font at 12 point size. Documentation and form should follow the MLA style manual. Number all pages after the first within the upper right margin. Submit papers to me via email (not Sakai).
4. PAPER MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES: Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers; it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material.
5. GRADE DISPUTES: Questions about assigned grades are acceptable during my office hours only. If my written responses do not address your concerns, I will explain why a grade was earned. With the exception of miscalculation or posting error, I will not consider grade changes. **Please do not ask.**
- 6.
7. ASSESSMENTS: Individual grades are available on Sakai immediately after grading.
- 8.
9. MISSED CLASS SESSIONS: Make up work for approved absences must be addressed within one week of your return. See me for submission deadlines for missed work within this time frame.
- 10.
11. FINAL PAPER SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: This assignment **must be submitted electronically**. Microsoft Word compatible documents only please. Unreadable documents will be returned ungraded. Submit your project by 7:00 p.m. on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Late submissions will suffer a half letter grade reduction.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

**DISABILITY SERVICES:** The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. It is your responsibility to contact the school administration regarding any disability you may have, and to inform me so we can make any necessary arrangements. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** Honor Code. “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.” This oath represents UF’s commitment to academic honesty and integrity. “Cheating, plagiarism, bribery, misrepresentation, conspiracy and fabrication” are violations of the Honor Code. Violators will suffer the consequences. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

**HARASSMENT:** UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>

## FINAL PAPERS —100 PTS

This six-page paper should emphasize some aspect of the course objectives using any of the required texts you wish. You may develop one of your oral report response papers or choose something new. This assignment is due **Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>**.

## ORAL REPORT —100 PTS

Each Student is required to present two (2) critical essays (worth 50 points each) with assessment and response presented to the class during two (2) separate class sessions (if possible). Prior to your presentation, submit to me, via email, a one page abstract of the essay and a brief (one page) summary of your response, which I will grade along with your oral presentation. No reading please! Your complete assignment submission should be no more than two pages. Select from the critical essays listed on the “oral report selections” sheet posted under “Resources” in Sakai. For this assignment you will conduct a 10 minute presentation in which you do the following:

- a close examination of the assigned essay
- make use of handouts and/or use technology
- provide two class discussion questions
- direct discussion of at least one of the two questions (after the 10 minute presentation is given)

## OTHER EXPECTATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS –300 PTS

**Participation (100 pts.):** Students should complete all readings prior to the class meeting and participate fully in discussion. Assessment is made in the area of attendance, interlocutory contribution, leadership, teamwork, originality and engagement.

*Attendance:* Discussions cannot be replicated so if you miss a day of class, you will have missed the lesson for that day. Therefore, I take attendance very seriously and expect you to come to class every day on time. You are allowed **up to three** unexcused absences, your grade will automatically drop a half letter grade after the third absence (excused or unexcused). **If you reach six absences you will automatically fail the course and should withdraw from the class (or you will receive an “E” for the semester).** Remember, this is a three hour seminar;

missing one class in its entirety counts as three absences. No INCOMPLETES are given for this course.

*Caveat: Excused absences are permitted if you provide proof documenting an illness, a family crisis, or participation in a university sponsored event. Unfortunately, given the nature of the course, if you miss more than two weeks of class—even if it is due to illness or other reasons—you will automatically fail and receive an E.*

#### **STRONG PARTICIPATION INCLUDES:**

1. only excused absences with no recorded tardiness
2. adherence to course policies and guidelines
3. clear and respectful exchanges with other students and the professor
4. volunteering to enter or begin discussions
5. leadership within group activities as well as a willingness to follow and serve group interests
6. an understanding of teamwork and ones responsibility to advancing positive class or group dynamics
7. originality in thought, discussion and entrance card information sharing
8. encouraging others' ability to enter or sustain participation in discussions
9. engaging questions from the professor or other students without hesitation or persuasion

#### **RUBRIC**

-  "A" level participation is strong in all key areas
-  "B" level participation, albeit promising, is notably weak in TWO key areas
-  "C" level participation, albeit promising, is notably weak in THREE key areas
-  "D" level participation is notably weak in FOUR or more key areas

**Preparation (100 pts.):** All readings, entrance passes, take-home assignments and writing assignments must be prepared and ready for each class session.

*Entrance Passes:* Purchase a pack of 3x5 index cards. These cards are your entrance passes and will be used to inform me of your attendance. Bring one with you every class session. Without an entrance pass you will be considered absent so be sure to put your name on them. Tardy attendees' cards will be collected at the end of class. Tardiness will be recorded and considered during grading. Consistent tardiness will result in a final letter grade reduction.

**Exams, Quizzes and Other assignments (100 pts):** There will be a mid-term exam and several pop quizzes—no makeup quizzes.

#### **COURSE CALENDAR**

WK 1: 8/25 Introduction

Film: *A World of Ideas*

WK 2: 9/1 Holiday

WK 3: 9/8 *What Moves at the Margin*

WK 4: 9/15 *The Bluest Eye*

WK 5: 9/22 *Sula*  
(Part One)  
Critical readings #1-6

WK 6: 9/29 *Sula*  
(Part Two)  
Critical readings #7-18

WK 7: 10/6 *Song of Solomon*  
Critical reading # 19  
(Part One)

WK 8: 10/13 *Song of Solomon*  
Critical readings #20-29  
(Part Two-Three)

WK 9: 10/20 *Tar Baby*  
Critical reading #30-32  
(Chpts. 1-5)

WK 10: 11/27 *Tar Baby*  
Critical readings #33-44  
(Chpts. 5-end)

WK 11: 11/3 *Beloved* (FILM viewing)

WK 12: 11/10 *Beloved*  
Critical readings #45-58

WK 13: 11/17 *Jazz*  
Critical readings #59-70

WK 14: 11/24 *Jazz*  
Critical readings concluded

WK 15: 12/1 *A Mercy*  
Critical readings #71-74

WK 15: 12/8 **TBD**

**FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 7:00 PM 12/10/14**