

TRAVEL, EXILE, & MIGRATION IN THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

English 4850-002 (11614)
Literature in Context
Class meetings on Tu: 6-8:50pm (LANG104)

Dr. Laila Amine
Spring 2018
Office: Language 408D
Office hours: Tu & We 5-6pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This class examines multiple forms of mobility in the black diaspora in 20th and 21st centuries through novels, essays, plays, and memoirs. Students will investigate the various social facets of mobility and the ways it shapes African Diaspora identity and political consciousness. With an eye on socio-political contexts, we will consider why men and women travel, leave, and/or return home. The course introduces students to a wide array of conceptualizations of “home” as it relates to locality, nationalism, diaspora, and cosmopolitanism. In addition, students will develop strategies to analyze and discuss literature, to understand cultural assumptions, and defend their critical positions.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (Farrar, 2008)
Baldwin, James. *Collected Essays* (Library of America, 1998)
William, Demby. *King Comus* (Ishmael Reed Publishing Company, 2017)
Marshall, Paule. *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* (Vintage, 1984)
Jackson, Naomi. *The Star Side of Bird Hill* (Penguin, 2015)
Armah, Ayi Kwei. *Fragments* (Heinemann, 1995)
Adoo, Ama Ata. *Dilemma of a Ghost* (Pearson 1995)
Selasi, Taiye. *Ghana Must Go* (Penguin, 2014)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and is crucial to successful performance in this course. To allow for unexpected emergencies only, students will not be penalized for missing one class over the course of the semester. However, with each additional absence, you lower your score by three points. For example, a 90 would become an 87. Note that four absences (or more) will result in an automatic “F” in the course.

Participation: You are expected to discuss the reading; raise questions that you prepared and that interest you; and engage with your classmates.

Quizzes and responses: To optimize participation, some classes will start with a very short quiz on the reading. At the end of the semester, the two lowest scores will be dropped. See schedule for responses

Essays: Students will write two analytical essays about works of fiction discussed in class. Both essays will involve conducting research on the chosen topic.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Class participation	15%	
Quizzes and responses	35%	
Essay #1	25%	due 3/23
Essay #2	25%	due 5/8

COURSE POLICY

Academic integrity: It is crucial that students inform themselves of the University's regulations on academic integrity, before it affects them. Cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconducts will be pursued. The guidelines on how to use and quote material can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.courses.unt.edu/efiga/FACULTYPAGE/PolicyOnPlagiarism.htm>

Incomplete for course grade: Only under the most extreme and exceptional circumstances can students petition for an incomplete. Please note that the grade of "Incomplete" ("I") is given only when the work of the course is substantially completed and only if the student's work is of passing quality at the time he or she petitions an "I."

Special circumstances for late essays: To be fair to all students, late essays will not be accepted, except in the case of extreme emergencies (such as prolonged hospitalization for a severe illness). Permission must be obtained, if possible, *before* the essay is due and with all *supporting documentation*.

Disability Accommodations and Special Needs: Please let me know right away if you have any special needs that would need accommodation to make you more comfortable in this class. We can meet to discuss any special needs you may have. If your documentation needs to be updated you can find information and resources to contact on the following link:
<http://www.unt.edu/oda/apply/reqs/learning.html>

Safe Space for Diversity and Open Communication: In this course, you are expected to keep an open mind while we discuss a wide range of topics that may sometimes be controversial. Students from all backgrounds – including by race, nationality, religion, and sexual orientation – are welcome and their opinions valued.

Communicating via E-mail: E-mail is the best way to contact me and I strive to respond quickly. Please be sure that messages are written formally with a subject line that includes the course (e.g. "ENG4850: Question about exam"); Salutation (e.g. "Dear Dr. Amine") at the beginning; Message (always mention the purpose of the e-mail in at least one full sentence, even if you are just submitting an attachment), Full name at the end (e.g. "Sincerely, Jane Smith")

Classroom Policy on Electronic Devices: It is very important that you are engaged in this class and not distracted by any electronic devices such as a laptop computer, tablet, or cell phone. Generally, use of a laptop is not necessary in this class but if for some documented reason you do need to use one, please meet with me to discuss it.

RESOURCES

Learning center: <http://learningcenter.unt.edu> 940-369-7006

The center helps with your learning style, tutoring, time management, note taking, test taking strategies and anxiety, speed reading, and provide exam prep materials (GMAT, GRE, LSAT, etc).

Career Center: <http://careercenter@unt.edu> 940-565-2105

Counseling and testing services: <http://counselingandtesting.unt.edu> 940-565-2735

C&TS deals with well-being, career counseling, consultation, mental health screenings, etc.

Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities: <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

Office of Disability Accommodation: <http://www.unt.edu/oda/> 940-565-4323

Student Legal Services: <http://studentlegal.unt.edu> 940-565-2614

Student Health and Wellness Center: <http://healthcenter.unt.edu> 940-565-2333

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault: UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

READING SCHEDULE

Week 1

1/16 – At home screening of *Dollars and Dreams: West Africans in New York* on KANOPY. Kanopy is a film database available on the UNT library website. Go to database, enter Kanopy, and the title. In a one-page response (double spaced), note the key concerns highlighted in the documentary as well as concerns viewers could have expected, but which were not included.

Week 2

1/23 – Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (1-159)

Week 3

1/30 – Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (160-end)

Week 4

2/6 – Adichie's "Imitation" and "On Monday of Last Week"
Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost*

Week 5

2/13 – At home screening of "I Am Not Your Negro" and "Price of the Ticket"
Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son* (part 3) and *Nobody Knows My Name* (part 1)
In a two-page response (double spaced), pick a small theme addressed in Baldwin's essays and the documentaries and explain its significance in his writing.

Week 6

2/20 – Marshall's *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* (1-147)

Week 7

2/27 – Marshall's *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* (147-300)

Week 8

3/6 – Marshall's *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* (300-end)

Week 9

3/13 – Spring break (no classes)

Week 10

3/20 – Jackson's *The Star Side of Bird Hill* (1-141)

3/23 – Essay#1 is due on turnitin folder on Blackboard

Week 11

3/27 – Jackson's *The Star Side of Bird Hill* (142-end)
Diaz's "Homecoming with Turtles"

Week 12

4/3 – Armah's *Fragments* (1-146)

Week 13

4/10 – Armah's *Fragments* (147-end)

Week 14

4/17 – Demby's *King Comus* (full novel)

In a two-page response (double-spaced), synthesize the significance of mobility for a central character.

Week 15:

4/24 – Hartman's *Lose Your Mother* (1-109)

Week 16:

5/1 – Hartman's *Lose Your Mother* (110-end)

Week 17:

5/8 – Essay#2 is due on Turn it in folder on Blackboard

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus.