ENGLISH 2316.661: Literature and Culture
Literature and Social Protest: From Bebop to Hip Hop
Fall 2019
MWF 1:00-1:50 p.m. (BH 205); 3:00-3:50 (OCNR 255)

**Instructor:** Dr. Wendy Walker
**Office:** Faculty Center 126
**Office Hours:** TR 1:00-3:00 p.m.; F 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.; and by appointment
**Office Phone:** 361-825-2979
**Email:** Wendy.Walker@tamucc.edu *

*The best way to reach me is via email. While I try to respond to all email within 24 hours, I am not available outside of regular business hours and likely won't respond after 5 p.m. or on weekends.*

Anna Reishus, “Power to the Polls”

**Course Description: Literature and Social Protest, from Bebop to Hip Hop**
This course examines the rich tradition of social protest literature in the United States from the Harlem Renaissance to the rise of Hip Hop. The authors that we will read this semester use literary forms to cry out against oppression and inequality while simultaneously creating and critiquing popular cultural forms. For them, then, the act of writing is a deliberate challenge to the status quo. Therefore, we will examine writing as a creative act that is a form of political activism that employs definite aesthetic strategies for resisting dominant cultural norms. We will read short stories, poems, fiction and nonfiction by authors who write to express dissent. But through the act of writing, these authors seek to
envision and manifest a more equitable, peaceful, sustainable future for the Americas and the world and call us, as readers, to action.

In addition to the thematic focus of the course, the course work is also designed to allow you to explore what you know about literature’s connections to writing and culture as well as what you know about yourself as a member of society. Therefore, I am especially interested in helping you explore the intersection of the personal and public, the private and the social in your thinking, your reading, your writing, and your life. This class will ask you to explore what you know about culture (academic and otherwise) and yourself. We will look at writing, our own and that of others, as articulations of knowledge. We will, therefore, need to continually ask ourselves a number of important questions, such as:

- Who is the author of this piece?
- Why was this piece written? What “knowledge” does it attempt to impart?
- What do we know about the historical, social, and cultural background of this piece?
- How do I connect to this piece? (How do I relate to it through my own life and experience?)

Of course, our work should not be limited to these questions, and many more will arise throughout our discussions. However, it is important to remember that the work we do should involve deep analysis.

Required Texts*:

*Several additional texts will be made available via Blackboard (Bb); you are required to print these texts and bring them to class on the day assigned. (Please note: if texts are not in hand, you will be considered absent that day.)

Course Objectives:
1. To consider how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience by examining the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts.
2. To use literature to explore ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures and nationalities.
3. To recognize the distinctive characteristics of relevant literary periods, genres, and writers.
4. To understand and use basic literary terms and concepts.
5. To develop analytic skills by close reading, class discussion, and writing.
6. To use writing as a tool for learning.

Student Learning Objectives:
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills in four Core Objectives defined by the Higher Education Coordinating Board of the State of Texas:

- **Critical Thinking**
  - CT1. Generate and communicate ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information.
  - CT3. Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information.

- **Communication Skills**
  - CS1. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication.

- **Personal Responsibility**
  - PR1. Evaluate choices and actions, and relate consequences to decision making.

- **Social Responsibility**

**Course Requirements and Policies:**

**Grading:** In order to succeed in this class you must do all of the assigned work; this includes reading assigned texts prior to class, participating in in-class discussions, completing all informal writing assignments (missing just one or two can lower your grade substantially), and collaborating with your peers on analysis, interpretation, and the writing process. Therefore, if you are absent during any class period, contact the instructor and/or a classmate immediately. Please also note the absence policy explained in this syllabus. In addition, please note the following:

- Most of your assignments will be submitted via Blackboard; emailed and/or hard copies of these assignments will not be accepted unless directed otherwise.
- In most cases, assignments are due just prior to our class meeting time on the due date provided.
- All writing, whether informal or formal, should be prepared per MLA style, so typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins. You should also use a Times New Roman 12-point font.
- You will not receive individualized feedback on all informal writing assignments, including drafts, via Blackboard. If you would like individualized feedback on any assignment, please make an appointment to meet with me.

**Homework, Informal Writing, and Quizzes:** All homework assignments are connected to course readings or major projects and should be completed to engage fully with the course material. The assignments are designed to make connections between your personal experiences and the material you are encountering in this course. These assignments will also prepare you to engage and participate as an active member within classroom discussions. This includes in-class essays, guided writing, freewriting, response journal writing, explications, comparisons/contrasts, reviews or any combination of these. Quizzes will be given randomly throughout the semester, and will include questions based on previous discussions as well as questions based on the assignment due on the day the quiz is given. You must be in class to take the quiz; no make-up quizzes will be given.
Homework will be assigned in class or on Blackboard. As these are informal assignments, it is not necessary to worry about grammatical or style conventions (except when specified; for example, you must use basic MLA formatting for informal assignments, but this is limited to margins, font (Times New Roman) size, and double-spacing).

**Scene Performance & Formal Writing**:  
**Scene Performance**: Throughout the semester, small groups of students will perform scenes from the dramatic texts we will read. You will be assigned to a group, and you and your group will lead a short discussion with the rest of the class to address your interpretation of the scene assigned, as well as the issues embedded in the text.

**Exams**: There will be three exams given this semester. These will be essay exams for which you will be given multiple prompts to which you must respond. Typically, I give prompts on a Wednesday and give you until the following Monday to complete the exam; therefore, they are take-home exams and necessarily open-book. As these are considered formal assignments, you will need to format and cite per MLA style conventions, and include a Works Cited page.

**Final Writing Project**: For the final writing project, you will create your own piece of protest literature. It will consist of a creative text and an artist’s statement, and will incorporate elements of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and/or drama. This project will also require you to do research on the issue you choose to protest, and incorporate secondary sources into either your creative text or your artist’s statement. It is a formal writing assignment, and will necessarily include a Works Cited page. This project is also an integrated assignment, and will count for a portion of your grade in UCCP 1102.

*Please note: All formal writing assignments must be prepared using Microsoft Word (in .doc or .docx format). If you do not have Microsoft Word or Office Suite, TAMUCC now provides free access to all students online. For more information about Office 365, go here: [http://it.tamucc.edu/Office365/Office365.html](http://it.tamucc.edu/Office365/Office365.html)*

**Grading Scale**:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation, quizzes, informal writings, group work, etc.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #1</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #2</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam #3</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene Performance</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Writing Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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A = 90-100%  B= 80-89%  C= 70-79%  D=60-69%  F=59% or below

*I use Blackboard to record grades, and while this allows you to consistently check your standing in the class, please note that Blackboard does not allow me to weigh grades until final calculations are done; therefore, grades may appear higher than they actually are.*
(Calculating your grades based on the points you’ve accumulated and the total will not yield an accurate reflection of your grade.) If you ever have questions about your standing in the class, please contact me directly.

**In-class participation:** Your attendance in class and your input during class discussions, activities, and assignments are valuable and necessary for your own success as well as the success of this course. Participation in class will be observed through in-class discussions, informal writing assignments, group work, peer review, and quizzes.

**Attendance:** Because the formal work you do in the course depends on your in-class participation, collaboration with your classmates, and discussion, your grade will be lowered if you miss more than four classes; it will be lowered by 1/3 for each absence beyond the initial four. That is, a B will drop to a B- and so on. Additionally, please note that NO ABSENCES ARE EXCUSED. (So, if you are sick, and have a doctor’s note, that absence is still included in the four allowed absences you are allotted for the semester.) Therefore, please consider the following:

- Excessive absences may result in a point deduction from your in-class participation grade.
- If you must miss a class, you are responsible for what you missed; you will be expected to be prepared for the next class that you attend and will not get an extension on any homework that is due. (I recommend that you exchange contact information with a peer so that you can get notes on that day’s discussion, etc., as I will not provide these.)
- If you participate in a sport or some other university sanctioned event or activity that requires you to miss class, appropriate documentation must be provided.
- Lastly, I am not unsympathetic to tragedy and understand that extenuating circumstances occur at incredibly inconvenient times. However, examples of this (such as a death in the family or major illness) have become the most overused and abused excuses given for missing classes and/or major assignments. Therefore, I require that you provide documentation of your circumstance to the Office of Student Engagement and Success if you are to continue in my class after a lengthy absence.

**Classroom/professional behavior**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Statement of Civility**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Disabilities Accommodations
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one's own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a “0” or “F” on that assignment.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism
Definition: In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or
me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University's OWL: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/), and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

**Academic Advising**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. **Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.** Should dropping the course be the best course of action, **you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.**

**Grade Appeals**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html).

**Statement of Academic Continuity**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.
Support for Basic Needs:
Insufficient basic needs--food, a safe living space--can affect your performance in classes and make your university experience more challenging. If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food, or you lack a safe and stable place to live, you might consider several resources on campus.

- Contact the Division of Student Engagement and Success for support. Specifically, the office of Student Assistance provides consultations, resource management, and institutional support for “extenuating circumstances.” Their website is here: [http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/StudentAssistance.html](http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/StudentAssistance.html). The Student Assistance Coordinator is Kristeen Gonzalez. UC318, M-F 8AM-5PM. 361-825-2612
- If you do not have access to or cannot afford sufficient food, be aware that “Izzy’s Food Pantry” provides on-campus access to food. Find more information here: [http://seas.tamucc.edu/FoodPantry/](http://seas.tamucc.edu/FoodPantry/)
- If you feel comfortable doing so, please talk with me and / or your other professors. We may be able to assist.

Tentative Schedule (See Daily Schedule/Assignments on Blackboard for regular updates):

Week 1
Monday, August 26: Introduction to Course
Wednesday, August 28: The Harlem Renaissance and Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”
Friday, August 30: Langston Hughes, from Montage of a Dream Deferred

Week 2
Monday, September 2: Labor Day Holiday
Wednesday, September 4: Langston Hughes, cont’d.
Friday, September 6: Langston Hughes, cont’d.

Week 3
Monday, September 9: The Black Arts Movement and Amiri Baraka
Wednesday, September 11: Amiri Baraka, “The Revolutionary Theater”
Friday, September 13: Amiri Baraka, Dutchman

Week 4
Monday, September 16: Dutchman, cont’d.
Wednesday, September 18: Dutchman, cont’d.
Friday, September 20: Dutchman, cont’d.

Week 5:
Monday, September 23: Dutchman, cont’d.
Wednesday, September 25: Get Out
Friday, September 27: Get Out, cont’d.
Week 6:
Monday, September 30: *Get Out*, cont’d.
Wednesday, October 2: Audre Lorde, “Poetry is Not a Luxury”
Friday, October 4: Lorde, cont’d.

Week 7:
Monday, October 7: Exam #1 due; The Last Poets
Wednesday, October 9: The Last Poets
Friday, October 11: The Last Poets, cont’d.

Week 8: The Last Poets, cont’d
Monday, October 14: Ntozake Shange, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*
Wednesday, October 16: Shange, cont’d.
Friday, October 18: Shange, cont’d.

Week 9:
Monday, October 21: Shange, cont’d.
Wednesday, October 23: Shange, cont’d.
Friday, October 25: Gloria Anzaldua, “Speading in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Women Writers”

Week 10:
Monday, October 28: Anzaldua, cont’d.
Wednesday, October 30: Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*
Friday, November 1: Cisneros, cont’d

Week 11
Monday, November 4: Cisneros, cont’d.
Wednesday, November 6: Cisneros, cont’d.
Friday, November 8: Cisneros, cont’d.

Week 12
Monday, November 11: Exam #2 due; Hip Hop as Social Protest Literature
Wednesday, November 13: The Holy Trinity
Friday, November 15: Grandmaster Flash

Week 13
Monday, November 18: N.W.A.
Wednesday, November 20: Michelle Wright, “Rise Up Hip-Hop Nation”
Friday, November 22: Beyoncé, *Lemonade*

Week 14
Monday, November 25: *Lemonade*, cont’d.
Wednesday, November 27: Reading Day
Friday, November 29: Thanksgiving Holiday
Monday, December 2: *Lemonade*, cont’d.
Wednesday, December 4: Open Mic

Final Exam: Exam #3 due