4305: Major Authors: Zora Neale Hurston & Gwendolyn Brooks

Dr. Jennifer Sorensen Section: .001 MW 3:30 – 4:45 pm
Email: jennifer.sorensen@tamucc.edu  Office: FC 258  Office Phone: (361) 825-3002
Office Hours: Wednesdays 2 - 3 pm and Tuesdays 1:00 – 5:00 pm & by appointment

In this course, we will read two African American women authors who wrote across a variety of genres including the novel, poetry, folklore, anthropology, drama, and memoir. We will read a diverse sampling of their work and analyze the cultural forces that shaped their reception and literary legacies. Brooks was a crucial figure in the Chicago literary scene and won the Pulitzer Prize for her second volume of poetry, *Annie Allen* (1949). Hurston traveled all over the American South and the Caribbean and researched folklore and anthropology in addition to writing fiction and poetry. By focusing on these two women, we will be able to get a thick and complex sense of their work and their experiences with publishing it.
Course Texts: *The vast majority of materials will be made available online and will need to be printed and brought with you to class—Thus, please be sure to factor in this printing cost into your course budget.

Available at the TAMUCC Bookstore: (or order online but be sure to get these editions)
Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on the Road* (Harper Collins) ISBN 9780060854089

Available on Blackboard (will need to be printed out and brought to class):
And a large selection of additional texts on Blackboard:
Gwendolyn Brooks, *A Street in Bronzeville*
Gwendolyn Brooks, *Annie Allen*
Gwendolyn Brooks, *Report from Part One* (excerpts)
Gwendolyn Brooks, *Report from Part Two* (excerpts)
Selected Critical Essays

Student Learning Outcomes & Course Goals:
I have designed the course to help you develop and hone the following skills:

*The ability to closely and persuasively analyze Brooks's and Hurston's literary output across a variety of genres including novels, poetry, short fiction, life writing, letters, and anthropology.
*The ability to think critically and to argue (verbally and in writing) about both the micro and macro levels of texts (i.e. at the level of the sentence, the paragraph, the chapter, and the structure of the whole book or story).
*The ability to analyze the print contexts and publication histories of these writers.
*The ability to engage with literary criticism and to use these materials to deepen your engagement with primary texts and to enhance your ability to think about texts in complex ways and from multiple perspectives.
*The ability to combine and fuse interpretive strategies to open up texts.

I aim for you to emerge from the semester with a complex understanding of both Hurston and Brooks and their literary legacies.

Assessment:
Your final grade for this course will be determined by the following breakdown of the percentage weighting of each course component:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close Reading Analysis Posts</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print History &amp; Material Form Analysis Paper</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Remediation Assignment</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative Presentation on Hurston’s &amp; Brooks’s Afterlives</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>150</td>
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Course Grading Scale:
890-1000: A
Assignments and Policies:

Close Reading Analysis Post (50 points): This semester you will practice and develop your analysis skills working with a small section of one of our texts that you will post to our course Blackboard site. This short (1-2 page) response will be directed by more specific instructions (i.e. you will respond to a question or prompt that I post) and will be submitted electronically via the Discussion Board area on our course Blackboard site. This short early assignment is meant to encourage you to write-to-learn and the emphasis is placed on the process of closely engaging with the textual dynamics of Brooks and Hurston. The response will be graded on a √ (for fulfilling the expectations of the assignment), √ + (for exceeding expectations through an exceptionally thoughtful and interesting response), or a 0 (for failing to post a response or for posting a response that fails to fulfill the expectations of the assignment). If you receive a √ or √ + on the post, then you will be awarded full credit for this 50 points of your final grade. Late responses (after the due date and time but within 24 hours) will receive ½ credit. Any response posted later than 24 hours after the due time will not be read and will receive a 0.

Print History & Material Form Analysis Paper (150 points): You will choose one of our course texts and write a 3 page paper analyzing how the print history and material form of that text informs your reading of a small piece of it. An assignment sheet with more specific guidelines, advice, expectations and grading criteria will be handed out in class.

Creative Remediation (150 points): This creative assignment will ask you to remediate one of our course texts in a different format, genre, or medium. You will create a new edition or version of your chosen text (a poem or a small section from a novel or story or memoir) and then you will write a short 2-3 page paper analyzing your creative remediation. An assignment sheet with more specific guidelines, advice, expectations and grading criteria will be handed out in class.

Final Research Paper: (400 points total)
   Annotated Bibliography (100 points) (Due Sunday December 1st by Midnight on Blackboard)
   Research Essay (300 points) Due Monday December 9th by 1:45 pm on Blackboard

This research paper will build on your engagement with Hurston OR Brooks as a writer in your earlier assignments and will allow you to develop and extended critical argument about one of our course texts. You will need to incorporate at least 4 useful critical sources in your final research paper and you will also turn in an Annotated Bibliography that will include a draft of your thesis statement and ¾ page – 1 page annotations about 4 critical sources. These sources must be current and scholarly (they must be found through Project Muse or Jstor and they must be from respected academic journals or books from our library’s collection or Interlibrary loan. You will be practicing scholarly research as well as analytical argumentation in this assignment. An assignment sheet with more specifics will be handed out in class.

Collaborative Presentations on Zora Neale Hurston’s & Gwendolyn Brooks’s Afterlives (100 points): You will work in teams of 4-5 students to develop a multi-media presentation that focuses on 1 particularly interesting example of a cultural afterlife of one of these two writers in contemporary popular or
literary cultures. In your groups, you will be thinking about the literary legacies and print histories of both authors and their relationship to the canon and to popular culture. These presentations are intended to be fun and creative and you will be given time in class to work with your group to prepare your presentation. Presentations will be given in lieu of a formal final exam on Monday December 9th during our class final exam time slot (1:45 – 4:15 pm).

Participation (150 points): Your participation grade will be based on your active engagement with class materials, your frequent and thoughtful contributions to class discussions of all shapes and sizes, your active listening to your classmates and to me, your productive work in frequent in-class small group activities, your reflections upon and completion of the assigned reading, and your coming to class prepared (with materials, thoughts, questions, and assigned work) every day. In order to engage actively with these texts and to promote lively discussions, you will need to prepare diligently for class each day—I encourage you to thoroughly mark up your texts (write all over them, use post-it notes, keep a reading journal on a separate page if you prefer), flag key passages that interest you, jot down questions as they occur to you, and come to class ready to discuss and to contribute questions and themes, passages, and patterns that you find particularly intriguing and worth talking about.

As you will see, I keep records of participation every single class meeting so that these grades are fair and able to be documented: I keep a huge spreadsheet of each day’s grade (assessed using a 4 point grading scale from 4 (an A for outstanding, engaged, thoughtful participation) to a 0 (total non-participation)) and the semester’s participation grade is an average of all of these daily marks (thus local highs and lows get evened out). Also, participation in this course can also extend beyond the boundaries of the classroom and efforts to engage more fully with the reading and writing in the course during office hours also contributes to good participation (I also record frequent office hours attendance and will bump up one or more of the daily marks to reflect this alternative, valuable form of engagement). I will give everyone mid-term participation grades so that you can see how you are doing in this area of the course. If you are concerned about your ability to effectively participate, please come and talk with me in office hours and we can develop strategies to improve your active participation.

You are responsible for obtaining all of the class readings for the course (including printing out any electronic resources assigned and accessible through Blackboard), for reading them carefully prior to class, and for bringing them to class with you as we will work actively with the assigned readings every single class session. If you do not bring your reading materials assigned for a given class meeting to class with you, then you will receive a zero for that day’s participation. We will work actively with the texts every single day and thus you really need to have them with you in order to actively contribute and even to keep up with our discussions.

⚠️ Please turn off all cell phones before class begins. No electronic devices—including computers—are to be used during class sessions. If you have your cell phone or any other electronic device out during class, you will receive a zero for that day’s participation.

Attendance Policy and Lateness: This course will be very discussion-intensive—so if you miss a class meeting, you are missing a lot any day that you miss. But obviously I understand that life sometimes gets in the way and so you may have two absences with no penalty. For each absence after the first two, your course grade drops 1/3 of a letter grade (i.e. from B to B-). So please use those two permitted absences wisely, they are to be used for times when you absolutely cannot make it to class (illnesses, family or personal emergencies, planned trips, etc.) and not for sleeping in, work for other courses, etc. Being more than fifteen minutes late to class constitutes a full absence and each day that
you are even slightly late will deduct from that day’s participation grade. Please be right on-time to
class every day as we will start promptly at 3:30 pm.

**Late work:** Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each 24 hour period that they
are late (i.e. if it was due on Wednesday at 4 pm it will be marked 1/3 grade down if it is turned in
after then but before Thursday by 4 pm; if it is turned in after 4 pm on Thursday, it will be marked
down an additional 1/3 of a letter grade and so on). Please make every effort to have all your
assignments in on time! I do not accept papers or read drafts over email.

**Academic Integrity:**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of
academic honesty. Violations of academic integrity include cheating, plagiarism (failure to
acknowledge via appropriate citation the sources for written, visual, on-line, and other sorts of
material), fabrication, illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery,
complicity, and multiple submissions (e.g., submitting the same or substantially the same paper for
two or more courses without prior approval of all instructors). Any assignment found to violate the
TAMUCC guidelines for academic integrity will receive a zero grade and will be reported to the college
dean and the Office of Student Affairs in accordance with university policy. Please read “Academic
Integrity” guidelines carefully and ask me if you have any questions: these guidelines are posted at
http://catalog.tamucc.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=177#Academic_Integrity

**Classroom/Professional Behavior:**
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.

**The Writing Center:**
You will be doing a lot of writing in this course and the TAMUCC CASA Writing Center is an excellent
resource to help you. The Writing Center offers one-on-one tutoring sessions with experienced
student writers to help you with a whole range of skills—getting started, building arguments,
grammatical issues, organization, and many more—and I highly recommend using this resource. They
offer appointments (easy to schedule with their online system) and also walk-ins during their open
hours. See their website for more details: http://casa.tamucc.edu/wc.php

**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

**Religious Observances:**
If a class meeting conflicts with a religious holiday, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we can make alternate arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence, but, in accordance with the TAMUCC policy on Religious/Academic conflicts, your absence will not affect your grade in the course.

**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.**

**Grade Appeals Process:**
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [cla.tamu.cc/students/studentinfo.html](http://cla.tamu.cc/students/studentinfo.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**Statement of Academic Continuity:**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane, if 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.

**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 me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. 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. Friday November 18th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Communication:**
The best way to get in touch with me outside of class and office hours is by email. During the semester, I check my email regularly every weekday. I probably will not be able to respond as promptly on weekends or late at night (I will most likely not respond on the same day if you email after 6 pm). Email is a great way to ask a question, share a comment, or make an appointment to talk in person. If you have a long, complicated question, please come visit during office hours or make an appointment so that we can talk it over in person. All conversations about grades and comments on written work should take place in person.

I will email the class if class should be cancelled due to extreme winter weather or other emergency, or if I want to circulate course information to the class so please check your own email regularly.
If you must miss a class, please do not email me asking what you missed. It is your responsibility to check in with a classmate to find out what was covered and to obtain the notes from that day. You should exchange email addresses with at least two of your classmates so that you can contact them if you have to miss class.

Name: _______________________________________

Email: _______________________________________

Name: _______________________________________

Email: _______________________________________

I reserve the right to make minor changes and to adjust this syllabus if necessary for the improvement of the course.
Week 1:
M August 26: Introductions and Syllabus Review; “kitchenette building” by Brooks (handout) and short excerpt from Dust Tracks on the Road by Hurston (handout)

W August 28: Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God, pp 1–76 (Chapters 1-6)

Week 2:
M September 2: No class Labor Day holiday

W September 4: Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God, pp 77–138 (Chapters 7-15)

Week 3:
M September 9: Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God, pp 139–193 (Chapters 16-20)

W September 11: Selected Critical Essays and Publication and Reception History materials

Sunday September 15: Close Reading Post #1 due on Blackboard by midnight.

Week 4:
M September 16: A Street in Bronzeville by Brooks – “A Street in Bronzeville” section

W September 18: A Street in Bronzeville by Brooks – finish the volume (ballads and “Gay Chaps at the Bar” sonnet sequence).

Week 5:
M September 23: Critical essays on Brooks and excerpts from Report from Part One

W September 25: Critical essays on Brooks and excerpts from Report from Part One Printmaking Studio Field Trip!

Sunday September 29: Close Reading Post #2 due on Blackboard by midnight.

Week 6:
M September 30: Zora Neale Hurston, Every Tongue to Confess

W October 2: Zora Neale Hurston, Every Tongue to Confess

Week 7:
M October 7: Zora Neale Hurston, Every Tongue to Confess

W October 9: Critical Essays on Zora Neale Hurston

Week 8:
M October 14: Annie Allen by Brooks

W October 16: Annie Allen by Brooks

Sunday October 20: Print History & Material Form Analysis Paper due by Midnight to Blackboard
**Week 9:**
M October 21: *Dust Tracks on the Road* by Hurston

W October 23: *Dust Tracks on the Road* by Hurston

**Week 10:**
M October 28: Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maud Martha*

W October 30: Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maud Martha*

**Week 11:**
M November 4: Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maud Martha*

W November 6: Gwendolyn Brooks, *The Bean Eaters* (excerpts)

**Sunday November 10:** Creative Remediation Assignment Due to Blackboard by Midnight

**Week 12:**
M November 11: Gwendolyn Brooks, *Riot* (excerpts)

W November 13: Critical Essays on Brooks and publication history and excerpts from *Report from Part Two*

**Week 13:**
M November 18: *Dust Tracks on the Road* by Hurston

W November 19: *Dust Tracks on the Road* by Hurston and Group Project Presentations Work time.

**Week 14:**
M November 25: **Work in Library for Final Research Project;** Rare Books and Special Collections visit.

W November 27: **Reading Day – No Class – Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Sunday December 1st:** Annotated Bibliography for Final research project due to Blackboard by midnight

**Week 15:**
M December 2: Final Day of Class with Wrap up activities and Group Project Presentations Work time.

**Final Research Project Due:** Monday December 9th by 1:45 pm posted to Blackboard

Monday December 9th: Final Class Meeting with Group Project Presentations. 1:45 pm – 4:15 pm