ENGL 2316.W01: Literature and Culture: Traveling Racisms
Fall 2020 / Tues. & Thurs., 2:00–3:15 PM

Instructor: Dr. Corinne Zeman
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Office: Faculty Center 254
Office Number: (361) 825-6044
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00–3:00 PM; Thursdays 3:30–4:30 PM; or by appt.
Preferred Pronouns: she/her/hers

This course will explore how racial ideologies travel between texts and across time. Our primary materials include early modern tragedies and tragicomedies, slave narratives, twentieth- and twenty-first century film, and postcolonial fiction. We will be investigating how four centuries of writers and artists have represented cross-cultural desire, the aesthetics of white and black bodies, racial masquerade, and the civilizing mission. As we jump between genres and centuries, we will be attending closely to the intertextuality of racism—that is, how appropriations of canonical texts register shifts in racial thought. Over the course of the semester, we will develop a vocabulary for discussing different forms of literary intertextuality; we will use this conceptual grounding to track the movements of bigoted rhetorics across temporal, geographical, and generic borders. How, for example, does the racialization of bodies differ on the page and in performance? And to what extent do twenty-first-century writers offer ameliorative visions of black and brown humanity?

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify the complex, contradictory ways literary works represent racial difference on stage, in prose, and in verse.
- Reflect on how pre-modern constructions of race laid the foundations for our twenty-first-century racial imaginary.
- Recognize how literary devices, conventions, and genres structure meaning and interpretation.
- Construct thoughtful, persuasive arguments using their critical thinking and close reading skills.
- Explore the representational issues that arise when a text moves between media and genres.

Recommended Texts: All course readings will be made available on Blackboard, but if you wish to have hard copies, I recommend the following editions:


**Assignments and Evaluation:**

Your final grade in this course will reflect your scores on the following:

- Essay 1 (3 pp.): 20%
- Essay 2 (6 pp.): 25%
- Collaborative Final Exam: 25%
- Class Participation (incl. Informal Writing Assignments & Reading Quizzes): 25%
- Self-Reflection: 5%

**Essays:** In this class, you will be asked to write two papers of increasing length. These exercises will hone your critical thinking as well as your analytical writing skills. Both will require you to identify the formal features of language, including diction, meter, sound symbolism, and imagery. Prompts will be distributed in class. Essays should be typed, double-spaced, proofread, and spellchecked. Be sure to include page numbers, MLA- or Chicago-style citations, one-inch margins, and a 12-point font. Both essay assignments should be submitted to Blackboard by midnight.

**Final Exam:** On the final day of the course, students will work in groups to create a database of potential test questions, including both essay prompts as well as short-answer questions. I will then draw from this database to cobble together the final exam, which students will take individually.

**Self-Reflections:** At the midpoint and end of the semester, you will be expected to complete reflective assignments discussing your progress, difficulties, questions, etc.

**Participation:** Active participation is an essential part of this course. My expectation is that all students will make a substantive contribution to our discussions, which will either take place via real-time Zoom conferences or the Blackboard Discussion Board. If we employ the latter, your grade will be determined by the number of quality comments you post to Blackboard, as well as your willingness to respond to your fellow classmates. Each Sunday, I will post writing prompts relevant to the upcoming week's readings. To receive credit for that week’s discussion, you must post two responses to Blackboard by no later than Saturday evening (11:59 PM). Your posts may take two forms: 1) a response to the prompt I have provided, or 2) a response to your peers’ posts. All posts should be a minimum of 150 words.

**Online Discussion Guide:**

- Be substantive and precise. Don’t resort to broad generalizations.
- Always offer textual evidence for your commentary. Whenever possible, identify a specific page or line number. Feel free to incorporate outside research, if applicable.
- Avoid redundancy. If your peer has already made a particular observation, you needn’t repeat it. To prevent unnecessary repetition, make certain you’re reading over your peers’ posts before publishing your own commentary.
Try always to relate your comments to the preceding discussion. Identify what your comment contributes to the conversation. Are you adding another example? Agreeing? Making a connection to another text or context? Asking for clarification? Qualifying a statement? Offering a contrasting interpretation of evidence already introduced? Offering a counterargument with new evidence?

Our readings will broach sensitive topics; it is therefore essential that our online discussion board functions as a safe, secure, and respectful learning environment. This means any language that makes other students feel unsafe will not be tolerated. Be respectful of other’s ideas. Do not make insulting or inflammatory statements to other members of the discussion group. Do not made derogatory comments regarding race, gender identity, sexual identity, religion, ethnicity, nationality, or ability. Please bring any violations of this policy to my attention as soon as possible.

Course Policies:

**Method of Delivery (Subject to Change Pending Survey Results):** At the start of the semester, I will be circulating a survey to ascertain whether you and your peers have ready access to Wi-Fi as well as a computer with video-conferencing capability. If the overwhelming proportion of students are able to meet synchronously, then I will propose that we hold weekly Zoom sessions at our scheduled class time (Tu/Th 2:00–3:15 PM). That said, if meeting in real time proves untenable for many students, then I will simply be uploading video lectures, which you will need to watch prior to completing your Discussion Board posts (see below). Lectures will be posted on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You will be expected to master the material presented in these lectures.

**Office Hours:** This semester, I will be hosting virtual office hours on Zoom. Which is to say, I will be available for one-on-one virtual meetings in order to answer questions, offer guidance, etc. My standing office hours are 1:00 to 3:00 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays, and 3:30 to 4:30 PM on Thursdays, though I am happy to arrange alternative appointment times as needed. At the start of my weekly office hours, I will send out an open Zoom invitation via email. The “waiting room” will be enabled, meaning that I will be able to meet with students individually in the order of their arrival. If you choose to attend my virtual office hours, you needn't email me beforehand; you may simply pop in—whether for a brief chat or an in-depth conversation. If you are unable to attend my office hours but nevertheless have questions about an assignment, course material, etc., you should contact me via email. I will endeavor to reply promptly to each of your messages (i.e., within 24 to 48 hours).

**Technology:** It is my hope that we will be able to meet synchronously throughout the semester. This will require us to use Zoom, a video-conferencing platform. If you’ve never before used Zoom, the basics are as follows: I will send you an email invitation before each of our class sessions. When you click the link to join your first Zoom meeting, the web browser client will download automatically (though you can also save time by downloading it manually here). Note that you do not need to have a Zoom account to nevertheless use the software. You’ll still be able to join classes simply by opening the emailed invitation. With your consent, I propose that we record all class-wide videoconferencing sessions so that I might post them to our Blackboard site. If you are unable to join a meeting (either due to technological issues, health concerns, etc.),
you'd then be able to watch the video in your own time. (Note: I will, of course, only record our sessions if I have explicit permission from all of you to do so. To be clear, you can absolutely say no. I would never willfully violate a student's privacy by filming without his/her/their consent. I will be deleting all videos when the semester is over.)

**Flexibility and Understanding:** We will be progressing through this course under extremely unusual circumstances: many students are dealing with housing and food precarity, job loss, medical emergencies, dependent care dilemmas, and irregular computer and/or Internet access. Delays and missed deadlines are to be expected. If you find yourself grappling with any of the above, I am more than happy to work with you to ensure that you succeed in my course. I am willing to offer extensions and will endeavor to accommodate late work. I'd also ask that you bear in mind that I and your other professors are facing new and unforeseen circumstances. So, we must all be patient with one another as we navigate this situation together.

**Grade Appeals:** As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site 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).

**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.

**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.

Support for Basic Needs / Mental Health Services: As a student, you may find that extenuating circumstances in your personal life are negatively affecting your university experience. If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food, or you lack a safe, stable place in which to live, I’d encourage you to contact the Office of Student Engagement and Success, which can connect you with available resources both on and off campus. If you do not have access to or cannot afford groceries, consider making an appointment at “Izzy’s Food Pantry.” Contact information and hours of operation can be found here. Additionally, if you find yourself grappling with interpersonal conflicts, the loss of a loved one, concerns about your eating or drinking patterns, and/or feelings of anxiety and depression, consider speaking with one of the licensed counselors at the University Counseling Center: (361) 825-2703.

Course Schedule (Subject to Change, as Needed):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assigned Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, August 20</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, August 27</td>
<td>William Shakespeare, <em>The Tempest</em> (1611), Acts 1–2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 1</td>
<td>William Shakespeare, <em>The Tempest</em> (1611), Acts 3–4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 8</td>
<td>Aimé Césaire, extracts from <em>A Tempest</em> (1969)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 15</td>
<td>Daniel Defoe, extract from <em>Robinson Crusoe</em> (1719)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 17</td>
<td>Daniel Defoe, extract from <em>Robinson Crusoe</em> (1719)</td>
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</tbody>
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Tuesday, September 22: Selected Robinsonades + Lesson Plans


Tuesday, September 29: Writing Workshop; **First Essay Due (Rough Draft)**


Tuesday, October 6: Frantz Fanon, extract from *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952); **First Essay Due (Final Draft)**

Thursday, October 8: William Shakespeare, *Othello* (1603), Act 1–2

Tuesday, October 13: William Shakespeare, *Othello* (1603), Act 3–4

Thursday, October 15: William Shakespeare, *Othello* (1603), Act 5

Tuesday, October 20: Djanet Sears, extract from *Harlem Duet* (1998)

Thursday, October 22: Toni Morrison, extract from *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

Tuesday, October 27: Toni Morrison, extract from *The Bluest Eye* (1970); Malcolm X (with Alex Haley), extract from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965)

Thursday, October 29: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688)

Tuesday, November 3: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688)

Thursday, November 5: Writing Workshop; **Second Essay Due (Rough Draft)**

Tuesday, November 10: Langston Hughes, “Slave on the Block,” from *The Ways of White Folks* (1934); Dorothy Parker, “Arrangement in Black and White” (1927)

Thursday, November 12: *Get Out* (2018); **Second Essay Due (Final Draft)**

Tuesday, November 17: Derrick Bell, “The Space Traders” (1992)


Tuesday, November 24: Wrap-Up Discussion; **Critical Reflection Due**

Tuesday, December 1: **Take-Home Final Exam Due**
Campus Safety Measures

To promote public safety and protect students, faculty, and staff during the coronavirus pandemic, Texas A&M University has adopted policies and practices for the Fall 2020 academic term to limit virus transmission. Students must observe the following practices while participating in face-to-face courses and course-related activities (office hours, help sessions, transitioning to and between classes, study spaces, academic services, etc.):

- **Self-monitoring**—Students should follow CDC recommendations for self-monitoring. **Students who have a fever or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should participate in class remotely and should not participate in face-to-face instruction.**
- **Face Coverings**—Face coverings (cloth face covering, surgical mask, etc.) must be properly worn in all non-private spaces including classrooms, teaching laboratories, common spaces such as lobbies and hallways, public study spaces, libraries, academic resource and support offices, and outdoor spaces where 6 feet of physical distancing is difficult to reliably maintain. Description of face coverings and additional guidance are provided in the [Face Covering policy](https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/) and [Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)](https://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/34.99.99.c0.02_use_of_face_coverings.pdf) available on the [Provost website](https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/).
- **Physical Distancing**—Physical distancing must be maintained between students, instructors, and others in course and course-related activities.
- **Classroom Ingress/Egress**—Students must follow marked pathways for entering and exiting classrooms and other teaching spaces. Leave classrooms promptly after course activities have concluded. Do not congregate in hallways and maintain 6-foot physical distancing when waiting to enter classrooms and other instructional spaces.
- **To attend a face-to-face class, students must wear a face covering (or a face shield if they have an exemption letter).** If a student refuses to wear a face covering, the instructor should ask the student to leave and join the class remotely. If the student does not leave the class, the faculty member should report that student to the [Student Conduct office](https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/) for sanctions. Additionally, the faculty member may choose to teach that day’s class remotely for all students.

**TAMU-CC Face Coverings**

TAMUCC Face Coverings Policy and FAQs:
[https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/](https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/)

Rule and Procedure:
[https://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/34.99.99.c0.02_use_of_face_coverings.pdf](https://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/34.99.99.c0.02_use_of_face_coverings.pdf)