

English 253

Gail Galloway Adams, ENGL 253, Fall 2002, Southern Writers

English 253 (001) Southern Writers. MWF 1330 (1:30) - 1420 (2:20) Stansbury

Hall 47 **Gail Galloway Adams.** Office: 434 Stansbury. 293-3107 xt 434 or 292-2540 (home) MIX e-mail: tadams1@mix.wvu.edu or gadams~wvu.edu (this I prefer). Office hours: MW Noon - 1:00/F 3:50-4; T 14; Th noon-4 & M a.m. by appointment.

Textbooks (required): *A Modern Southern Reader* ed Ben Forkner; *As I Lay Dying* (corrected text) William Faulkner; *Signet Classic Book of Southern Short Stories*, ed Abbot & Koppelman; *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*, Carson McCullers; *Oral History*, Lee Smith; *Meridian*, Alice Walker. There will also be other stories/poems/film suggestions as handouts. I will also welcome your suggestions for stories/books/authors.

AUGUST

Monday 19 Hey ya'll! Introductions all around and basic record keeping during these first days which are always hectic.

Wed 21 Read Introductions in: *A Modern Southern Reader* and the few pp intro in *Signet*. Welty's essay on Place in Fiction *MSR*.

Fri 23 Read in *Signet*: *Jean Au Poquelin* in *Signet*. First reading response.

Mon 26 Bring in informal essay: "What I know about the South". Typed please with autobiographical detail. Also read: RPWarren "Covered Bridge"(poem) in *MSReader*

Wed 28 Carson McCuller's *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*.

Fri 30 Truman Capote's *Children on Their Birthdays* *MSReader*

SEPTEMBER

Monday 2 LABOR DAY NO CLASS MEETING

Wed 4 Begin Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. Also read Faulkner interview in *MSR*

Friday 6 (Jewish New Year) Finish *As I Lay Dying*

Mon 9 *Signet* Faulkner's *Dry September*

Wed 11 *MSR* Faulkner's *Barn Burning*

Fri 13 (YIKES!) *Signet* Charles Chestnutt's Sheriffs Children

Mon 16 (Yom Kippur) *Signet* RP Warren's When the Light Gets Green

Wed 18 *MSR* Applewhite's Tobacco Men/ Robert Morgan's White Autumn (poems)

Fri 20 *Signet* Ernest Gaines' The Sky is Gray

Monday 23 FLANNERY O'CONNOR WEEK: *Signet*: Revelation; Also essay: Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South in *MSR*. Will also explore options with her stories/novels.

Wed 25 O'Connor Continued: The Life You Save May Be Your Own *MSR*

Fri 27 Xerox handout: Good Country People

Mon 30 Xeroxed handout: A Good Man is Hard to Find

OCTOBER

Wed 2 *MSR* Ernest Gaines' Just Like a Tree

Fri 4 Mid-term Exam and/or options.

Mon 7 DEAN YOUNG READS FOR THE STURM RESIDENCY WEEK; EUDORA WELTY WEEK: A Worn Path in *MSR*

Wed 9 Welty's Ida M'Toy in *MSR*

Friday 11 Xeroxed handouts: Powerhouse/Where is that Voice Coming From/Why I Live at the P.O. Your choice and discussion.

Mon 14 Peter Taylor's Two Pilgrims in *Signet*

Wed 16 Doris Betts' The Ugliest Pilgrim in *Signet*

Fri 18 Zora Neale Hurston in *MSR* Mules & Men/Dust Tracks in the Road

Mon 21 Alice Walker's *Meridian*

Wed 23 *Meridian* continued Fri 25 Alice Walker's Everyday Use in *Signet*; "Burial" (poem)

MSR Mon 28 Jean Toomer's Blood-Burning Moon in *MSR* Wed 30 William Styron's This Quiet Dust in *MSR* NOVEMBER

Fri 1 Etheridge Knight's The Idea of Ancestry (poem) *MSR*; and Donald Justice "Tales From a Family Album/The Grandfathers" *MSR*

Mon 4 Reynolds Price's Uncle Grant in MSR

Wed 6 Agee's excerpt A Death in the Family MSR; xeroxed handout excerpt Let Us Now Praise Famous Men

Fri 8 xeroxed handout: Jayne Anne Phillips' Raymie.

Mon 11 VETERAN's DAY. Frank Yerby's Health Card in Signet Wed 13 Davidson's Lee in the Mountains or Tate's Ode to the Confederate Dead in MSR

Fri 15 NO CLASS SAMLA Conference in Baltimore. Read about the South. Go rent a movie: Wise Blood/Gone With the Wind/Rich in Love/Bastard Out of Carolina/Band of Angels/All the King's Men/Good Baby/The Sound and the Fury/etc

Mon 18 Begin Lee Smith's *Oral History*

Wed 20 Continue *Oral History*

Fri 22 Rosengarten's All God's Dangers: Nate Shaw in MSR (real oral history)

SATURDAY 11/12-SUNDAY 12/01 THANKSGIVING RECESS

DECEMBER

Monday 2 McCuller's Member of the Wedding in MSR

Wed 4 Capote's A Christmas Memory in *Signet*

Fri 6 Final Class Day--Review. Celebration which might include Southern food. **Final Papers** can be turned in at this time. **Absolute Deadline Monday December 9th at 4:45 in my office.**

Final Exam to follow **Thursday December 12 from 3:00 - 5:00.**

Welcome to Southern Writers which is also sometimes referred to as Southern Literature. This semester will be devoted to trying to examine through the reading of short stories, essays, novels, poetry, and plays about the South such questions as: What is southern writing? Is there still such a thing as southern writing, what with the New South and all; and if there is, what makes it southern? What kind of things should a southern writer write? Does it have to have a dead mule in it? What does it mean to know that contemporary writers of the south have been called *Hick Chic* or *Grit Lit*? What would experimental writing of the south be like? To what do we refer when we speak of Greasy Greens? Is West Virginia the south?

There will be a reading response journal kept on the work that you do. Format up to you: handwritten in lined notebook or typed in loose-leaf. Try not to use scribbles on napkins. I'll call these in periodically or you'll read from them in class during discussion. If this approach seems not to be working there will be handouts with questions about the stories that'll you'll answer and

return. A mid-term examination (primarily essay), one final paper approximately 10 pages in length, a final examination (both short and long essay or the option of a second paper) and hopes for visits from a guest writer or two. It is possible we'll see a movie documentary Tell About the South; and I certainly hope that we can have some kind of southern meal with cheese grits and greens, Cajun shrimp and bar-b-que, and of course, Moon Pies and sweet tea.

Come to class. You can use up all your three absences but if they're gone by mid-term, I can almost guarantee that you'll not do well. Any absences after three will affect your final grade. I count on class participation to make things lively so jump in but politely--this is a southern class after all--and I note your contribution as part of the grade. Do the work. Read the assignments. If you choose to do a second paper rather than final I have some ideas. Watching selected number of southern movies and writing on them. Reading another southern classic of author not read and comparing it to one of those we'd already addressed. Reading one of the authors we read--but more--and writing paper on him/her.

I'd thought that maybe each of you could adopt a southern writer as an alternate persona, but while intriguing not sure that it wouldn't become burdensome having to be an inebriate like James Dickey all term or trying to live up to the low-down if you were Erskine Caldwell and writing *Tobacco Road*. This idea still intrigues me (as you can see) so if you'd like to take this on and present this alternate life --might be fun to be O'Toole writing *A Confederacy of Dunces* (although and *alas* he took his life later when it didn't get published) or Harper Lee spying on Truman Capote when they were children so he could be in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. So this we'll discuss and maybe at some point we'll all watch *Wise Blood* together and marvel at Flannery O'Connor's genius and drink CoColas with peanuts bobbing in them and all screech out *Leon Leon Meon Meon* which is what O'Connor says peacocks say in the south. And don't ask for an Incomplete just because it's a southern course and you got slow and behind and think to mosey into spring. If you're living in really bad housing, you might want to read Tennessee Williams' *This Property is Condemned*.

Breakdown: 20 % participation/reading responses; 25% mid-term, 30% Final paper; 25% Final.