

Fall 8-15-2011

ENG 4950-001: Literary History

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Literary History/English 4950 Fall 2011

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Coleman 3020 office hours-Tuesdays and Thursday 11:00-2:00, 3:30-5:00

Literary History is intended to be a capstone class for your career as an English major here at Eastern where you can use skills that you've developed in your other courses, ask some big questions about literature and the way it works in our world, and take stock of what your experience of studying literature and language has meant to you.

The class is designed with two basic parts. First, we'll be reading as a group a body of literature centered around Barbara Kingsolver's novel, a truly fine book set in Africa. We'll read some non-fiction, some British and African fiction and work with some film and other materials to create a context for Kingsolver's work in such a way that the interplay of texts will tell us much about the vital connections between history and art, one artist and another, and how we as readers and students of literature can put this all together.

Second, each of you will work on something best called the personal bibliography project, in which you will draw up a list of that which you have read, both in and out of school, and then write a reflective autobiographical essay on what all this reading and study has meant to you. This project will be explained in more detail later, but it is an interesting assignment that many students have done over the years that I have taught this class, and I can guarantee you will find it rewarding.

Rules and regulations:

1. Late stage English majors should know the importance of reading the material. Failing to do so will not work out for you. Doing so will.
2. Late stage English majors should know the importance of coming to class and being part of the conversation. Failing to do so will not work out for you. Doing so will.
3. I may ask you to do some writing specifically about *The Poisonwood Bible* and related texts, but the primary written work is the personal bibliography project. Failing to take it seriously will not work out for you. Doing so will.