ENG 3601-001: William Faulkner and Toni Morrison

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Eng 3601: WILLIAM FAULKNER and TONI MORRISON
Prof. Guzlowski, Fall 03

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Special Needs: Students with special needs who require academic accommodations should contact Disabilities Services at 581-6583.

Course Objectives: The purpose of this course is to give the student a general background in the fiction of Faulkner and Morrison. Faulkner and Morrison never met. He was a Mississippian who came from privilege. She was from a working-class, Ohio family, and she had grandparents who were slaves. He was born in the 19th century, she is writing in the 21st century.

Despite the apparent disconnections between these two authors, many readers have sensed a vital connection between this living black woman from Ohio and this dead white man from Mississippi. So what we'll do is look at individual works by these authors and how these works speak to each other. We will also look at how these authors respond to the literary, existential, social, historical and cultural conditions of the worlds they live in.

Course Requirements: Reading of Assigned Texts

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Grades: 360 - 400 points = A; 320 - 359 points = B; 280 - 319 points = C; 240 - 279 points = D; 0 - 239 points = F

Reading of Assigned Texts: This is a heavy reading class. We're going to read a lot of works, and a number of them will be difficult, but the reading is not impossible. I expect you to keep up. If I feel that the class is falling behind on the reading, I'll start giving objective reading quizzes.

Also, a number of the works deal with topics such as incest, atheism, infidelity, miscegenation, alcoholism, and sexual abuse. If you feel that such topics may not be appropriate for you, you may want to consider changing out of this class.

Papers: You will write one paper, at least 2000 words long, on the two authors we'll be reading this semester. This paper should be argumentative (proving some significant point) and critical (i.e. using outside criticism). The paper will be graded on content, research, and form. Highest grades will go to ambitious papers that are most insightfully and thoughtfully written. Further, the papers must be typed and must use the MLA format. Papers will be due the last Wednesday night class of the semester. The papers will not be due during Finals Week. A late paper will drop a letter grade for each calendar date it is late. More information regarding every aspect of this assignment will be handed out following mid-term.

Exams: They will be comprehensive and will contain objective and subjective components. You will be asked to 1) identify characters, situations, images from the literature, 2) identify and explain quotations from the works we will be reading, 3) explain in short essay answers important issues as they relate to the literature, and 4) answer longer essay questions about them.
Yahoo Group Work: We learn about literature not only by reading and talking about it but also by writing about it. During the course of the semester, each student will participate in an electronic discussion group. The egroup site is available at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eng3601/

During the semester, you will submit 10 short analytical entries to the egroup about the literature we'll be reading and 10 responses to other students' entries.

What should you write about in your 10 short analytical entries? Each one should begin with an important question about the text you are analyzing. This important question should be about an important issue in the work you are analyzing, or the question should focus on an important quote. Your analysis should answer the question that you raise. Sometimes you may want to respond to something that was said in class about the literature. That's fine.

What should you not write about in your 10 short analytical entries? Although I realize the importance of responding to a work of literature on a personal level, I want these essays to be analytical rather than personal. Also, the responses should not be summaries of the works being responded to.

How long should these entries be? The length of a well-developed paragraph: at least 100 words each.

Responses to other students' entries should also be analytical rather than personal. The responses may respond to a student's initial question or final question or to a block of responses or analytical entries or to things said about texts in class. The responses should be thoughtful and substantive.

To make sure these 10 short analytical entries are equally spaced out (this will benefit all of us), each student will be expected to write 5 short analytical entries before mid-term and five after mid-term. You can write as many of these as you want but I will only count the first short analytical entry per week toward your grade.

The responses should also be spaced out. I expect each student to do 5 before mid-term, and 5 after mid-term. This is a minimum sort of requirement. Feel free to respond more often. But no more than 2 a week will count toward your required minimum of 10 before mid-term and 10 after mid-term.

If you have trouble getting on-line, see me. You can always post through my computer.

Plagiarism: Note the English Dept's statement on plagiarism: "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' (Random House Dict.)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course."

I have zero-tolerance for plagiarism of any kind. I will fail a plagiarist for the course and will notify the judicial board of the plagiarism. The judicial board has the option of expelling the student from the university. If you have any question about this, see me.

Syllabus:
Sound and the Fury, Faulkner
The Bluest Eye, Morrison
As I Lay Dying, F
Sula, M
Light in August, F
Song of Solomon, M
Absalom, Absalom, F
Beloved, M
Go Down, Moses, F
Jazz, M