

Department of English & Writing Studies
Bullets and Ballots: U.S. Literature and Civil Rights
English 3471F (001)
Fall 2022
Tentative Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. Miranda Green-Barteet
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Course Location: UC 3225

Course Day/Time: T 9:30-10:30, Th 9:30-11:30

Office Hours: T 10:30-12:30
and By Appointment*

*Email is the best way to contact me. If you email me Monday through Friday between 9 am and 5 pm, I will respond within 24 hours; if you email me on the weekend, I will not respond until Monday after 9 am. Be sure to put your course number into the subject line and to use your UWO email to contact me.

Land Acknowledgement:

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London.

Calendar Description:

This course considers literature that produced, reflected, and reacted to the emergence of various U.S. civil rights movements. Approaches will vary but likely topics will include: the revolution and founding; “Indian Removal” and Indigenous rights; slavery, abolition, and Jim Crow; women’s rights and feminism; the sexual revolution and queer identity.

Course Description and Outcomes

The Declaration of Independence, presented to the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, proclaims “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” Since this document was shared by the white men gathered to declare the Thirteen Colonies’ independence from Great Britain, this passage has been cited innumerable times by individuals seeking to secure or expand their civil rights. Among the civil rights most often sought is the right to bodily autonomy.

Defined most simply, bodily autonomy is the right to governance over one’s body, and it emphasizes the importance of personal autonomy, self-ownership, and self-determination. Throughout U.S. history, many groups have been denied various civil rights, including the right to bodily autonomy. In this course we will consider a selection of U.S. literature, from the colonial period to the present, that relates to the key civil right of autonomy. Drawing on a variety of genres, we will consider, but not limit ourselves, to the following questions:

- What is bodily autonomy? Is it a human right? Is it a civil right? What is the difference between a human right and a civil right?
- How does Americans perception of bodily autonomy change from decade to decade?
- How do U.S. authors take up the issue of bodily autonomy? Do the race, class, gender, and sexuality of authors influence the ways they consider bodily autonomy?
- Historically, which individuals have been denied the right to bodily autonomy?
- What historic events have affected Americans' views of bodily autonomy?
- How have authors used literature to advocate for bodily autonomy?
- How do U.S. authors' perception of bodily autonomy change as the nation ages?
- Where do works addressing bodily autonomy fit into the canon?
- What other civil rights are most often connected to bodily autonomy?

Course Objectives:

Throughout the semester, in addition to gaining and sharing knowledge through the assigned readings, you will

- apply rigorous critical thinking and analysis by engaging productively with new ideas through reading and discussing literature;
- develop an understanding of civil rights and how U.S. authors advocate for civil rights through literature;
- gain an understanding of literary genres and periods, specifically U.S. literature;
- have a sense of the way literature influences and is influenced by social constructions of gender, race, and class;
- develop and refine close reading skills;
- apply theory to literature;
- research, assess, and synthesize information;
- and locate, evaluate, and critique sources using appropriate disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary research skills and tools.

Course Materials

Course Texts *these may change by the start of term

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

August Wilson, *Fences*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*

Angie Thomas, *The Hate U Give*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between Me and The World*

You may purchase the editions I have selected, available at the UWO bookstore, or you may use whatever edition you prefer, including an electronic version. You will need to bring a version of the text to class as we will discuss specific passages.

Methods of Evaluation

Participation	10%
Class Blog (entries and comments)	15%
Close Reading Papers (2 @ 750-1,000 words)	30%
Paper/Unessay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography	10%
Final Paper/Unessay	35%

Course Policies

Discussion Guidelines:

We will cover a variety of topics pertaining to U.S. literature and civil rights. Among other topics, we will consider how race, class, gender, sex, and sexuality are presented within the genre. Some of the materials we will consider may include topics that may be difficult to read about and to discuss. Ensure you are comfortable discussing this potentially sensitive material. Additionally, this class is a space in which students are free to express their views, to post questions, or to raise issues without reprisal.

Students should also feel free to address any topics in their written projects, taking care to do so within the parameters of the genre. If a writing project contains scenes of a sensitive or upsetting nature, I expect students to prepare their peer review groups.

Professionalism & Privacy:

Western Students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations apply to this course (please keep in mind some expectations apply to meeting online):

- Students are expected to be courteous and kind and to follow online etiquette expectations provided on OWL.
- All course materials created by the instructor are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared.
- All course materials created by graduate students (i.e., presentations, handouts, discussion questions, etc.) are the intellectual property of the student creating the materials and cannot be sold/shared.
- Recording are not permitted (audio or video) without the instructor's or the students' explicit permission.
- Permitted recordings are only to be used for class and are not to be distributed.
- All recorded sessions, if any, will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed.
- Students should feel free to keep their cameras on or off as they choose, with the exception of presentations. When you are giving a presentation, please turn your camera on.
- Students should also feel free to use an appropriate virtual background and to use a nickname on Zoom. If you choose to use a nickname, please email me so that I learn your nickname and mark your attendance based on your nickname.

Submitting Assignments:

All assignments are due in-class on the date stated on the class schedule. You are expected to submit an electronic version to OWL. All papers should be submitted as .doc or .dox files. Do not submit PDFS. Assignments should be submitted at the time indicated on the class schedule/assignment prompts. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Please get in touch via email **24-hours prior** to an assignment's due date to request an extension.

Note: if you need an extension, you do not need to share with me the intimate details of your personal life. That information is none of my business, and you should never have to disclose private information to get support. If you feel compelled to offer a reason for requesting an extension, I encourage you to be creative (e.g., your cat vomited on your rough draft, or you're a Marvel super-villain who is planning an inter-galactic heist).

Attendance Policy:

The very nature of this course requires that you attend regularly to do well. You are expected to come to class. Should you need to be absent, notify me as soon as you know you will be away. If you miss more than **4 classes**, I reserve the right to deduct 10% off your final grade (e.g., an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 72).

Owl/Sakai:

The use of OWL/Sakai is necessary for successful completion of this course. This includes accessing readings as stipulated in the course outline, downloading instructions and guidelines for assignments, and submitting assignments OWL. All course information, including assignments, will be posted on the course website.

Communicating with Instructor:

Email is the best way to communicate with me. It may take up to 24 hours for me to respond to you during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Intellectual Property/Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The full policy is set out here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Religious Accommodation:

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support & Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Timetable

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