

Dr. Venetria Patton
ENGL 672/AMST 650: African American Women Writers
TR 12:00-1:15 in HEAV 102
Office: HEAV 403
Office hours: T 10:00-11:00am, R 1:30-2:30 and by appointment
Drop in visits available in BRNG 6174 office
Phone: 4-4710 in HEAV—no voice mail; 4-2151 in BRNG—voice mail
Email: vpatton@purdue.edu
ENGL email: fall2009-engl-67200-001@lists.purdue.edu
AMST email: fall2009-amst-65000-004@lists.purdue.edu
<https://blackboard.purdue.edu/webct/logon/2059874908101>

This course will introduce students to foundational texts within black feminist discourse as well as provide an opportunity to read and discuss short stories and novels by African American women writers. The course will begin with the 1970's, which saw the growth of black women's literary production. Each decade will be marked by a Toni Morrison novel as she is considered by many to be the leading African American woman writer and her novels reflect many of the themes, issues, and narrative devices found in other black women's texts.

Required Texts: *African American Literary Theory: A Reader*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Kindred*, *The Salt Eaters*, *Praisesong for the Widow*, *Beloved*, *Mama Day*, *Family*, *Paradise*, *Don't Explain: Short Fiction*, *Love* and *The Complete Stories* by Alice Walker. ***Reserve Essays at Hicks & on Blackboard Vista.**

Requirements:

1. **Participation** grades are determined not only by attendance, but also by contributions to discussions. Active reading is a necessity and initial research on the historical context and authors we are discussing is encouraged. Some students find it helpful to keep a reading journal or to prepare a list of questions or comments prior to class.
2. Students will complete a **1-2 page paper proposal**, including a working thesis statement, potential approach to the topic, and preliminary list of sources. Try to confine your articulation of your plans for your research paper to one page, as this will be excellent practice for the submission of conference abstracts.
3. **Students will compose a 20-25 page original research paper**, regarding one or more of the primary texts in the class and utilizing secondary sources. Research papers should be new work and not revisions of papers for other classes or double submissions. Engage rigorously with the most current and important scholarship in the field. Aim for originality, intellectual seriousness, and depth. Ph.D. students should think of their papers as potential journal submissions. **Essays must be typed according to MLA standards** (visit--<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/> or consult the MLA handbook). **Please be advised:** I typically do not accept late assignments; however, I will on occasion grant extensions when approached in advance of the deadline.

Grading Distribution: Participation—25%, Paper Proposal—25%, and Research Paper—50%. Assignments will be graded as follows:

100-98=A+	97-93=A	92-90=A-	89-88=B+	87-83=B	82-8=B-
79-78=C+	77-73=C	72-70=C-	69-68=D+	67-63=D	62-60=D-
59-0=F					

Grades will not be posted or verbally reported over the telephone or via e-mail.

Academic Dishonesty:

University Regulations, Section III-B states: Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty. The commitment of the acts of cheating, lying, stealing, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of ghost-written papers, the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest.

Plagiarism on the research paper will lead to an F for the class and disciplinary action.

Reading & Assignment schedule: Come to class with that day's reading already completed. All assignments are due at the beginning of class.

- 8/25 "The F-Word: A Video about Feminism" & "A Black Feminist Statement"*
 8/27 "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" & "To Hell with Dying"
 9/1 *The Bluest Eye*
 9/3 *The Bluest Eye*
 9/8 "Roselily" & "Everyday Use"
 9/10 "Nineteen Fifty-Five" & "New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism"
 9/15 *Kindred*
 9/17 *Kindred*
 9/22 *Kindred*
 9/24 Ch 1: Alice Walker's Womanism* & "Some Implications of Womanist Theory"
 9/29 *The Salt Eaters*
 10/1 *The Salt Eaters*
 10/6 *The Salt Eaters*
 10/8 "Black Feminist Theory and the Representation of the Other" & "Revision and (Re)membrance: A Theory of Literary Structures in Literature by African-American Women Writers"
 10/13 **Fall Break--Beloved**
 10/15 *Beloved*
 10/20 *Beloved*
 10/22 Ch. 3: Clenora Hudson-Weems's Africana Womanism* & *Mama Day*
 10/27 *Mama Day*
 10/29 *Mama Day*—**Paper Proposals Due**
 11/3 "Black Feminist Thinking: The 'Practice' of 'Theory'" & *Family*
 11/5 *Family*
 11/10 *Family*
 11/12 *Paradise*
 11/17 *Paradise*
 11/19 *Paradise*
 11/24 "Don't Explain" & "Black (W)holes and the Geometry of Black Female Sexuality"
 11/26 **Thanksgiving Holiday**
 12/1 "Water with Wine" & "Houston"
 12/3 *Love*

12/8 *Love*

12/10 *Love*

12/15 Seminar Papers due by noon in 403 HEAV

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE INSTRUCTOR'S DISCRETION.

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course. Blackboard Vista web page: <https://blackboard.purdue.edu/webct/logon/2059874908101>, my email address: vpatton@purdue.edu, and my office phone: 494-3756 or 494-2151 (voice mail).

NOTICE REGARDING ONLINE EVALUATIONS

During the last two weeks of the semester, you will be provided an opportunity to evaluate this course and your instructor. To this end, Purdue has transitioned to online course evaluations. On Monday of the fifteenth week of classes, you will receive an official email from evaluation administrators with a link to the online evaluation site. You will have two weeks to complete this evaluation. Your participation in this evaluation is an integral part of this course. Your feedback is vital to improving education at Purdue University. I strongly urge you to participate in the evaluation system.

Bibliography of Reserve Material

Collective, The Combahee River. "A Black Feminist Statement." *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*. Ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall. N.Y.: The New Press, 1995. 232-40.

Phillips, Layli, ed. "Alice Walker's Womanism." *The Womanist Reader*. N.Y.: Routledge, 2006. 3-19.

---. "Clenora Hudson-Weems's Africana Womanism." *The Womanist Reader*. N.Y.: Routledge, 2006. 37-54.