



MULTI-CULTURAL LITERATURE

LITERARY MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF ARTS

MR.OYEDEJI (ROOM EIGHTEEN)

WE WELCOME YOU TO THE DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS LITERARY MEDIA and COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT, WHERE OUR MISSION IS:

The Literary Media and Communications Department's (LMC) goal is singular, to train its student in the different strands of communication (written, verbal and new media), considering how this translates to the marketplace. This department necessitates interdisciplinarity, including, but not limited to LMC, Theater, Museum Studies, Visual Arts, and TDP (recording studio). Our aim is to dismantle the sometimes self-indulgent, and strictly cathartic workshop model of writing and leave in its place a department that imparts to its students the notion that they are writing to work, rather than just writing to write. The department has five strands, that are product driven, products that range from performance, to print, archival, to design, research to debate, and within the strands, culminating work both within the Duke Ellington School of the Arts (copy and content for the Ellington website, developing archives of Ellington work, creating script in the areas of performance/performance marketing, writing copy and public service announcements, serving as viable extension/support mechanism of and for Ellington Fund, to name a few), and outside the context of the school.

Strand One – Research, Public Speaking, Speech, and Debate (within this formation of an interdisciplinary, Ellington Debate team that competes within the District of Columbia, eventually, nationally) —this discipline would encompass LMC, Museum Studies, and Theater

Strand Two – Dramatic Writing and the Construction and Understanding of Character —this discipline would encompass LMC and Theater

Strand Three – Magazine, Newspaper, and Online (borrowed from Syracuse Graduate Program in New Media studies), in addition to serving as the magazine, print and online face of Ellington, this strand could also liaison/serve the parent community through blogs, and work in conjunction with Ellington Fund to market and deliver Ellington brand to outside/funding communities –this discipline would encompass LMC, Museum Studies, and Visual Arts

Strand Four – Film and New Media, in addition to the screenwriting component, this strand could serve as the archiving entity for Ellington, pod casting that would complement strand three and also in conjunction with branding for the institution/Ellington Fund. Additionally copy/psa writing/content writing across discipline—this strand would encompass LMC, Museum Studies, and TDP, Theater

Strand Five – Internship (across discipline)

Multi-Cultural Literature

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Course Description

The aim of this course is to introduce students to global literatures from around the world. Students will be expected to examine the chosen strands of literature and critique the cultural, social and political context that informs the writing. The texts that will be examined range from African to African-American Literature, American-Dominican and Black British Literature. The course includes Junot Diaz, Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, Linton Kwesi Johnson and Toni Morrison as well as critical introductions to the concept of colonialism and post-colonialism, Orientalism and the works of Edward Said, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy and Franz Fanon.

Students will learn the principles of studying literature. They will be expected to read the texts, identify the themes and issues raised in the books and to be able to discuss these critically in class as well as in their essays. They will consider the use of imagery, illusion and irony in texts as well as the use of other literary techniques, such as metaphor, simile, etc.

Concept and Context – Students will be expected to grasp the concepts explained in class and to gather a working sense of the context to each piece of writing examined, from author background to historical and social context, as well as the place in which a piece of writing fits into a larger corpus of work.

Output: writing assignments, class presentations and final essays.

UNIT ONE: THE NOBEL LAUREATES

The unit focuses on short works by two of the world's most renowned writers, both of which are recipients of the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature. Toni Morrison won the prize in 1993; the unit examines her sole short story "Recitatif", considering its themes of racial integration and the implicit role in the discussion of race that the reader makes. The unit also conducts a comparative examination to the work of the 1986 recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Wole Soyinka. Students will contrast the racial exclusion found at the heart of his poem "Telephone Conversation".

Toni Morrison is the author of several books including *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved* & *Jazz*. She has received the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize. In 1993 she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. She lives in Rockland County, New York, and Princeton, New Jersey.

Wole Soyinka is the author of many famous plays and literary works such as *Jero's Metamorphosis* and *Death and the King's Horsemen*; he is also the author of the essay collection *Myth, Literature and The African World*. His work *The Man Died* recounts his time in jail as a political prisoner. In 1986, Wole Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Laureate in Literature.

Assessment: Written Assignments, Test (Essay), Creative Writing Assignment

UNIT TWO: DOMINICAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE: JUNOT DIAZ

The unit looks at the hybrid fusion of language, culture and history in the work of Junot Diaz and how he experiments with traditional modes of fiction. The class will study his short story collection *Drown*. The class will also examine the socio-political state of Dominicans in the United States, and the history of their mother country, particularly under the regime of dictator Rafael Trujillo.

Junot Diaz is the author of the short story collection *Drown*, and his fiction has appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *Paris Review*, and *The Best American Short Stories*. Born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and raised in New Jersey, he now lives in New York City.

Supporting Texts for Unit: Junot Diaz' *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, Julia Alvarez' *How The Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, Peter Sollett's *Raising Victor Vargas*.

Assessment: Test (Essay), Creative Writing Assignment

UNIT THREE

AFRICAN LITERATURE: CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHE

Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche has been hailed as the successor to Chinua Achebe and the "future voice of African writing". The African Literature element of the course concludes with a focus on contemporary Africa and a study of the circumstances that inform the continent today.

Students will read Adiche's short story *Half Of A Yellow Sun* as well as her collection of stories *The Thing Around Your Neck*, while studying the themes of colonialism, post-colonialism, civil war, political upheaval and religion. Through the book and supporting materials, students will be introduced to post-colonialism and Nigerian history through both a political and theoretical context.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche is the author of *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and the recent short story collection, *The Thing Around Your Neck*. She is the recipient of a Commonwealth Writer's Prize and the Orange Prize for Fiction. She splits her time between the U.S. and Nigeria.

Supporting Texts for Unit: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Assessment: Written Assignments, Test (Essay),

UNIT FOUR

BRITISH LITERATURE: LINTON KWESI JOHNSON

The unit looks at British Literature from an alternative lens to the texts that have been canonized in the western world. Students will consider the themes of multiculturalism, nation and nationhood, racism and the state.

The unit focuses on the work of the dub-poet Linton Kwesi Johnson through an examination of his poetry collection *Mi Revalveshanary Fren: Collected Poems*. Often vocal in his criticism of the British state, his work has been an outspoken

representation of the frustrations and difficulties of ethnic minorities and the working labor class of the country.

Linton Kwesi Johnson is considered one of the most influential poets of his generation. Known as a pioneer of dub-reggae poetry and the black artists movement in Britain, Linton Kwesi Johnson's poems first appeared in the journal *Race Today* and he has gone on to produce five collections of work including *Dread Beat An' Blood*, *Inglan is a Bitch* and *Tings An Times*.

Supporting Texts for Unit: BBC One Documentary *Reggae Britannia*, Menelik Shabazz's film *Burning An Illusion*, *Empire Windrush* collection edited by Onyekachi Wambu.

Assessment: Creative Writing Assignment, Presentation

TEXTS REQUIRED:

Drown by Junot Diaz

The Thing Around Your Neck by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche

Mi Revalueshanary Fren by Linton Kwesi Johnson

GRADING

Students will be graded in four primary areas:

Classroom Participation and Quality of Contribution/Return of written agreements: **10%**

Writing Assignments: **20%**

Research and Presentation: **20%**

Essays: **50%**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Signed agreements – Class Rules, Student Information and Agreement to acquire key texts (Return of agreements goes towards Classroom Participation and Quality of contribution grading, failure to return agreements leads to deduction.)
- Current functioning e-mail address.
- Students must have a flash drive.
- Students must contribute to the class by way of verbal communication.
- Computer, Printer and Internet accessibility outside of Duke Ellington School to dialogue with instructor on ways to improve work and presentations.
- Respect for the works and classroom contributions of others and the willingness to learn how to critique constructively.

- Attendance and promptness are essential for all classes.
- Timely completion and submission of assignments, late work will not be accepted and student will be marked as failed assignment.
- Maintenance of course notebook in compliance with periodic notebook checks.
- Regular and comprehensive note-taking.

THE USE / CHARGING OF CELL PHONES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN CLASS; ANY PHONES VISIBLY SEEN SHALL BE CONFISCATED AND DELIVERED TO FATHER PAYNE FOR COLLECTION.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Binder with college-ruled paper
Writing instrument
Notebook

Methodology

The course utilizes the "Triangle Method," a methodology of learning. The methodology references the triangle as a shape, in that all sides of a triangle are equal and equidistant, and in this methodology the sides are Character/Context, Compassion, and Citizen. The "Triangle Method" does this because it is our contention that we need to produce students who understand that knowledge, language, information, indeed art, are not privileged spaces. The idea, within the "Triangle Method" is that the student makes no decision about which part of learning, which part of the "Triangle" is more important, but rather how each, in concert, produces lifelong learners.

A Note on Grading: For Students and Parents

A grade is final. I will not change grades on the result of a discussion. I am available to discuss any concerns that you might have, but will not be able to change the grade for any work submitted and marked.

A Note on Absence and Tardiness

You will be marked tardy if you fail to show up in class before the bell rings.

It is important to note that the school has implemented a policy whereby **five unexcused instances of tardiness equal an absence** per advisory. Five unexcused absences from a class in any single advisory will **result in automatic failure of that class** regardless of the level of work submitted. **This is an automatic process that takes place on our administration system. As teachers we are in no position to overturn this process/grade.**

Five unexcused tardiness = 1 absence.

Five unexcused absences = failure.