

Mark A. Williams – mwill209@yahoo.com

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.

African-American Literature

“Until the lions have their historians, tales of hunting will always be told by the hunter”.
(African Proverb)

This course considers the work and contributions of African-American writers from a different vantage. Students consider the construct of race as it pertains to power, stereotype and the institution of chattel slavery using this as a lens to examine different periods in the lives of African-Americans and the ways in which racism was legislated, delineated and administered. African-American Literature, then, is contextualized historically so that students consider its relevance and impact on subsequent generations of artists, including the students themselves.

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 my 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.

Standards

- Discussion
- Questioning, Listening, and Contributing
- Oral Presentation
- Vocabulary Development
- Text – Expository, Document and Procedural Text, Argument and Persuasive Text
- Connections
- Genre, Theme
- Fiction, Literary Nonfiction
- Poetry

- Drama
- Style and Literature
- Traditional Narrative
- Imaginative/Narrative Writing
- Revision

-Advisory One and Two – Memory/Erasure of Memory, Narrative/Importance of Narrative, Stereotype/Construct of Race, Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, Reparations, Resistance/Identity, Owning Identity, Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Capitalism, Socialism, Reconstruction, Legislated Racism, Rationalization for Slavery/Human beings as capital

-Advisory Three and Four – Minstrels, Black face, Stereotype as commodity, “Gangsta rap” as minstrel, Narratives of Resistance, Black as Monolith, Wearing the Mask, Artists of the Harlem Renaissance, Ideal/Power/Resistance/Identity Politics/Subversive Activity/Social Transformation

*Students will screen several films including “Panther”, “Beloved”, “Harlem Minstrels”, “Eyes on the Prize”, “Scottsboro Boys”, and “Native Son”, among others

Requirements:

- Students must have a current e-mail address, which will be put on list serve for the class
- Access to a computer outside Duke Ellington to dialogue with instructor regarding revision of work, and access to a printer to bring in copies of text for instructor and fellow students
- Respect for the work of others and the ability to give and receive critique

Grading:

Students will be graded in four primary areas:

- Two response papers (2 to 4 pages)
- Mid-term
- Final
- Class Participation