

English 2025. 028: Special emphasis course in the history through literature of the unique cultural diversity in Louisiana, from the antebellum to the present eras with a service-learning option that will connect the literature to the living history of Louisiana.

Instructor: Jean Witherow

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Course Objectives: In English 2025, you will develop

- An effective command of written and spoken English
- A comprehension of how knowledge is acquired and applied
- An informed appreciation of the roles of arts and the humanities
- An understanding of other cultures and other times
- An understanding of institutional vs. individual needs.
- An understanding of one's multiple social identities.
- An ability to deal with moral and ethical issues.
- Active learning and problem solving skills.
- Competency in identifying community assets.
- Cross cultural communication skills.

Course description: This class will focus on Louisiana's diverse and unique cultural history as represented both in literature and in collected oral histories. One purpose of the class is to serve as a tribute to that rich history as seen through the eyes of the authors, the characters to whom they have given life, and the people who have actually lived it. Many of the authors are from Louisiana; some, like William Faulkner and Kate Chopin, spent a period of time here and were infatuated enough to write about its people. Class discussion will address such issues as slavery, class distinction within African-American, Cajun, and Creole cultures, and change effected through civic action. We will examine various cultures, their interrelated struggles, triumphs, and contributions, as we look objectively at a past we are not always proud of but that deserves to be remembered as shaping our present and certainly as impacting the larger US culture.

Course Options:

Students may choose a service-learning or an in-class assignment. Service-learning option will consist of using existing collected oral histories from Old South Baton Rouge and creating power point presentations to present to social studies students at McKinley High School and to leave with that community. Service-learning groups will keep a detailed reflective journal; combined presentation and journal will be worth 25% of their course grade. Non-service learning groups will make a thematic presentation to the class of one of the stories we read and write an additional 4-page paper, for a combined total worth 25% of their course grade.

Course Requirements and Grading: Come to each class period prepared to participate.

Complete reading and writing assignments on time, and "show up" to class mentally as well as physically. In short: **BE HERE:** Because this is an interactive learning community, your presence may be the single most important element in your progress. Attendance will have a large bearing on participation grade: Every absence over three will lower participation grade by 3 points. Expect periodic pop quizzes covering assigned stories. Note: **NO QUIZZES CAN BE MADE UP**, even for excused absences, so save absences for actual emergencies. I will drop at least two quizzes instead of offering make-up quizzes. Plan to find time out of class to meet with groups and research issues/stories.

Late papers (papers turned in after I collect them **AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS PERIOD**) will lose 5 points for each day they are late, and will receive a grade of F if turned in later than one week. All papers **MUST** be turned in (even late papers) in order to pass the course.

Manuscript Format: All out-of-class journals and papers must be typed. In-class daily journals need not be typed. Computers are available in the library and various labs on campus. Assistance in writing, revising, editing, and word processing is available in the Writing Center, B18 Coates. Save your writing on more than one disk! A failed disk is not an excuse for a later paper! You can also save on Tiger Bites in your PAWs account.

Double space all essays. Use one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 point font. Do not justify right margin. Papers must have the following information in the upper RIGHT HAND corner: Name, section number, and date. Essays should have a title that catches the reader's attention and gives a clue what to expect. DO NOT simply title your essay with the short story title, although it may be included in your title.

Do not discard prewriting or drafts! I may call on you to produce a draft or prewriting, in which I MUST FIND EVIDENCE OF REVISION AND EDITING. You are not permitted to write one draft and turn it in with no revision or editing. Not even a professional is capable of that, so save your drafts AS A SEPARATE FILE to save your grade! Final graded papers will be returned but will not be yours to keep. **Mandatory:** Make a copy of any outside source you refer to and submit the copy along with your final draft.

Note: Plagiarism is a serious offense! Be forewarned that I am adept at spotting work that is not original to the student and adamant about enforcing the rules. Know and follow the *Code of Student Conduct*. Consult a writing handbook or website such as PurdueOwl for MLA guidelines for correct documentation procedure.

In-Class Journals: At the beginning of each class period, you will write a journal entry, AT LEAST a one-page response to each story we read, to be picked up at random intervals, so do your reading and keep your journals up to date.

Format for journals: Question, Hypothesis, Question (QHQ). What **question** comes to mind when you read the story? For an A journal, think of a question that does not have an obvious answer. Rather, write a question that you can explore and examine in your hypothesis, not one you already have a pat answer for. Your **hypothesis** is your one-page discussion of key issues, themes, or elements of fiction that may shed light on your question. End your journal entry with a follow-up **question** that you do not answer, but that can be addressed to the class for discussion. Be prepared to volunteer or be called on to share your journal entry with the class on any given day. Failure to share a QHQ if you are called will result in a 0 in participation for the day. There are some sample journal entries in your packet, but be aware that the samples do not meet my NEW length requirement of one page.

Major assignments:

Midterm Exam	20%
Midterm three-page interpretive essay	20%
Participation, informal class journal, quizzes, and attendance	15%
Final Exam	20%

Options: choose one

Service Learning Option: Presentation and formal reflective service-learning journal	25%
Non-Service Learning Option: Presentation and four page interpretive essay	25%

Required Materials: BUY NOVELS EARLY IN SEMESTER!

Course Packet available at LSU Union Bookstore:

Selected stories: Kate Chopin and Grace King

Selected readings from *The Louisiana Book* (1894), Thomas M' Caleb, Ed.

Selected readings from *The Booklover's Guide to New Orleans* (1999), Susan Larson, Ed.

Selected stories from *Louisiana Stories*, Ben Forkner, Ed.: Cable, Hearn,

Faulkner, Saxon, Bontemps, Hurston, Burke, and Grau.

Additional Course Packet available at Serve-U-Center, on Highland, near south campus entrance.
Twelve Years a Slave, Solomon Northup, 68 edition, LSU Press.
The Awakening, Kate Chopin, 2nd edition, Ed. Margo Culley.
A Lesson Before Dying, Ernest Gaines, 93 edition.
Fielder's Choice, Rick Norman, 91 edition.

Tentative Schedule:

TH 1/22: "Introduction," *Louisiana Stories*
 "George Washington Cable, the 'Negrophilist'," from *The Louisiana Book*
 T 1/27: "Posson Jone'," (1879) Cable
 "Cable, King, Hearn, Chopin et al." from *Booklover's Guide*
 TH 1/29: "La Belle Zoraïde," (1893) Chopin
 T 2/3: *Twelve Years a Slave*, (1853) Northup, to page 86
 TH 2/5: *Twelve Years a Slave*, to page 170
 T 2/10: *Twelve Years a Slave*, to end
 TH 2/12: "A Crippled Hope," (1925) King
 "La Grande Demoiselle," (1925) King
 T 2/17: "A Summer Tragedy," (1973) Bontemps
 "The Legend of L'Île Dernière," from *Chita*, (1888) Hearn
 TH 2/19: *The Awakening*, (1899) Chopin, to page 38, chapter XIV
 T 2/24: HAPPY MARDI GRAS
 TH 2/26: *The Awakening*, to page 70, chapter XXV
 T 3/2: *The Awakening*, to end
 Midterm Paper due
 TH 3/4: *A Lesson Before Dying*, (1993) Gaines, through page 85
 T 3/9: *A Lesson Before Dying*, through 177
 TH 3/11: *A Lesson Before Dying*, to end
 Midterm exam
 T 3/16: "The Convict," (1988) Burke
 S-L Journal #1 due
 TH 3/18: "The Sky is Gray," Gaines
 T 3/23: "The Cane River," (1926) Saxon
 "At the 'Cadian Ball,'" (1892) Chopin
 S-L Journal #2 due
 TH 3/28: First visit to McKinley High School
 T 3/30: Second visit to McKinley High School
 S-L Journal #3 due
 TH 4/1: Third visit to McKinley High School
 T-TH 4/6-4/8: HAPPY SPRING BREAK
 T 4/13: Final S-L Journals, #1-4 due
 "The Kingdom of God," (1925) Faulkner
 TH 4/15: "Joshua," (1954) Grau
 T 4/20: "Father Watson," (1935) Hurston
 "At Chenière Caminada," Chopin
 TH 4/22: *Fielder's Choice*, (1999), to page 137
 T 4/27: *Fielder's Choice*, to page 137
 TH 4/29: *Fielder's Choice*, to end
 T 5/4: Final discussion, final reflective journal entry, collection of all in-class journals.
 TH 5/6: Review for final exam