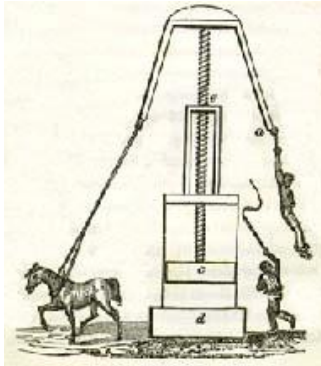


Disability, Narratives, and the Black Body

Professor Delia Steverson



Course Overview

This course is designed to help students critically engage reading notions of the black body in African American literature by exploring the construction of the black body historically and culturally. This course takes an interdisciplinary approach to examine notions of race and disability in African American literature and culture. By first acquiring an understanding of the definition(s) of disability, we will then examine intersecting identities including race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality in order to uncover how disability shapes black embodiment. This course will uncover how historically the construction of blackness runs parallel with the construction of disability.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate the value of engaging a disability studies approach
- Articulate the ways in which race and disability are in conversation in African American literature
- Identify key political, social, and/or economic issues that have shaped the construction of the black body in America

- Analyze a variety of texts using critical reading skills and rhetorical strategies

Required Texts:

- David Serlin, Rachel Adams, and Benjamin Reiss—*Keywords for Disability Studies*
- Audre Lorde—*The Cancer Journals*
- William and Ellen Craft—*Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*
- Moses Roper—*A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper*
- Suzan Lori Parks—*Venus*
- Susan Birch and Hannah Joyner—*Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Birch*
- Ernest J. Gaines—*A Lesson Before Dying*

Grade Distribution

- ✚ **Critical Responses 3/4 (60%)**
 - You will write THREE 2-3 page (600-750 words) responses throughout the semester. These will be based on your readings and your in-class writing prompts. Every student must complete Critical response 1. You may choose which other two you wish to complete. Although you are NOT required, I encourage you to write all four responses, because I will drop the lowest grade out of the four.
 - Your Critical Response papers are due on Canvas by **11pm** on the due date. Please **do not** place papers in my box as I do not accept hard copies. Follow MLA guidelines for your Critical responses. Papers that are turned in after the deadline will receive five points off for every day it is late.
- ✚ **Presentations (15%)**
 - You will be required to make a 10-12 minute creative presentation that teaches the class about some issue of race and/or disability. A more detailed explanation of these presentations will be given on a separate handout.
- ✚ **Presentation Analyses (10%)**
 - For each presentation day, you are required to write a one-page double-spaced typed response that synthesizes the presentations for that day. That means you should complete FOUR presentation analyses. These responses are free-flowing and can take many forms such as: How do the presentations relate to each other? How do they relate to the material we have been discussing in class? What questions did the presentations spark for you? You do not have to comment on every presentation for the day, but you should be able to thoroughly engage the presentations. Because these analyses cannot be made up, attendance is crucial.
- ✚ **Quizzes, in-class assignments (10%)**
 - Be prepared to take a short reading comprehension quiz most days that I assign readings. For those who have read, it will be a piece of cake. In-class assignments will often serve as a place of departure for our discussion.
- ✚ **Participation/Attendance (5%)**
 - You are allowed **FOUR** absences at no penalty. After your fourth absence, I will subtract **ONE** point from your final grade per absence.
 - Make sure you let your voice be heard in class. Your opinions are important and we need them to help forward the discussion. Questions are also welcomed and expected, and count toward participating. The more you participate, the more lively our discussions can be!

For further information regarding UF grading policies, see:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Tentative Schedule of Readings

Week 1 8/22	Introductions; Syllabus
8/24	Deconstructing Disability and Blackness Keywords: <i>disability, race</i>
Week 2 8/29	Depictions of race and disability in (AA) literature
8/31	Library Scavenger Hunt! Meet in _____
Week 3 9/5	Audre Lorde— <i>The Cancer Journals</i> Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 Keywords: <i>embodiment, trauma</i>
9/7	<i>The Cancer Journals</i> Chapter 3 Keywords: <i>illness, passing</i>
Week 4 9/12	Douglas Baynton—“Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History” Keyword: <i>citizenship</i>
9/14	William and Ellen Craft— <i>Running A Thousand Miles for Freedom</i> Preface and Part 1

Week 5 9/19	<i>Running A Thousand Miles for Freedom</i> Part II Ellen Samuels— <i>Fantasies of Identification</i> Chapter 1: “Ellen Craft’s Masquerade”
9/21	<i>A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper</i> Read Preface, Introduction and entire narrative (1838 2 nd ed) Keywords: <i>pain, impairment</i>
Week 6 9/26	Rough draft Critical Response 1 due
9/28	Presentations #1
Week 7 10/3	Final Draft Critical Response 1 Due Film: <i>Freaks</i>
10/5	<i>Freaks</i> Keywords: <i>freak, normal</i>
Week 8 10/10	Rachel Adams— <i>Sideshow USA</i> Chapter 2: “Freaks of Culture: Institutions, Publics, and the Subjects of Ethnographic Knowledge” (pgs. 25-44)
10/12	Presentations #2
Week 9 10/17	Suzan-Lori Parks— <i>Venus</i> Overture and Scenes 31-20 (pages 1-79) Article: Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully—“Ghosts of Sara Baartman”
10/19	<i>Venus</i> Scenes 19-end (pages 80-162)
Week 10 10/24	Critical Response 2 Due Film: <i>Venus Noir</i> Keyword: Stigma
10/26	<i>Venus Noir</i> Article: TBD
Week 11 10/31	Susan Burch & Hannah Joyner— <i>Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Wilson</i> Introduction and Chapters 1-3 Keywords: <i>institution, deafness</i>
11/2	<i>Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Wilson</i> Chapters 4 and 5 Liat Ben-Moshe—“The Institution Yet to Come: Analyzing Incarceration Through A Disability Lens”
Week 12 11/7	Kathleen M. Collins—“A DisCrit Perspective on <i>The State of Florida v. George Zimmerman</i> : Racism, Ableism, and Youth Out of Place in Community and School

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11/9	Presentations #3
Week 13 11/14	Critical Response 3 Due Ernest J. Gaines— <i>A Lesson Before Dying</i> Chapters 1-11
11/16	<i>A Lesson Before Dying</i> Chapters 12-21 Keyword: <i>ability</i>
Week 14 (Thanksgiving!) 11/21	<i>A Lesson Before Dying</i> Chapters 22-end
Week 15 11/28	Short Film—“In His Own Home”
11/30	Presentations #4
Week 16 12/5	Critical Response 4 Due Reading TBD