

MORRISON AND FAULKNER: RACE, GENDER AND INTERTEXTUALITY

This seminar course will look very closely at a few texts by two Nobel Prize winning twentieth-century American novelists: Toni Morrison and William Faulkner. More specifically, it will deal with issues of race and gender as they arise between the texts of Faulkner (a canonical, dead white male, sometimes accused of being a racist and/or misogynist) and Morrison (a contemporary, feminist, black female, sometimes accused of being influenced by Faulkner).

Gender, race, and intertextuality are, of course, vast subjects, and Faulkner and Morrison are exceedingly complex writers. I have, therefore, decided to focus very narrowly on 4 works of fiction and a few theoretical and critical texts (although there will be opportunities to deal with other texts by these authors in the final term paper). Even so, many important issues surrounding these topics will inevitably remain unexplored.

I have no particular thesis to demonstrate; indeed, the seminar is designed to open up questions and new areas of thought, not to solidify existing knowledge. Nevertheless, the course is designed with the conviction that rigorous and theoretically informed analyses of the relationships between these authors may tell us something useful, interesting, and fresh about their fictional worlds and about the ways in which certain important aspects of twentieth century America are conceived and represented.

Wednesdays, 3:00 - 5:45, UC 377

Date	Text	Supplemental Reading	Quiz / Seminar Topic
Jan 9	Introduction		
16	<i>Go Down, Moses</i> (Vintage)	Gray, "Fictions of History," pp. 1-85, esp. 12-60.	Q: <i>GDM</i> , pp 3-180
23	<i>Go Down, Moses</i>	--	Q: <i>GDM</i>
30	<i>Go Down, Moses</i>	--	land, genealogy, race in "The Bear"
Feb 6	<i>Song of Solomon</i> (Plume)	Weinstein, "Introduction," pp. xvii-xxiv; "Historical Beginnings: Slavery," pp. 36-40 (<i>What Else But Love</i>)	Q: SOS construction of identity through time
13	<i>Song of Solomon</i>	Duvall, "Doe Hunting and Masculinity: <i>Song of Solomon</i> and <i>Go Down, Moses</i> ," Weinstein, "The Condition Our Condition is In," pp. 135-144 (<i>What Else But Love</i>)	Call and Response in SOS
20	<i>Song of Solomon</i> / <i>Go Down, Moses</i> at my house, 252 Wortley Road, for a class and film	Weinstein, "Historical Beginnings: Slavery," pp. 55-66 (<i>What Else But Love</i>); Morrison, <i>Playing in the Dark</i> , pp. 1-28	flying motif in SOS
March 6	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> (Vintage / Modern Library) (378pp edn)	Morrison, <i>Playing in the Dark</i> , pp. 31-59, 63-69.	Q: AA incest / miscegenation
13	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i>		Storytelling in AA
20	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> / <i>Beloved</i> (Plume)		Q: <i>B</i> , Ghosts in AA
27	<i>Beloved</i>		trauma in B
Apr 3	<i>Beloved</i>		appetite in B
10	<i>Beloved</i> / Conclusion		ghosts in B
May 3	TERM PAPER DUE		

Supplementary texts (articles, etc.) will be made available either on reserve at Weldon or (more commonly) as photocopies.

Office: Stevenson-Lawson 149, I am usually available Mondays, 9:00 - 12:00, 3:30 - 5:00; Tuesdays, 12:00-1:00, and Fridays, 9:00 - 12:00, for drop in meetings; but, if you want to guarantee that I will be available, please call or e-mail for an appointment. 661-2111, x84614; martyk@uwo.ca.