English 117

Fiction of William Faulkner

John Burt
Rabb 141 (x2158)
burt@brandeis.edu
Office hours: M 11 W 10 and by appointment

Texts

• Collected Stories of William Faulkner Vintage 978-0679764038
• The Sound and the Fury Norton Critical Edition 978-0393964813
• As I Lay Dying Vintage 978-0679732259
• Sanctuary Vintage 978-0679748144
• Light in August Vintage 978-0679732266
• Absalom! Absalom! Vintage 978-0679732181
• Go Down, Moses! Vintage 978-0679732174
• The Hamlet Vintage 978-0679736530
• Intruder in the Dust Vintage 978-0679736516

Sessions

Week 1
Session 1: (January 18) A Rose for Emily
Session 2: (January 19, ) Barn Burning, Dry September
Session 3: January 23) Red Leaves, That Evening Sun

Week 2 and 3 (January 25, 26, 30, February 1, 2, 6) The Sound and the Fury

Week 4 (February 8, 9, 13) As I Lay Dying

Week 5 (February 15, 16, 27) Sanctuary

Week 6 and 7 (March 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 13) Light in August

Week 8 and 9 (March 15, 16, 20, 22, 23, 27) Absalom! Absalom!

Week 10 (March 29, 30, April 3) The Hamlet

Week 11 and 12 (April 5, 6, 19, 20, 24, 26) Go Down, Moses

Week 13 (April 27, May 1, 3) Intruder in the Dust
Requirements:

1. **Short papers** There will be short (two pages or so) writing assignments due every Tuesday for six weeks, beginning January 26, and ending March 9. You will pick a passage of about 250 words from the reading for that day or the next and type it out. Be sure to pick a passage which strikes you as rich and interesting and full of a significance that might not be already obvious to every reader of that text. In other words, I don’t want you to pick a passage that will enable you to repeat some point I have already made in the lecture, but rather some passage which will enable you to bring a new reflection into our conversation, some passage that casts some new light upon the conversation we have already been having, some light that we might not have seen were it not for you. You will write a two page (or so) commentary on that passage, giving what you take its point to be, noting its context, and developing in cogent detail the claim it leads you to make about the text. Imagine that you are writing for someone who has some knowledge of the text but who does not know what precisely is your point of view about it—someone rather like the other members of this class, for instance. I will not give particular papers letter grades, but I will comment upon them and give them either a check, a check plus, or a check minus. You are to turn the whole lot of them in again at the end of the term, and they will be the basis for your final grade. Attendance at the lectures and discussion sections is mandatory. If you miss one of either, I will expect you to explain to me why in writing at the next class.

2. **Other papers** Two relatively short papers dealing closely with a brief text or with an aspect of a longer one. The first, of 5-6 pp., will be due on March 17 to your writing group, and on March 24 to me. This paper should be an extended exercise in close reading. The second, of 7-9 pp., may engage the literary-critical tradition of commentary on the poem you discuss. This will be due on April 21 to your writing group, and on the last day of class (April 28) to me.

Learning Goals

1. Develop the habit of independent critique, intellectual self-reliance, and self-confidence from the perspective of attentive reading and collaborative discussion

2. Become conversant with the major questions, concepts, theories, traditions, and techniques of humanistic inquiry about the fiction of war

3. Reflect on quality peer-to-peer interaction.

4. Develop and sharpen writing skills through rigorous assignments.

Policies

1. **Disability** If you are a student with a documented disability at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see the course instructor immediately.

2. **Attendance and Participation** Attendance in this course is required. A student with more than two unexcused absences should expect to fail the course. Participation in the class discussion is required, so come to class prepared to speak. There may well be classes at Brandeis in which you can coast for much of the term and recover yourself by heroic efforts at the end, but this isn’t one of them. It’s best to plan to work steadily.

3. **Extensions** You must contact me no later than the class before a paper is due to receive an extension. I will not grant extensions on the due date of the paper. Late papers will be docked in proportion to their lateness.

4. **Academic Honesty** You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually as section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances
of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask.

5. **Electronics** You are not allowed to have an open laptop in this class. Please turn off your cell phones for the duration of the class.

6. **Four-Credit Course (with three hours of class-time per week)** Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

7. **Communications** The course will have a mailing list on LATTE. Information about snow days, changed deadlines, and so forth will be broadcast on that mailing list. We may make use of LATTE discussion forums as well.

**Assignment Weights**

I view calculations using these values with suspicion, and I will not accept arguments about your final grade based on calculations from this table, but I include this table to give you a rough idea of how much each assignment is worth.

- Short Papers 20 %
- First Paper 20 %
- Second Paper 35 %
- Participation 25 %