

You Don't Know Dixie: The South at the Center of American Identity
Southern Literature– English 4323–001
10:20am – 11:15am MWF

Course Description

This course explores the South as a dynamic region that possess crucial stories and cultures that sit at the center of America's construction of its history and identity. Many people see the South in simplistic one-dimensional terms. Some see it as a site of honor and tradition while others see it as a place of hatred and violence. Yet the South has always been more complex than it initially appeared. Similarly Southern literature is often limited in the popular imagination as solely about an idyllic South devoid of racial oppression or a frightening space filled with violently racist attitudes and grotesque stereotypes. In this class, we will view what constitutes the South as substantially more expansive than we have previously been led to believe. Not only will we move as far as the Southwest and Mexico in thinking about how far the South as a region stretches, we will also look at how perspectives of historically marginalized groups have laid claim to the South as their own. So while overt racism has continued to be a defining feature in the South's relationship with African Americans from slavery to the Civil War and Reconstruction to Jim Crow, the 21st century has seen African American writers explore the return of many African American return to the South and their direct impact on the future of the South's culture, politics, and identity. Whether we are viewing the recovery of the Native American South or examining the South's attraction to carnivalesque demigods, this course chronicles the evolution of Southern literature in depicting the complexity, intimacy, and volatility of a South that often sits at the center of America's formation of its national identity.

Required Texts:

Gaines, Ernest	<i>The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman</i> (ISBN:0553263579)
Faulkner, William	<i>Absalom, Absalom</i> (ISBN: 0679600728)
Walker, Alice	<i>The Color Purple</i> (ISBN: 978015603182)
O'Connor, Flannery	<i>A Good Man is Hard to Find and Other Stories</i> (ISBN: 9780156364652)
Hall Katori	<i>Hurt Village</i> (ISBN: 9781408147025)
Williams, Tennessee	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (ISBN: 0451163168)
Ward, Jesmyn	<i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i> (ISBN: 9781501126079)
Mason, Bobbie Ann	<i>In Country</i> (ISBN: 9780060835170)
McCarthy, Cormac	<i>Blood Meridian</i> (ISBN: 9780679728757)
Silko, Leslie Marmon	<i>Ceremony</i> (ISBN; 9780143104919)
Warren, Robert Penn	<i>All the King's Men</i> (ISBN: 0156004801)
Wright, Richard	<i>Uncle Tom's Children</i> (ISBN: 0060812516)