

GWS/ENG 350 Gender & Literature
“Adaptations of Black Women’s Literature”
UW Madison, Fall 2018
Tuesday & Thursday 11:00am-12:15pm
Sterling Hall 1339

Instructor Information:

Dr. Sami Schalk

sdschalk@wisc.edu

3408 Sterling Hall

Office Hours: Thursdays 12:30-2:30pm or by appointment. Book appointments at:

<https://drschalk.youcanbook.me/>

Course description:

What is gained and what is lost when a novel is adapted? How does a change in medium or genre change the way we understand narrative, characters, and themes? What liberties are taken in adapting a text? In this class, students will read literature by black women and watch or read adaptations of these texts. Students will be asked to consider what elements of the texts are enhanced, altered, obscured or erased when adapted to a new medium or genre, especially regarding the politics of race, class, gender and sexuality. This course fulfills the literature requirement and is writing intensive.

Content Warning: This course contains frequent and regular engagement with issues of sexual and domestic violence, including incest and rape. This course could therefore be triggering for survivors of violence and trauma. It is recommended that students who feel they may be unable to read about, view, discuss, and write about sexual and domestic violence in a safe, healthy, critical, and responsible manner do not take this course.

Learning Goals:

1. To increase exposure to black women’s literary and black feminist literary studies
2. To understand concepts of adaptation and genre
3. To improve critical reading, writing, and thinking skills

Required Materials:

1. Zora Neale Hurston *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
2. Alice Walker *The Color Purple*
3. Octavia E. Butler *Kindred* (novel)
4. Damien Duff *Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation* (graphic novel)
5. Sapphire *Push*
6. Beyoncé *Lemonade* (video album available on iTunes or Tidal)

Course Policies:

Universal Design & Accommodations:

I believe everyone has a right to a quality education and that classrooms can adapt to students' needs. Everyone learns differently. If you have ideas on how you can best learn and express your learning in this class, if you have an undocumented disability, or if you have a change in disability status during the semester, I encourage you to meet with me as soon as possible to discuss a learning plan. If you have a documented disability, please provide me your accommodation information within the first two weeks of class. The University accommodation policy reads as follows:

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty, will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Questions about documenting your disability can be directed to the McBurney Disability Resource Center (mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu, 608/263-2741).

Classroom Conduct:

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner toward both their peers and faculty at all times. While disagreement and passion are welcome in our discussions, the emotional and intellectual safety of everyone is of utmost importance. Students behaving in a way which harms, threatens or otherwise significantly negatively impacts others in the classroom will be asked to leave class and be counted as absent for the day. Repeated violations will result in a zero for participation in the course. In this class, we will assume goodwill, educate each other, and strive to learn and grow, even when it is difficult or painful. Come to class open and willing to learn and change.

Late Policy:

All assignments lose ten percent for each day they are late, unless an accommodation plan is already in place. In emergency cases, students may request extensions and must do so at least 24 hours before the assignment is due with evidence of the emergency situation *and evidence of progress on the assignment*. **A common complaint is work being lost on broken computers or missing flash drives. I highly recommend all students set up a cloud account like Dropbox or Google Docs to save their drafts and final work.**

Technology:

Technology is a vital part of our everyday lives and, for many, a useful learning tool. You are welcome to bring laptops or tablets to use during class for referring to articles, taking notes, or

looking up information related to the class discussion. Make choices about technology in the classroom that are right for you and your learning, however, please make sure all devices and your use of them are not distracting to your peers: turn off sound and vibrations before class begins. Internet is not required during class meetings, however, students should have regular, reliable access to the internet to access course readings online well as to submit their written work.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to uphold University expectations for academic integrity by submitting only their own original works and ideas for all assignments in this course. Violations of academic integrity can result in a range of repercussions depending on the severity of the violation, from having to repeat the assignment to expulsion from the University. All academic integrity violations will be recorded and reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards (OSCCS). For more on academic misconduct procedures at UW-Madison see: <https://students.wisc.edu/student-conduct/academic-integrity/>

Assignments:

This course is graded on the UW-Madison grading system: A (93-100%), AB (88-92%), B (83-87%), BC (78-82%), C (70-77%), D (60-69%), F (below 60%). All written assignments must be submitted in order to pass the class. The assignments are weighted as follows:

Attendance	10%
Participation	10%
Midterm & Final Drafts & Meetings	20%
Peer Review	5%
Midterm Essay	25%
Final Paper	30%

Attendance: Attendance is graded by percentage of classes attended. The first three absences count as 50% attendance, all other absences count as a zero. If you anticipate frequently missing class, you should consider taking another course. If a medical or personal emergency results in your missing multiple class sessions, contact Dr. Schalk as soon as possible to set up a meeting to discuss how you can keep up with the course. Students with disabilities should meet with Dr. Schalk to set up an accommodation plan for their absences. Attendance counts for 10 percent of the final grade.

Participation: Participation is a vital part of the course and one of the primary ways through which students learn to become critical thinkers. Participation in this course will be half constituted by pre-class writing assignments submitted to Canvas and half constituted by being actively involved in the class in a respectful manner. This includes communicating in class discussions (including asking questions) and engaging in class activities, such as group work, in-class writing assignments, writing on the board, and reading aloud. Since participation is essential to practicing expressing critical thinking skills, it is important that students be on time and prepared for class and ready to actively participate each day. Excessive tardiness, sleeping in class, or distracting use of technology will reduce your participation grade.

Midterm and Final Drafts & Meetings: All students are required to write drafts of their midterm and final paper which will be submitted to peer writing tutors for review. Drafts are each due two to three weeks before the final version is due and students are required to meet with their assigned peer writing tutor about the draft *and revise* prior to submitting the final draft, which will be graded. **The midterm draft is due October 9 and the final paper draft is due November 20.** All drafts and draft meetings are required to pass the class. Each draft is worth 5 percent and each draft meeting is worth 5 percent of the final grade for a total of 20 percent of the final.

Peer Review: All students will also be required to participate in peer review for the final papers. The peer review session is worth 5% of the final grade.

Midterm Essay: This midterm essay will be a 4-5 page paper (double-spaced, one inch margins, 12 point font) on *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The essay should discuss one scene from the novel (or in some cases a scene not in the novel, but added to the film or in the novel, but cut from the film) and analyze how differences in the scene between the novel and the film change (alter, diminish, enhance, etc.) our understanding of a character, a relationship, or a theme in the novel. **The midterm essay is due October 23.** It is worth 25 percent of the final grade.

Final Paper: The final will be an 8-10 page paper (double-spaced, one inch margins, 12 point font) about any course adaptation except *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The final paper should do the following:

1. Select one character or theme and explain how it was represented in the novel
2. Develop a thesis/argument about how that character or theme was lost, altered, or enhanced in the adaptation
3. Analyze the effect of that change on the adaptation as a whole using close reading
4. Include reference to at least two academic sources, one of which must be a literary analysis article about the novel.

The final paper is due December 14. It is worth 30 percent of the final grade.

Reading Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Thursday September 6: Introductions and Review of Syllabus

Week 2: Black Feminist Theory

Tuesday September 11: “The Intersectionality Primer” and Combahee River Collective “Black Feminist Statement” [Please let Dr. Schalk know if you will miss class to observe Rosh Hashanah]

Thursday September 13: Barbara Christian “The Race for Theory” and Robert J. Patterson “African American Feminist Theories and Literary Criticism”

Week 3: Film & Adaptation Theory

Tuesday September 18: Douglass Kellner “Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture” and the Yale Film Analysis online guide (<http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/>)

Thursday September 20: Linda Hutcheon “Beginning to Theorize Adaptation”

Weeks 4 & 5 *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Tuesday September 25: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* novel (Chapters 1-6)

Thursday September 27: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* novel (Chapters 7-13)

Tuesday October 2: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* novel (Chapters 14-20)

Thursday October 4: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* film

Weeks 6 & 7 *The Color Purple*

Tuesday October 9: *The Color Purple* novel (pages 1-101) *Midterm draft due before midnight

Thursday October 11: *The Color Purple* novel (pages 102-183)

Tuesday October 16: *The Color Purple* novel (pages 184-288)

Thursday October 18: *Class Cancelled for Writing/Revising Day*

Weeks 8, 9 & 10 *Kindred*

Tuesday October 23: *The Color Purple* film *Midterm due before midnight

Thursday October 25: *Kindred* novel (pg1-143; Prologue through The Fight Section 6)

Tuesday October 30: *Kindred* novel (pg143-264; The Fight Section 7 through Epilogue)

Thursday November 1: *Kindred* graphic novel (pg 7-99; Prologue through The Fall)

Tuesday November 6: *Kindred* graphic novel (pg 100-236; The Fight through Epilogue)

Thursday November 8: *Class Cancelled for Instructor Travel*

Weeks 11 & 12 *Push/Precious*

Tuesday November 13: Sapphire's *Push* novel (Chapters I-III)

Thursday November 15: Sapphire's *Push* novel (Chapter IV-End)

Tuesday November 20: *Precious* film *Final paper draft due before midnight

Thursday November 22: *Class Cancelled for Thanksgiving*

Week 13 Shire & Lemonade

Tuesday November 27: Warsan Shire Selected Poems

Thursday November 29: Beyoncé's *Lemonade*

Weeks 14 & 15 Peer Review and Final Papers

Tuesday December 4: Peer Review

Thursday December 6: *TBD*

Tuesday December 11: Optional last chance paper meetings with Dr. Schalk (first come, first serve in 3408 Sterling Hall)

*Final Paper due Friday December 14 by midnight