

Course Syllabus

Course Information

HUSL 6372 American Popular Literature
Spring 2013
W 1- 3:45 p.m
JO 4.708

Professor Contact Information

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Office: HH 2.304
Office Hours: T 2:30-3:30 and W 4-5 and by appointment

Course Description

This course is both a historical survey of American popular literature from the colonial period to the present and an introduction to the interdisciplinary study of reading, literacy, and history of the book. Historians of the book study texts as both sign systems and material artifacts. That is to say that a book's meanings arise not only from the words on the page, but also from the contexts in which it is produced, distributed, and read. Consequently, we will read a variety of popular texts—Puritan Indian captivity narratives, novels of the early Republic, nineteenth-century women's sentimental fiction, slave narratives, dime novels, pulp magazines, Christian fiction, contemporary popular romances, and middlebrow fiction—alongside studies of the institutions that shaped their production and the readers for whom they were important.

These texts offer clues to the preoccupations of ordinary people, ways of reconstructing popular world-views. What kind of "equipment for living" did these texts offer women and men, recent immigrants and the native-born, slaves and free, the rich and the working classes? Do ordinary readers uncritically consume these texts, or are they "resisting readers?" What is the relationship between popular texts and the institutions that produce, market, and distribute them? How do changes in levels of education and religious beliefs influence popular literature? How do gender, race, and class shape what texts we read and how we make sense of them?

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

1. Students will be able to describe major genres of American popular literature and the major issues and questions in scholarship about them.
2. Students will be able to analyze and evaluate arguments made by scholars in the field.
3. Students will research and write a literary or literary historical argument about some aspect of American popular writing.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Vaughan & Clark, ed., Puritans Among the Indians (1676-1724)
Susannah Rowson, Charlotte Temple (1791)
Jesse Aleman and Shelley Streeby, eds., Empire and the Literature of Sensation: An Anthology of 19th-Century Popular Fiction
Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852)
Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave (1845)
Hannah Crafts, Bondwoman's Narrative (1855-59)
Dashiell Hammett, The Maltese Falcon (1930)
Tim Lahaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days (1996)
Sister Souljah, The Coldest Winter Ever (1999)
James Frey, A Million Little Pieces (2004)
Stephenie Meyer, Twilight (2005)

All texts except Twilight and Left Behind available at Off-Campus Books or Stanza Books or the UTD bookstore. Additional materials will be posted on e-learning. Secondary readings available on e-reserve at

<http://utdallas.docutec.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=1448>

PASSWORD:

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Wed. 16 Jan.

Intro. to Course / Books as Artifacts

Paradigms for Studying the "Popular"

Wed. 23 Jan.

John Fiske, chap. 23, "Popular Culture" in Critical Terms for Literary Study, 2d ed. Ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995): 321-35 (e-reserve)

Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular'" in People's History and Socialist Theory, ed. Raphael Samuel (Boston: Routledge, 1981): 227-39 (e-reserve).

Fredric Jameson, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," Social Text 1 (Winter 1979): 130-48 (e-reserve).

Michael Denning, "The End of Mass Culture," International Labor and Working-Class History 37 (Spring 1990): 4-18 (e-reserve).

Tony Bennett, "Introduction: Popular Culture and 'the turn to Gramsci'" in Popular Culture & Social Relations, eds. Tony Bennett, Colin Mercer & Janet Woollacott (Philadelphia: Open UP, 1986): xi-xix (e-reserve).

On Popular Reading

Wed. 30 Jan.

Michel de Certeau, chap. 12, "Reading as Poaching" in Practice of Everyday Life, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Los Angeles: U of California P, 1984): 165-76 (e-reserve).

Roger Chartier, chap. 1, "Communities of Readers" in The Order of Books (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1994): 1-23 (e-reserve).

Robert Darnton, chap. 7, "Communication Networks" in The Forbidden Bestsellers of Pre-Revolutionary France (NY: Norton, 1995): 181-97 (e-reserve).

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Pierre Bourdieu, "The aristocracy of culture," Media, Culture & Society 2 (1980): 225-254 (e-reserve).

Janice Radway, "The Book-of-the-Month Club and the General Reader: The Uses of 'Serious' Fiction," Critical Inquiry 14.3 (1988): 516-38 (e-reserve).

Wed. 6 Feb. -- Captivity Narratives

Puritans Among the Indians: Mary Rowlandson (29-75); Quentin Stockwell (77-91); Hannah Swarton (145-158); and Hannah Dustan (159-65)

David D. Hall, chap. 1, "The Uses of Literacy," in Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989): 21-70 (e-reserve).

E. Jennifer Monaghan, "Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England" in Reading in America, ed. Cathy Davidson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1989), 53-81 (e-reserve)

Wed. 13 Feb. -- **The Novel in the Early Republic**

Rowson, Charlotte Temple

Cathy Davidson, chap. 3, "Ideology and Genre" (38-54) and chap. 4, "Literacy, Education and the Reader" (55-82) in Revolution and the Word (New York: Oxford UP, 1986) (e-reserve).

Wed. 20 Feb. – **Dime Novels**

Selections TBA from Aleman & Streeby, Empire and the Literature of Sensation

“Introduction” to Empire and the Literature of Sensation

Erin A. Smith, chap. 8, “Pulp Sensations,” in Cambridge Companion to Popular Fiction, ed. David Glover and Scott McCracken (New York: Cambridge UP, 2012): 141-58 (e-reserve)

Wed. 27 Feb. – **Sentimental Fiction**

Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin (chap. 1-20)

Wed. 6 Mar. – **Sentimental Fiction – ctd.**

Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin (finish)

Jane P. Tompkins, "Sentimental Power: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Politics of Literary History" in The New Feminist Criticism, ed. Elaine Showalter (NY: Pantheon, 1985): 81-104 (e-reserve).

Amy Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” American Literature 70.3 (1988): 581-606 (e-reserve).

Spring Break – No Class Wed. 13 Mar.

Wed. 20 Mar. -- **Slave Narratives / Conference Abstracts Due**

Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave

Dana Nelson Salvino, "The Word in Black and White: Ideologies of Race and Literacy in Antebellum America" in Reading in America, ed. Cathy Davidson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1989) 140-156 (e-reserve)

Wed. 27 Mar. -- **Slave Narratives – ctd.**

Crafts, Bondwoman's Narrative

Elizabeth McHenry, Introduction, "In Search of Black Readers" in Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies (Durham: Duke UP, 2002): 1-21 (e-reserve).

Wed. 3 Apr. -- **Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction**

Hammett, The Maltese Falcon

Erin A. Smith, chap. 2, "The Adman on the Shop Floor: Workers, Consumer Culture, and the Pulp" in Hard-Boiled: Working-Class Readers and Pulp Magazines (Temple UP, 2000): 43-73 (e-reserve).

Wed. 10 Apr. – **Christian Fiction**

Lahaye and Jenkins, Left Behind

Amy Johnson Frykholm, chap. 2, "Networks of Readers, Networks of Meaning" (39-66) and chap. 7, "Witness to the Apocalypse" (153-174) in Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America (New York: Oxford UP, 2004) (e-reserve).

Wed. 17 Apr. – **Oprah and Therapeutic Culture: The Addiction Memoir**

Frey, A Million Little Pieces

Ted Striphas, chap. 4, "Literature as Life on Oprah's Book Club," in The Late Age of Print: Everyday Book Culture from Consumerism to Control (New York: Columbia UP, 2009): 111-40 (e-reserve).

Timothy Aubry, chap. 4, "The Pain of Reading *A Million Little Pieces*," in Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle Class Americans (Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2011): 127-50 (e-reserve)

Wed. 24 Apr. – **Urban Fiction / Street Literature**

Souljah, The Coldest Winter Ever

Megan Sweeney, chap. 4, "Fear of Books: Reading Urban Fiction," in Reading Is My Window: Books and the Art of Reading in Women's Prisons (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2010): 140-72 (e-reserve).

Justin Gifford, chap. 6, "The Women of Street Literature: Contemporary Black Crime Fiction and the Rise of the Self-Publishing Marketplace," in Pimping Fictions: African-American Crime Literature and the Untold Story of Black Pulp Publishing (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2013): xx (e-reserve)

Wed. 1 May – Young Women and Romance

Meyer, Twilight

Tanya Erzen, chap. TBA in Fanpire: The Twilight Saga and the Women Who Love It (Boston : Beacon P, 2012): xx (e-reserve).

Janice Radway, chap. 4, "The Ideal Romance: The Promise of Patriarchy" in Reading the Romance (Chapel Hill: UNC P, 1991), 119-57 (e-reserve).

Wed. 8 May -- (2-5 p.m. -- Final Exam Period) Final Conference Presentation / Papers Due

Course Requirements

*seminar attendance, preparation and participation -- You are expected to come to class prepared for discussion. Your participation includes not only expressing your own ideas, but also the respect and seriousness with which you treat the ideas of your colleagues.

*class presentation -- You are responsible for getting discussion of the day's primary and secondary reading started once during the semester and facilitating (or co-facilitating) the class. Your job is to give us an overview of the scholarship and to identify the central questions/issues/concerns in it. Presentations will be **(MAX) 10 minutes** at the start of class, although discussion of questions may run much longer. **You will distribute to everyone a one-page hand-out you produce with bibliography, central themes, and 4-6 questions for us to address at the start of class.** Detailed handout available on e-learning.

*book review (3-5 pages) with 10 min. (MAX) oral presentation -- detailed handout and list of proposed titles available on e-learning

*Final Project – conference abstract, paper, and presentation. Detailed handout and sample abstracts available on e-learning.

*500-word abstract and brief bio. due Wed. 20 March
*final conference paper (20 min. formal presentation and 10-12-page paper) due
Wed. 8 May

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.