
4/2, Celebration of Literary Arts: Guest Lecturer

4/4, Read the background sections--"Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, 1940-1960" (1355-68), "The Black Arts Era, 1960-1975" (1831-50), "Literature Since 1975" (2127-39)--written by Gates and McKay as you complete this section, using the information in the overview to help you relate and analyze the material. Write in your journal about an idea that stands out to you as helping clarify something you did not understand or previously know about the black thought during the Civil Rights Movement.

4/4, Read Robert Hayden’s background (1516-8), “Those Winter Sundays” (1525), and “Frederick Douglass” (1528) and analyze their form (is it a ballad, sonnet, something else?), meter and rhyme. Then, trace one symbol through the piece, defining its literal and figurative meaning.

4/4, Read James Baldwin's background (1696-9) and “Sonny's Blues” (1728-50) and answer one of the following questions in an original posting:

A. Discuss the progression of plot in this story. Where does the exposition end and the rising action begin? Trace the rest of the parts of plot, supporting your reasons why the transitions occur in these spots around the protagonist and antagonist, so defining those two elements are crucial for the answer, too. You might begin this answer by stating something similar to "The protagonist is ______, and the central conflict revolves around ______. This means that the plot progression moves..." Do not use that sentence verbatim, but use the ideas to help you define elements of the literature.

B. Who is the narrator of the story? How do you know that? Discuss the point of view and perspective from which this story is described. Remember that you can find the terms narrator and point-of-view on Dr. Wheeler’s site.

C. What is the theme of "Sonny's Blues"? Ground your answer in the reading, offering at least two examples and analyzing those examples in relation to your theory of theme.

4/4, Read James Baldwin's "Stranger in the Village" (271-81) and answer one of the following questions in an original posting:

A. Baldwin states in Notes of a Native Son, "People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them." Write a posting in which you explain this quotation. Support your position with examples from history or from the literature.

B. Discuss the fact that the narrator is no longer in America and the reaction he receives from the villagers.

C. Comment upon the narrator's observations of the villagers being proud of buying Africans for the good of the church.

4/9, Read Ralph Ellison (1535-8) and the excerpts from The Invisible Man (1548-70). Write what you wish about the excerpt for the journal entry.
4/9, Read Gwendolyn Brooks' "the mother" (1625) and answer one of the following questions in an original posting:

A. Look up "speaker" on Dr. Wheeler’s site. Analyze who the speaker of the poem is and why that speaker is appropriate or not appropriate to relate the content.
B. What is the form of this poem? What is the rhyme scheme? What does his form and rhyme add to the reader's understanding of the poem?
C. What images appear repeatedly throughout the poem? Pick one, and describe its significance in the poem. Define the image in literal terms--what _____ means--and then define it figuratively--what _____ represents. Does the image always represent the same idea, or does that idea transform throughout the piece?

4/9, Gwendolyn Brooks' "The Lovers of the Poor" (1635-7) and answer one of the following questions in an original posting:

A. Look up "speaker" on Dr. Wheeler’s site. Analyze who the speaker of the poem is and why that speaker is appropriate or not appropriate to relate the content.
B. What images appear repeatedly throughout the poem? Pick one, and describe its significance in the poem. Define the image in literal terms--what _____ means--and then define it figuratively--what _____ represents. Does the image always represent the same idea, or does that idea transform throughout the piece?
C. What form does this poem take? Compare it to the forms discussed earlier in the semester.

4/11, Read Lorraine Hansberry's background (1768-1820), Act I-II of A Raisin in the Sun (1771-96), and answer one of the following questions:

A. Find a symbol in the play and trace its path through the piece. What kind of a symbol is it? What is its relevance to the overall story in the play here in Act I?
B. Study the characters to determine who is the protagonist and antagonist, looking up the definition of these words on Dr. Wheeler’s site. Use the central conflict of the play--what is the biggest issue and whose issue is it--to help you determine who the protagonist and antagonist are.
C. Look up information about American, Kenyan, and Nigerian civil rights movements during the 1950s and 1960s. What are the central issues of each movement? What are the similarities and differences? What successes are still seen today? What successes have yet to be seen?
D. Is this play an example of realism, naturalism, modernism, or another movement? Support that answer with evidence from the text as well as findings in Dr. Wheeler’s site, the Norton site, or Literary Reference Center Plus.

4/16, Read Act III of A Raisin in the Sun (1820-30) and answer one of the following questions:

A. Based upon the completion of the play, determine whom you believe the true protagonist and antagonist are. Support that claim by defining the height of conflict and resolution of the plot.
B. Does the symbol you classmates traced through the first two acts retain its literal and figurative meaning? What is its relevance to the overall plot now at the end?

4/18, Read Mari Evans’ background (1850) and study her poem “Status Symbol” (1851). Write what you wish about the poem for the journal entry.

4/18, Read Hoyt Fuller’s background (1852-3) and “Towards a Black Aesthetic” (1853-60). Write what you wish about the essay for the journal entry.
4/23, Read the introduction to the author Alice Walker (2425-7), her excerpt from *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens* (2430-7), “Women” (2427), and “‘Good Night, Willie Lee, I’ll See You in the Morning.’” Make a connection between the poems and a commentary from *In Search . . .* for the journal entry.

4/23, Read Alice Walker’s “Outcast” (2428) and analyze the comments she makes about Lester. Look up who Julius Lester is (his folktales are in the African American anthology I have on reserve in the library, but we have plenty in the library resources, too) and assess what and why she is telling him what she writes. Do you agree with her assessment and what she is telling him? Why or why not?

4/25, Read Audre Lorde’s background (1919-20), “Now That I Am Forever with Child” (1922-3), and “Poetry Is Not a Luxury” (1924-6). Write what you wish about the poem for the journal entry.

4/25, Read Nikki Giovanni’s background (2096), “Beautiful Black Men,” (2097-8), and “Nikki-Rosa” (2097). Write what you wish about the poem for the journal entry.

4/25, Read Toni Morrison’s background (2210-4), “The Site of Memory” (2290-9). Write what you wish about the essay for the journal entry.


Hayden, Robert. “Frederick Douglass” Gates and McKay 1528.


---. Excerpt from In Search of Our Mother's Gardens. Gates and McKay 2430-7
