

FIRST YEAR SEMINAR COURSE PROPOSAL
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit **FSEM 100 topics** courses for review **or any other existing course** that you wish to have designated to meet the first year seminar requirement.

COURSE NUMBER:	FSEM 100		
COURSE TITLE:	SEXUALITY IN SOUTHERN LITERATURE		
SUBMITTED BY:	Gary Richards	DATE:	September 9, 2008
<i>This course proposal has the department's approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)</i>			X

NOTE: Click on the link for “first year seminar” at www.jtmorello.org/gened to see the criteria used to evaluate courses proposed to meet the first year seminar requirement. See the report entitled “General Education Curriculum as Approved by the Faculty Senate” for additional details.

COURSE DESCRIPTION. In the space below, provide a one to two sentence description of this class. The description will be entered in Banner, and will also be used in other publications about the first year seminar program (such as the “Eagle Essentials” booklet).

This class surveys how recent southern literature depicts components of regionalized sexuality.

RATIONALE. Using only the space provided in the box below, **briefly** state why this course should be approved as a first year seminar course.

This course will: a) give first-year students a useful critical vocabulary about sexuality, a topic in which many of them have a keen interest but little experience in negotiating in an academic context; b) force students to see how regional and sexual identities are potentially mutually constitutive; c) complement the lived experiences of these students, who are frequently negotiating their sexualities and regional associations in new or newly complicated ways; d) introduce students to the ways that literature is a central cultural mode for handling the complexities of sexuality; e) expose students to a range of texts (critical essays, novels, short stories, plays, poems, movies) and the multiple ways in which they can be discussed; f) introduce students to scholarly resources pertinent to these discussions; and g) force students to express themselves through multiple oral and written articulations and therefore refine developing skills of communication.

SYLLABUS. Attach a course syllabus.

FSEM 100: Sexuality in Southern Literature
Gary Richards

Course Description:

This class surveys how recent southern literature depicts components of regionalized sexuality and addresses such topics as anxious heterosexuality, bestiality, eroticized cannibalism, incest, interracial desire, prostitution, rape, sadomasochism, and male and female same-sex desire.

Course Goals:

This course will: a) give first-year students a useful critical vocabulary about sexuality, a topic in which many of them have a keen interest but little experience in negotiating in an academic context; b) force students to see how regional and sexual identities are potentially mutually constitutive; c) complement the lived experiences of these students, who are frequently negotiating their sexualities and regional associations in new or newly complicated ways; d) introduce students to the ways that literature is a central cultural mode for handling the complexities of sexuality; e) expose students to a range of texts (critical essays, novels, short stories, plays, poems, movies) and the multiple ways in which they can be discussed; f) introduce students to scholarly resources pertinent to these discussions; and g) force students to express themselves through multiple oral and written articulations and therefore refine developing skills of communication.

Required Texts:

William Faulkner, *Sanctuary*
Richard Wright, *Uncle Tom's Children*
Eudora Welty, *A Curtain of Green and Other Stories*
Tennessee Williams, *Collected Stories*
_____, *Four Plays*
Randall Kenan, *A Visitation of Spirits*
Dorothy Allison, *Bastard out of Carolina*
Poppy Z. Brite, *Exquisite Corpse*
various handouts and Blackboard postings of poems and brief secondary readings

Student Requirements:

- **Participation (20%):** Students will actively read all assigned texts, attend classes regularly and promptly, and participate in daily discussions, whether in-class or on-line. The last includes regularly volunteering ideas, engaging with others' ideas, and perhaps even challenging those ideas while not dominating discussion or disrespecting the ideas of others.
- **Quizzes (10%):** Students will take six bi-weekly reading quizzes scheduled every other Wednesday covering all matter since the last quiz. These quizzes will be fifteen questions answerable in short responses.
- **Responses (20%):** Students will write four one-page typed responses that will address an issue deemed of interest in a text. Students are free to choose any four reading assignments so long as: a) two responses are written before midterm, and b) responses address at least three different authors. These responses will include clearly articulated thesis positions and ample textual evidence. A hard copy will be given to the professor and electronic versions distributed to all seminar participants.
- **Presentation (10%):** Students will make one five-minute formal presentation on an assigned element of sexuality (impotence, rape, prostitution, and so on, as listed on the syllabus below). This presentation will include a handout, distributed either in person or electronically, that features a definition of the element, a historicization of the element specifically within southern culture, and a bibliography of contemporary academic discussions of the element. Students are also urged to be creative in this presentation.
- **Project (20%):** Students will complete a term project that synthesizes secondary sources, close readings of two texts discussed in class, and lived experience and argues how a specific element of

sexuality circulates within southern culture. Students will present this project in two ways: a creative 15-minute presentation done in the last two weeks of class and a six-page essay that delineates the project's specific argument.

- **Final Examination** (20%): Students will complete a cumulative final examination covering the material addressed in class.

Week 1:

- M: **Introduction: Talking about Talking about Sexuality**
W: **Introduction: Talking about Talking about Sexuality** (*continued*)
• Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex"
F: **Strategies for Close Reading**

Week 2:

- M: **Strategies for Researching** (meet in Simpson Library)
W: **Impotence, Rape, and Prostitution**
Quiz #1
Histories and Definitions: Impotence _____
• William Faulkner, *Sanctuary* (1931) [3-52]
F: **Impotence, Rape, and Prostitution** (*continued*)
Histories and Definitions: Rape _____
• Faulkner, *Sanctuary* [53-98]

Week 3:

- M: **Impotence, Rape, and Prostitution** (*continued*)
Histories and Definitions: Prostitution _____
• Faulkner, *Sanctuary* [99-159]
W: **Impotence, Rape, and Prostitution** (*continued*)
• Faulkner, *Sanctuary* [160-241]
F: **Impotence, Rape, and Prostitution** (*continued*)
• Faulkner, *Sanctuary* [242-317]

Week 4:

- M: **Strategies for Writing**
W: **Interracial Desire and Anxious Male Heterosexuality**
Quiz #2
Histories and Definitions: Interracial Desire _____
• Richard Wright, "Big Boy Leaves Home" from *Uncle Tom's Children* (1938)
F: **Interracial Desire and Anxious Male Heterosexuality** (*continued*)
Histories and Definitions: Male Heterosexuality _____
• Wright, "Long Black Song" from *Uncle Tom's Children* (1938)

Week 5:

- M: **Anxious Female Heterosexuality**
Histories and Definitions: Female Heterosexuality _____
• Eudora Welty, "Lily Daw and the Three Ladies" from *A Curtain of Green and Other Stories* (1941)
W: **Anxious Female Heterosexuality** (*continued*)
• Welty, "Petrified Man" from *A Curtain of Green and Other Stories* (1941)
F: **Anxious Female Heterosexuality** (*continued*)
• Welty, "Why I Live at the P.O." from *A Curtain of Green and Other Stories* (1941)

Week 6:

- M: **Anxious Female Heterosexuality** (*continued*)
• Welty, "A Curtain of Green" from *A Curtain of Green and Other Stories* (1941)
W: **Male Same-Sex Desire, Sadomasochism, and Cannibalism**

Quiz #3

Histories and Definitions: Male Same-Sex Desire _____

- Tennessee Williams, "One Arm" (1948), "The Mysteries of the Joy Rio" (1954)

F: **Male Same-Sex Desire, Sadomasochism, and Cannibalism** (continued)

Histories and Definitions: Sadomasochism _____

- Williams, "Desire and the Black Masseur" (1948)

Week 7:

M: **Male Same-Sex Desire, Sadomasochism, and Cannibalism** (continued)

Histories and Definitions: Cannibalism _____

- Williams, *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958) [1-40]

W: **Male Same-Sex Desire, Sadomasochism, and Cannibalism** (continued)

- Williams, *Suddenly Last Summer* [41-93]

- Film: clips from *Suddenly Last Summer* (1959)

F: **Male Same-Sex Desire, Sadomasochism, and Cannibalism** (continued)

- Williams, "The Killer Chicken and the Closet Queen" (1978)

Week 8:

M: **Bestiality**

Histories and Definitions: Bestiality _____

- James Dickey, "The Sheep-Child" (1966)

W: **Homosociality, Anxious Male Heterosexuality, Situational Homosexuality, and Rape**

Quiz #4

Histories and Definitions: Homosociality _____

- Film: *Deliverance* (1972)

F: **Homosociality, Anxious Male Heterosexuality, Situational Homosexuality, and Rape** (continued)

Histories and Definitions: Situational Homosexuality _____

- Film: *Deliverance*

Week 9:

M: **Homosociality, Anxious Male Heterosexuality, Situational Homosexuality, and Rape** (continued)

- Film: *Deliverance*

W: **Interracial Male Same-Sex Desire**

Histories and Definitions: Interracial Male Same-Sex Desire _____

- Randall Kenan, *A Visitation of Spirits* (1989) [1-28]

F: **Interracial Male Same-Sex Desire** (continued)

- Kenan, *A Visitation of Spirits* [29-103]

Week 10:

M: **Interracial Male Same-Sex Desire** (continued)

- Kenan, *A Visitation of Spirits* [104-168]

W: **Interracial Male Same-Sex Desire** (continued)

Quiz #5

- Kenan, *A Visitation of Spirits* [168-257]

F: **Incest, Rape, and Female Same-Sex Desire**

Histories and Definitions: Incest _____

- Dorothy Allison, *Bastard out of Carolina* (1992) [1-70]

Week 11:

M: **Incest, Rape, and Female Same-Sex Desire** (continued)

Histories and Definitions: Female Same-Sex Desire _____

- Allison, *Bastard out of Carolina* [71-152]

W: **Incest, Rape, and Female Same-Sex Desire** (*continued*)

- Allison, *Bastard out of Carolina* [153-231]

F: **Incest, Rape, and Female Same-Sex Desire** (*continued*)

- Allison, *Bastard out of Carolina* [231-309]

Week 12:

M: **Interracial Male Same-Sex Desire, Sadomasochism, and Cannibalism**

- Poppy Z. Brite, *Exquisite Corpse* (1996) [1-79]

W: **Interracial Male Same-Sex Desire, Sadomasochism, and Cannibalism**

(*continued*)

Quiz #6

- Brite, *Exquisite Corpse* [80-159]

F: **Interracial Male Same-Sex Desire, Sadomasochism, and Cannibalism**

(*continued*)

- Brite, *Exquisite Corpse* [160-240]

Week 13:

M: **Student Projects**

W: **Student Projects**

F: **Student Projects**

Week 14:

M: **Student Projects**

W: **Student Projects**

F: **Summaries and Conclusions**

SUBMIT this form and attached syllabus electronically as one document to Warren Rochelle (wrochell@umw.edu) or Maya Mathur (mmathur@umw.edu). All submissions must be in electronic form.