

Grading Scale

Total Points	OU Grade	Equivalent grade
920-1000 =	4.0	A
900-919 =	3.7	A-
880-899=	3.3	B+
820-879=	3.0	B
800-819=	2.7	B-
780-799=	2.3	C+
720-779=	2.0	C
700-719=	1.7	C-
680-699=	1.3	D+
600-689=	1.0	D
599 or lower=	0.0	F

Attendance & Participation

Attendance and participation comprise 36% of your final grade, or 360 points. For this class, the grade will be dependent on regular attendance and participation in class discussions as well as the completion of occasional in-class writing assignments. **Four absences or more will reduce your participation grade by *at least* a full grade.**

I don't make distinctions between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. Every student gets three "freebies," which I strenuously suggest you save for the unavoidable car breakdown, personal illness, or family emergency. After those three, your participation grade starts dropping, first by thirty-six points, then in increments of ten per absence. Thus, a student with six absences would lose fifty-six points from their participation grade (this is really dangerous if you are not participatory in class—an earned C, with 265 points, would drop to 209 points, an F).

All assigned readings should be completed *before* setting foot in the classroom on the day they are listed on our reading schedule. I have very deliberately designed the class in order to enable you to re-read and reconsider passages as needed—most often, your weekly readings will amount to less than 60 pages. On days when there is especially light reading, you might reasonably read ahead in the class. I expect all students enrolled in the class to read deeply. A surface reading of the texts will, in all likelihood, result in a superficial grade in the course.

Our discussions will almost always include a close reading, sometimes of a passage that has been pre-circulated. Close reading is the act of performing a careful and sustained reading of a brief passage from a literary work. It is, quite simply, the cornerstone of literary analysis. Many of the specific moments that we will focus on in class will consist of close readings, and your ability to perform close readings will be an essential element of your participation and your annotation assignments. Moreover, the skills you practice in close reading should come to the fore in the term paper.

There will likely be sessions in which your comments and questions dominate the discussion. That is certainly my goal. It is thus imperative that you come to meetings having read and thought ahead toward possible topics of conversation. Flag passages that seem particularly evocative or confusing—even, or perhaps especially, if you're not sure what to say about them. All reading is mandatory. You **must bring your books to class**—neglecting to do so may negatively affect your participation grade. If we have Moodle readings, please print them or take out a book from the library. Reading on over the shoulder of a classmate is really problematic—it suggests to me that you have not prepared for the class, and will affect your grade.

I allow students latitude on their comments in discussion, as long as they adhere to the following guidelines: when possible, you should talk to each other, by name, and not simply to me (or the ceiling, or your books); you should aim always to back up your comments by referring to specific passages in the text; and you should feel free to question or contradict one another or the text or me, as long as you do it respectfully and with some backing other than personal opinion. Do note that while this class does focus on literary interpretation, all interpretations must be backed by evidence from the text. Mere opinion is never sufficient in this class.

Please note—if you merely attend class regularly and say nothing, your participation grade will likely be in the low C range (258-268 points). Only by regularly participating can you get a participation grade in the B or A range. I will let you know how you are doing with regard to participation after the first exam so that you may make necessary adjustments. Painfully shy students *do* have options to be a part of the conversation: feel free to e-mail me explicit questions the evening before a class session that I can use to jump start dormant discussions. I will say this, however: there are few careers in which the ability to speak to other people, interact, and make an argument or comment on the fly is not a valued skill. I'd prefer that you speak up in class. Finally, while e-mailing me questions is a substitute for class participation, it is *never* a substitute for attendance.

I do expect that cell phones be turned off and put away or, in the case of emergent situations, turned to “vibrate.” **I do not allow computer use in my classroom, including telephones with internet capabilities.** Students who need special consideration to use computers for note-taking must speak to me, and must also conform to the following requirements:

- 1) sit in the far back row of the classroom so that your classmates are not distracted by your computer
- 2) e-mail me the notes from class immediately after class ends (within 10 minutes of the session's conclusion).

I will request that students who do not comport to these requirements refrain from computer use.

Exams

There will be three exams designed to allow you to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the works we have read, appropriately linking that knowledge to specific themes from the lectures and

discussions, and identify similarities or differences between authors in the course. Exams are designed to test the content we cover *in class*, and the most successful students will address the issues covered during class time in their responses.

For the first exam, you will answer a combination of 5-7 identification questions, 8-10 multiple choice questions, and 3 short answer questions. The final exam will include an additional essay question, and will also include a take home comparative essay that you should expect to be 1-2 pages in length.

My policy on plagiarism and intellectual honesty is in full effect for exams. The first three exams will each make up 18% of your total grade (180 points each). The final essay will make up 10% of your total grade (100 points).

Extra Credit

Over the course of the semester, you will be given opportunities to earn extra credit for this class. Extra credit in my class is designed to allow you to practice skills that are important in the class, and which I feel will help you prepare for the exams or otherwise augment your learning experience. However, these are not free points. Extra credit is always assessed by me in the following way: a check-plus earns full offered credit; a check earns half offered credit; a check-minus earns one point; a zero earns no credit. The idea here is that students must do quality work in order to earn any credit at all, and going through the motions will often result in an outcome that does not boost your grade much, or at all. Doing the assignments in a slap-dash manner will not be rewarding intellectually—and will not be rewarded with very many points. If you feel that your best-effort work is being given check-minus grades, come see me; it may merely mean that you have misunderstood the assignment or my expectations for it.

Please note: **when you agree to turn in extra credit, my policy regarding plagiarism and intellectual honesty will be in effect**; using info from other sources without credit or cutting and pasting from other websites, if verified, will result in what might reasonably be described as an administrative smackdown: an F in the class, and academic probation at best. It's not worth it.

All extra credit annotations will have strictly enforced due dates; I will not accept them later than their due date.

Additional Items

Moodle Use

This course has an extensive website that I will use to post assignments, and make assigned and supplemental readings available. You may sign in to Moodle by directing your Firefox web browser to moodle.oakland.edu and then click on the link to our course.

In order to properly use Moodle, it is suggested you use Mozilla Firefox. You may download a free version of the browser at www.firefox.com. *In my experience, students who use a different browser (especially internet explorer) have a ton of trouble and cannot properly view the course website, thereby missing out on valuable communications, assignments, and class notes. It is your responsibility to upload assignments on time.*

Communication

The best way to reach me is via e-mail. Please allow me 48 hours to respond to your questions. **If you have questions about assignments, you must ask them at least forty-eight hours before that assignment is due.** I want to have time to actually think about my response and give you time to think about what I write and incorporate it into your work. Please try not to respond to group e-mails, since the OU e-mail system groups replies in specific ways that may result in my missing an e-mail.

I absolutely love it when students attend my office hours. In fact, I love it so much that I'm going to offer ten points of extra credit to anyone who stops by my office hours or makes an appointment to chat about *anything* before the midterm exam. *Please* contact me to sign up for a slot so that we can be guaranteed to have time to chat. Feel free to pop in when you'd like, too, but realize that I may have other students who have reserved time. If you cannot attend office hours at the posted times, please contact me; I'm generally willing to arrange to meet at other mutually convenient times.

Do note that because of the large number of students I work with each semester, I am unable to review drafts of assignments via e-mail. If you wish to discuss the extra credit assignments, or would like feedback, please make an appointment to speak with me.

Dropping/Adding

Beginning the first day of classes through the end of Late Registration, the signature of the faculty member is required to add all classes. The assignment of these students will be made in accordance with class enrollment capacities agreed upon by the department chair and the Registrar. If students drop classes through the end of the "no grade" drop period, their names will no longer appear on the class list. For students who drop classes after the "no grade" period until the last day of official withdrawal, a grade of "W" is assigned. The last day to add or drop classes at 100% tuition refund for full semester classes for the Fall 2018 semester is September 18, 2018. No adds after that day will be processed. Please refer to the OU website at http://www.oakland.edu/important_dates for other important dates this semester.

Students with Disabilities

Students who may require special considerations should make an appointment with campus Disability Support Services. Students should also bring their needs to my attention as soon as possible.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

Federal law, Title IX, and Oakland University policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and violence based on sex and gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation and retaliation). If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, and you are not ready or sure if you should report the behavior, you can confidentially receive appropriate advice and support at Graham Health Center, East Wing, 408 Meadow Brook Road, reachable at 248-370-3465. Counselors conducting therapy cannot contact authorities without student permission or the belief that there is an imminent threat of harm to self or others. If you are ready to officially report this behavior, you may report violations non-confidentially with the Dean of Students Office at 248-370-3350, or with the OU Police Department at 248-370-3331. Any other form of reporting—including in-class admissions, a report to an instructor during office hours or via e-mail, or even within student writing assignments—is non-confidential. I will seek to keep any information you share with me private to the greatest extent possible, but as a faculty member I have mandatory reporting responsibilities to share information regarding sexual misconduct and crimes I learn about to help make our campus a safer place for all.

Plagiarism & Intellectual Honesty

I have a zero tolerance policy toward plagiarism—documented plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and will forever ruin my good impression of you. If you are caught engaging in academic misconduct you will also deal with the dean as specified in the code of conduct. Even the appearance of such misconduct will be reported to the dean to examine—so be careful. Please see the academic misconduct policy as specified in the course catalog. (for a decent definition of plagiarism and examples of proper citation, see [<http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>]). **When in doubt, please feel free to run anything questionable by me. I'd rather take a minute to educate students than hours filling out paperwork for disciplinary action.**

The policy on intellectual honesty is in place for **exams, papers, annotations** and **all extra credit** assignments.

Reading Schedule

Thursday	September 6	Introduction, Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool," p. 309
Tuesday	September 11	NO CLASS
Thursday	September 13	Robert Hayden, "Middle Passage" pp. 167-172
Tuesday	September 18	Ralph Ellison, from <i>The Invisible Man</i> pp. 190-207
Thursday	September 20	Gwendolyn Brooks, all, pp. 306-316
Tuesday	September 25	NO CLASS
Thursday	September 27	James Baldwin, "Going to Meet the Man" pp. 392-404
Tuesday	October 2	NO CLASS
Thursday	October 4	August Wilson, <i>Fences</i> Act I pp. 921-948 Audre Lord, all, pp. 685-687
Tuesday	October 9	August Wilson, <i>Fences</i> Act II pp. 948-967 Lucille Clifton, all, pp. 695-699
Thursday	October 11	Toni Morrison, "Recitatif" pp. 607-620 Exam Review
Tuesday	October 16	Exam I Louise Glück, "A Fable" [MOODLE]
Thursday	October 18	Bernard Malamud, "The Magic Barrel," pp. 177-188 Adrienne Rich, "Yom Kippur 1984"
Tuesday	October 23	Philip Roth, "Defender of the Faith" pp. 644-665 Art Spiegelman, from <i>Maus</i> pp. 1050-1066
Thursday	October 25	Paula Vogel, <i>Indecent</i>
Tuesday	October 30	Paula Vogel, <i>Indecent</i>
Thursday	November 1	N. Scott Momaday, from <i>The Way to Rainy Mountain</i> pp. 674-684 Leslie Marmon Silko, "Lullaby" pp. 1042-1048

Tuesday	November 6	Simon Ortiz all, pp. 818-822 Joy Harjo, all, pp. 1068-1074
Thursday	November 8	Louise Erdrich, all, pp. 1110-1121
Tuesday	November 13	Exam II Gloria Anzaldúa, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” pp. 843-852
Thursday	November 15	Rudolfo Anaya, from <i>Bless Me Ultima</i> , “Dos” pp. 721-730 Gloria Anzaldúa, all, pp. 832-855
Tuesday	November 20	Sandra Cisneros, “Woman Hollering Creek,” pp. 1101-1108 Junot Díaz, “Drown” pp. 1208-1216
Thursday	November 22	NO CLASS
Tuesday	November 27	Maxine Hong Kingston, “No Name Woman” pp. 798-807 Li-Young Lee, all poetry, pp. 1122-1128
Thursday	November 29	Amy Tan, from <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> pp. 1091-1099 Hieu Minh Nguyen, “Outbound,” “Staying Quiet” [MOODLE]
Tuesday	December 4	Lawrence Joseph “Curriculum Vitae” [Moodle] Naomi Shihab Nye, “Blood” [Moodle] Hayan Charara, “Being Muslim” [Moodle] Fatimah Asghar, <i>from</i> “Oil,” [Moodle]
Thursday	December 6	Jhumpa Lahiri, “Sexy” pp. 1192-1207 Exam Review
Tuesday	December 11	8 AM-11 AM Final Exam