

PROSEMINAR: READING THE CITY (NEW ORLEANS)

AMST 401T

Spring 2008

Wednesdays 4:00-6:45; UH-333

Wayne Hobson

Office Hours (UH-415):

Mondays 1:00-3:00 & Wednesdays: 1:00-2:00

Phone & Voice Mail: (714) 278-3225

Email: hobson@fullerton.edu (Subject: AMST 401T)

Required Texts: (available at **Little Professor Book Center**, 725 Placentia Ave., Fullerton)

Tom Piazza, *Why New Orleans Matters*

John Miller and Genevieve Anderson, eds., *New Orleans Stories: Great Writers on the City*

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*

Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon, eds., *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*

James Gill, *Lords of Misrule: Mardi Gras and the Politics of Race in New Orleans*

About the course:

We will be studying the cultural life of a major American city as seen through its historical memory and self-image, its diverse racial, ethnic, and class life, and its artistic and expressive culture (literature, film, architecture, music, cuisine). The focus for spring 2008 is on New Orleans.

Assignments and Assessment:

This is a research proseminar. You are expected to read, reflect, discuss, write, and rewrite throughout the semester. The primary writing assignment is to prepare a substantial research paper. You will work on this assignment throughout the semester. In addition, there will be two in class midterm examinations. **Class attendance and participation are required** and will be important factors in your grade.

There will be a class Blackboard site that will contain explanations for all assignments.

Assessment in this course will gauge your ability to think critically, to use relevant bibliographic resources, to analyze primary documents for their meaning and secondary sources for their arguments and their methodology, to analyze and synthesize materials, and to create informed and thoughtful written and oral arguments which are clearly based on the evidence you have collected. You can expect to receive timely, constructive written comments on your work throughout the semester. The final grade in this course will utilize the +/- grading system.

Research Paper: The primary assignment in this course is to conduct focused research on a topic of your own choosing related to the general topic of the course. You will be asked to narrow your interests to a researchable topic, conduct library research on that topic, and then formulate a defensible cultural interpretation of the material you have researched. You will present that interpretation in a 15-20 page (4000-5000 words), fully documented paper due at the end of the semester. Your grade on this paper will represent 40% of your grade in the course. You can expect to get a lot of advice and encouragement, as well as a few cautions from me concerning your research project throughout the semester.

Research Paper Preliminary Assignments: There will be four required assignments leading up to the research paper:

Tentative Statement of Research Paper Topic due Feb. 13

Preliminary Bibliography due Feb. 27 (give your research group partners a copy)

Written Progress Report (5 pp.) due March 26 (give your research group partners a copy)

Oral Presentation of Research sign up for one of these dates: April 23, April 30, May 7, or May 14

Your **Research Paper** will be due Friday, May 16

"Incomplete" (I) final grades will be given only in exceptional cases, and only after you have discussed your situation with me and scheduled a completion date. The use of such an extension in completing coursework usually includes a 10% reduction-in-grade penalty on the late assignment.

In accordance with university and department policies, **graduate students** taking this course for study plan credit will be required to complete an additional assignment: a 5-page book review essay evaluating two recent scholarly books relevant to your research paper topic. This essay may be turned in any time during the semester, but no later than May 14.

Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated and will receive sanctions authorized by university policy. Plagiarism is defined as the act of taking the work of another and offering it as one's own without giving credit to that source. When sources are used in a paper, acknowledgment of the original author or source must be made through appropriate references. If you have any questions about what should be documented and how you should document, please ask me.

Assignments	Undergrads	Grad students	Grading Scale:
Research Paper	40%	40%	A= 90-100 A+ 96 A- 92
Research Paper Preliminaries	10%	10%	B = 80- 89 B+ 87 B- 82
Mid-term exam #1	15%	12.5%	C = 65- 79 C+ 77 C- 69
Mid-term exam #2	15%	12.5%	D = 50- 64 D+ 60 D- 54
Class Participation	20%	12.5%	
Grad Student Review Essay	-----	12.5%	

Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments:

Jan. 23 Introduction to Course Themes & Research Paper Assignment
 "When the Levees Broke" Act 1 (video shown in class)

HISTORICAL MEMORY AND SELF-IMAGE

Jan. 30 Katrina and Why New Orleans Matters
 Piazza, *Why New Orleans Matters*, entire
 "When the Levees Broke" Act 4 (video shown in class)

Feb. 6 Tourist New Orleans; Built Environment of New Orleans

Read/skim a New Orleans guidebook and visit at least one tourist-oriented Internet site about New Orleans -- come to class prepared to explain how these sources frame the city for the tourist; watch for silences as well as for what is emphasized
Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 1-18, 214-220 (Introduction & Epilogue)

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND CLASS**Feb. 13 Race & Ethnicity in 18th & Early 19th Century New Orleans: Indians, French, and Afro-Creoles**

Dumont, "Indian Trouble and Hangmen" in *New Orleans Stories*, 119-122

"The Exploration of Louisiana" in *New Orleans Stories*, 3-8

Hirsch & Logsdon, *Creole New Orleans*, 3-130 (chs. 1-2 + Pts. 1 & 2 Introductions)

Submit a tentative research topic by the beginning of class Feb. 13 (schedule conference with instructor before this date)

Feb. 20 Slavery, Race & Ethnicity in Antebellum New Orleans: Blacks, and "Americans"

Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 19-116 (chs. 1-3)

Hirsch & Logsdon, *Creole New Orleans*, 131-185 (ch. 4)

Gill, *The Lords of Misrule*, 27-58 (ch. 2)

Feb. 27 Race & Ethnicity in 19th & Early 20th Century New Orleans

Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 135-161, 189-213 (chs. 5 & 7)

Hirsch & Logsdon, *Creole New Orleans*, 189-261 (ch. 5 + Pt. 3 Introduction)

Gill, *The Lords of Misrule*, 59-108 (chs. 3-4)

Guest Lecture: "Creole and Cajun Cuisines"

Preliminary Bibliography due beginning of class, Feb. 27

March 5 New Orleans Cuisines and Their Cultural Significance

Research and prepare an "authentic" New Orleans, Creole, or Cajun dish. The class will meet at a location to be announced to consume the food we have prepared, listen to some good music, and discuss the cultural and personal significance/meaning of it all

Kein, "Louisiana Creole Food Culture: Afro-Caribbean Links" (available on Blackboard)

Conferences on Student Research Papers (scheduled individually during the week)

March 12 First Midterm Exam**March 19 Mardi Gras and the Cultural Politics of Race in Contemporary New Orleans**

Gill, *The Lords of Misrule*, 3-26, 193-282 (ch. 1, 10-14)

Hirsch & Logsdon, *Creole New Orleans*, 189-261 (ch. 6)

"Always for Pleasure" (video shown in class)

EXPRESSIVE CULTURE**March 26 The Big Easy: Authenticity and Image in the Story of Jazz**

Armstrong, "Growing Up in New Orleans" in *New Orleans Stories*, 23-38

Dos Passos, "Funiculi Funicula" in *New Orleans Stories*, 173-180

"Satchmo" (video shown in class)

Research Paper Progress Report due beginning of class March 26**April 2 SPRING BREAK****April 9 Voodoo Stories & Tennessee Williams's New Orleans**

Hurston, "Hoodoo" in *New Orleans Stories*, 57-66

Reed, "Mumbo Jumbo" in *New Orleans Stories*, 123-126

Saxon, "Gumbo Ya Ya Superstitions" in *New Orleans Stories*, 199-212

Williams, "A Streetcar Named Desire" in *New Orleans Stories*, 86-104

"A Streetcar Named Desire" (video shown in class)

April 16 Identity and Place in New Orleans Fiction

Anne Rice, "the Feast of Saints" in *New Orleans Stories*, 39-56

John Kennedy Toole, "A Confederacy of Dunces" in *New Orleans Stories*, 70-81

Walker Percy, "The Moviegoer" in *New Orleans Stories*, 9-22

Truman Capote, "Dazzle" in *New Orleans Stories*, 105-115

Ellen Gilchrist, "Rich" in *New Orleans Stories*, 134-154

**April 23 Second Midterm Examination
Student Presentations of Research Papers****April 30 Student Presentations of Research Papers****May 7 Student Presentations of Research Papers****May 14 Student Presentations of Research Papers (class meets 5:00-6:50)****Research Paper Final Draft due May 16**