Course: Advanced Elective Seminar
Topic: African American Literature – Octavia E. Butler's *Wild Seed*

IN 807-909 (E1: 25175)
IN 807-910 (E2: 25176)

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Research Seminar is required to register.

Instructor: Deborah W. Holton, Ph.D., MFA
dholton@depaul.edu (preferred communication)
Office: 312-362-8595

All appointments are by arrangement, either in person or conference call. Feel free to send an email or discuss in class your meeting preferences.

Course Dates: Tuesdays, 5:45 – 9 PM, January 2 – March 13, 2018

Course Location: TBA

Course Description

The best of writers, Octavia E. Butler among them, draw inspiration from topics that are of interest to them rooted in their own tacit and explicit knowledge. In other words, an author conducts her own brand of research that coalesces into a particular fictional work. Zora Neale Hurston said it well: “Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose. It is a seeking that he who wishes may know the cosmic secrets of the world and that they dwell therein.”

Scholars attend to the analysis of a text by looking at what the writer has created from within the academic disciplines in which they work. How does approaching the text from various contexts and disciplines enhance our reading of an author's fiction? When does an author incorporate or diverge from them? In this course, we will learn how to “poke and pry” for deeper meanings informed by various academic disciplines and contexts.

Through an integrative exploration of a selected author’s work, such as that of researcher, folklorist, creative writer Zora Neale Hurston or science fiction and speculative fiction writer Octavia Butler, students will analyze the complexity of the writer’s gaze in view of particular disciplines within the liberal learning categories. Students will articulate their heightened awareness of the author’s creative choices in response to issues within disciplinary contexts, noting the boundaries or limitations of such knowledge. Active participation in learning activities that include reading, discussion, research, writing, and presentation will enhance the learning experience and our learning environment. Developing competence in integrative thinking is the primary learning outcome in this advanced course.

In other words, the Advanced Elective Seminar is designed to permit students to explore a topic as a group integrating various methods of inquiry and satisfy the Advanced Elective competencies: E1, E2. Our specific topic, assessment and evaluation criteria as well as learning activities will be centered on Butler’s novel, *Wild Seed*.

Learning Competences and Outcomes

E1: Can explain a topic of interest generated from direct engagement with a fictional text from at least two academic disciplines within the liberal learning categories.

1. Can identify a research topic derived from direct engagement with a primary fictional text;
2. Can use integrative knowledge principles to investigate the chosen topic from two academic disciplines within the liberal learning categories;
3. Can evaluate the two major academic disciplines in terms of their limitations and potential as they apply to the primary text;

E2: Can apply knowledge from two or more academic disciplines within the liberal learning categories to the interpretation of a fictional text and synthesize one’s findings for an audience.

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1. Can investigate an author’s ideas and perspectives on her or his own work as they apply to one’s research topic; 
2. Can compare scholarship about one’s topic relative to each chosen academic discipline; 
3. Can analyze, drawing from 1 and 2 above, the author’s use of knowledge from one or more academic disciplines in the creation of a fictional world; 
4. Can present to an audience a synthesis of one’s research that includes a discussion of the value of integrative knowledge and its application to actual situations.

Learning Strategies & Resources

Lecture and discussions; in-class and independent readings; research; in-class listening; in-class and independent writing; and, student presentations will support the learning outcomes.

Articles will be available either as links in D2L or in E-Reserves: www.lib.depaul.edu. Additional or substitute readings may be assigned in class.

Required reading

Books


Be advised: Octavia E. Butler’s Wild Seed speculates on events that are rooted in history within a fictional world. It does so in ways that are provocative, adult, and disturbing. It addresses moral themes that question societal norms and expectations. You are encouraged to “suspend your disbelief and judgment,” so that you may investigate the fictional world the author has created as well as the themes and issues she presents within it.

Articles


Media

Interview with Octavia Butler, Part 2: https://youtu.be/W1W9CNwl2e8

Recommended


Evidence to Submit

10/09/17
See also Academic Integrity and Plagiarism policies below.

Your final grade is based upon the successful and timely completion of all assignments and learning activities:

- Active participation in classroom discussions and activities;
- Learning journals (8 entries total), 500-700 words each entry.
- Two essays, 5-6 pages each, based on scholarly research.
- One annotated bibliography, documenting scholarly engagement across the liberal arts disciplines.
- Final presentation (posted in Digication; and, presented in class)

Learning activities

- Reading of assigned primary and secondary texts;
- Active participation in all class discussions and activities. Students will each lead one or more discussions centered on ongoing research and topics of interest;
- Journal writing: students will keep a typed journal (500-700 words per week) that specifically documents their engagement with the assigned texts. Journals will include emerging topics of interest for exploration from at least two academic disciplines within the liberal learning categories. Journals will serve as documentation of sustained engagement, reflections on in-class activities, questions and responses to ongoing research, and one’s changing perspectives based on new learning. Students may be asked to share excerpts in class. Journals will be collected weekly.
- Two 5-6 page formal essays, following MLA style
  - Students will conduct scholarly research to evaluate two or more academic disciplines, with creative writing being one of the two, in terms of the discipline’s limitations and potential in application to the primary text.
  - Students will conduct scholarly research to support their analysis of the author’s use of one or more academic disciplines in the creation of a fictional world.
- One annotated bibliography that documents the quality and quantity of scholarly investigation across the liberal arts disciplines relative to the course topic.
- Final presentation: a synthesis of one’s research and a discussion of how that research has deepened an understanding of the text as well as how integrative thinking can apply to actual situations. Students should include their analytical methodology. They are encouraged to demonstrate the complexity of their learning with charts, concept maps, posters, or other appropriate visual materials. All presentations will be posted to Digication for final evaluation.

Assessment of Student Learning

The Advanced Elective is a graded course, although students may request the Pass/Fail option according to the policy below. All students are expected to show that they have read the texts provided, that they comprehend them, and that they are thinking critically about them, including their potential applications and implications beyond the classroom, and do so to communicate with all members of the class.

Assignments in this course will be graded based on both your ability and willingness to actively participate in discussions and in-class activities. Points will be taken off for tardiness. Your
grade will also include your timely submission of written work that reflects both quality and quantity.

Your final grade will be based on the successful completion of your writing assignments, class activities, class participation, and final presentation. Each competence will be graded based on the requirements for the competence. **Prerequisites for the course are successful completion of Research Seminar competencies.**

As you demonstrate your learning, essential is a mindfulness of others as you “share space and time” in discussions and activities. In other words, let the Golden Rule be your guide, “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

**Course Requirement Grading Weights**

All written work must be submitted to the D2L Submissions box. Detailed instructions and guidelines will be provided in class. See also the Checklists below. The following is an overview of assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class participation</th>
<th>50%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active participation</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead ongoing-research topic related discussion (in consultation with instructor)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Final presentation</td>
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**Written Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written Assignments</th>
<th>50%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly learning journals: (8 total, 5% each entry)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Final paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated bibliography</td>
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**General Assessment Criteria for All Writing Assignments**

*All writing assignments are expected to conform to basic college-level standards of mechanics and presentation, which means all written assignments must be typed.* Generally, written work will be evaluated as follows:

| A = | work of high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; reflects a clearly identifiable thesis and argument that demonstrates cogent and creative development and support of idea. |
| B = | work of good quality; reflects clearly organized and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; presents substantive thesis and argument with evident development and support of ideas. |
| C = | work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas but develops argument in superficial or simplistic manner; may only address part of the assignment or be otherwise incomplete |
| D = | work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment; demonstrates poor organization of ideas, grammar, and spelling; |
treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic; may indicate that student has not attended to reading assignments thoroughly.

## Course Grading Scale

Although this course will use a checklist instead of numeric grading, you may find helpful the scale below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A = 95 to 100</th>
<th>A- = 91 to 94</th>
<th>B+ = 88 to 90</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85 to 87</td>
<td>B- = 81 to 84</td>
<td>C+ = 77 to 80</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 to 76</td>
<td>C- = 69 to 72</td>
<td>D+ = 65 to 68</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>61 to 64</td>
<td>F = 60 or below</td>
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## Late Submissions

This course will demand a significant investment of your time and energy. Readings will include sections from various texts, along with selections from the DePaul's eReserve site and other resources. In discussions, you will be asked to reflect upon readings and course exercises. You will also write formal and informal papers, plans and assessment documents.

Some assignments will require research. All assignments, however, are designed based on your attention to the learning activities and exercises that precede them. It is, therefore, essential that you read the materials associated with each assignment thoroughly and carefully.

If you are unable to complete an assignment by the established deadline, you should contact me immediately for guidance on how to proceed. The expectation of receiving satisfactory credit, beyond quality and quantity, on any course deliverable (discussions, assignments, assessments, etc.) depends on timely submission. Exceptions to this policy will be considered only in cases involving extreme circumstances (emergencies) in which you have notified me. Remember: timely feedback requires a timely submission. I will deduct points for late work, and I reserve the right to refuse late submissions. **You are responsible for meeting all deadlines.**

Also, see Incomplete policy below.

## Pass/Fail Grading Options

For SNL students, competencies awarded for prior learning or in the Lifelong Learning Domain do not count towards the twenty credit hours limit on the pass/fail option. In addition, SNL students can select this option for most SNL courses. SNL students must notify faculty prior to the end of the second week of the course for which the pass-fail is requested. If the course is passed, the credit hours earned are entered on the student’s record; the grade is not included in computing the grade point average. If the course is failed, the F grade is recorded on the record and the credit hours attempted are included in computing the grade point average. For Lifelong Learning Domain courses that provide a grading option, students must notify faculty prior to the end of the second week of the course they are requesting that option.
Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is subject to change prior to the second week of the course, or as class needs indicate. Significant changes will be discussed in class and with student consensus approval. See Policies below.

Note: All assignments are due the week and day that they are listed in the Submissions box. Assignments after the Grace Period will not be accepted.

Session 1
Octavia Butler – Integrative Thinker
  Introduction
  Syllabus
  Class structure

Students: Sign up to lead a discussion about the novel and your particular area of interest (confirmed Session 3)

Due Next Session: Assignments

- Reading
  - Read the novel for enjoyment. Circle (in pencil) unfamiliar words. Write their definitions in the margins (in pencil)
  - Read the introductory biography in Contemporary Literature Criticism
  - Read the Afterword by Govan (see E-Reserves)
  - Read Martin
  - Come prepared to discuss each article in class, as stand alone exemplars of integrative thinking, and as they inform our understanding of the novel.

Texts
- Butler, Wild Seed
- Govan “Afterword” Wild Seed (2001 edition)
- Martin, Becoming an Integrative Thinker
- Contemporary Literature Criticism Online: Octavia E. Butler, An Introduction (available via DePaul Library database: Literature)

- Journal entry #1
  - After completing the novel, write your initial response to the text. What engaged you most? What questions do you have? What themes or issues does she address that intrigued you?
  - After reading the introductory biography or the Afterword, comment on what you’ve learned and how it has informed your initial reading of the novel
  - Provide page citations when you refer to any text, including the novel
  - Comment on Martin’s article and its potential applications in life. “Speculate” on how reading a text from multiple angles can help you practice integrative thinking.

- Digication setup
  - Create your ePortfolio page for the course if you already have a Digication account. If not, log in and create one.
Session 2  
Octavia Butler – Creative Writer

Shared agreements  
Integrative thinking - overview  
Octavia E. Butler - creative writer

Due Next Session: Assignments

• Reading
  o Read the novel again, this time noting themes, issues, ideas, and topics that you’d like to investigate further. For example, when and where does she illuminate religion? Note the page numbers in the margins.
  o Read at least one of the assigned texts, plus review your notes and D2L documents regarding creative writing
  o Come prepared to discuss them in class, as stand alone exemplars of integrative thinking, and as they informed your reading of the novel.
  o Study the maps in “The Transatlantic Slave Trade.” Be prepared to discuss how it can inform our reading of the novel.
  o Remember, Essay #1 due Session 5

Texts
  • Butler, Wild Seed
  • Dubey, “Enslavement”
  • Thaler, “The Meaning of the Past”
  • Govan, “Homage to Tradition”
  • Eltis, David, The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment (Wrenn maps)

• Journal entry #2
  o Review your notations in the text. What themes, topics, issues, etc. are resonating most for you? Write about your interest and how the novel “sparks” it. What possible topics are you thinking you’d like to research based on your “second read”?
  o Comment on what you’ve learned from your chosen article, and the texts on creative writing, as they each pertain to Butler’s work.
  o Discuss in what ways Butler has or has not adhered to the conventions of a) creative writing; b) fiction; and c) science fiction.
  o Assess your potential use of the articles as a resource for your own research.

Session 3  
Disciplinary Underpinnings - History

Historical perspectives

Due Next Session: Assignments

• Reading
  o Read at least two of the assigned texts
  o Come prepared to discuss them in class, as stand alone exemplars of integrative thinking, and as they informed your reading of the novel.
  o Remember, Essay #1 due Session 5

Texts
• Butler, *Wild Seed*
• Joo
• Harris
• Wood

**Journal entry #3**
- Review your notations in the novel. What themes, topics, issues, etc. are resonating most for you? Write about your interest and how the novel “sparks” it. What possible topics are you thinking you’d like to research based on your “second read”?
- Review your class notes about Creative Writing and the author’s
- Comment on what you’ve learned about the novel from the articles, and the discipline in which the author is writing
- Assess your potential use of the article as a resource for your own research.

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**Session 4**
**Disciplinary Underpinnings – Literature**

Literary Criticism – Views from multiple angles

**Due Next Session: Assignments**

**Reading**
- Read two or more assigned articles
- Come prepared to discuss them in class, as stand-alone exemplars of integrative thinking, and as they informed your reading of the novel.

**Texts**
- Butler, *Wild Seed*
- Hampton
- (Barr) Dubey, “Becoming Animal”
- Bollinger

**Essay #1 Note:** *To complete this assignment additional scholarly research is expected.* 5-6 pages, not including Works Cited

Potential research topics as they pertain to the novel are not limited to:
- History (a topic in)
- Science (a topic in)
- Speculative fiction
- Science fiction
- Literary traditions
- Religion
- Dyslexia and the Writer
- Women’s issues (a topic in)
- Mythology, superstition, and folk practices
- An approved topic in consultation with your instructor

- Evaluate the boundaries of creative writing and one other academic discipline.
  - What can we learn about society, humanity, the individual, etc. through this discipline?
What research methods are employed? How do we demonstrate our knowledge?

What are the discipline’s limitations? What can’t we learn or know?

What are some common vocabularies used when writing and/or studying within this discipline?

How does Butler draw from these two disciplines in service of telling the story, Wild Seed?

Session 5
Disciplinary Underpinnings – Science

Discussion leaders present preliminary research reports and lead discussions for class consideration (60 minutes each) (topics TBD. We’ll discuss presentation guidelines in class).

Due Next Session: Assignments

- **Reading**
  - Read all of the assigned texts
  - Come prepared to discuss them in class, as stand-alone exemplars of integrative thinking, and as they informed your reading of the novel.

- **Texts**
  - (Jackson & Moody-Freeman) Gibney in *The Black Imagination: Science Fiction, Feminism, and Blackness*
  - Rose, Interview with Octavia Butler, Part 2: [https://youtu.be/W1W9CNwl2e8](https://youtu.be/W1W9CNwl2e8)

- **Journal entry #4**
  - Review your notations in the novel. What themes, topics, issues, etc. are resonating most for you?
  - Propose your research topic. What discipline or disciplines, in addition to creative writing, will you investigate? See Paper #2 below.
  - Comment on what you’ve learned about the novel from the interviews. What has the author said that further informs your topic of interest, your understanding, and appreciation for the creative writing process, or both? What types of questions does the interviewer ask, and what disciplinary thought do the questions reflect?
  - Assess your potential use of the interview as a resource for your own research.

Session 6
The Author Speaks

Discussion leaders present preliminary research reports and lead discussions for class consideration (60 minutes each) (topics TBD. We’ll discuss presentation guidelines in class).

Due Next Session: Assignments

- **Reading**
  - Read each of the assigned articles
  - Come prepared to discuss them in class, as stand alone exemplars of integrative thinking, and as they informed your reading of the novel.

- **Texts**
• Butler, *Black Scholar* Interview with Frances M. Beal (Literature Criticism Online)
• (Francis) Balagun, “Interviewing the Oracle”
• **Annotated bibliography**, draft (submit to D2L for feedback)

• **Journal entry #5**
  o Review your notations in the novel. What themes, topics, issues, etc. are resonating most for you?
  o Propose your research topic. What discipline or disciplines, in addition to creative writing, will you investigate? See Paper #2 below.
  o Comment on what you’ve learned about the novel from the interviews. What has the author said that further informs your topic of interest, your understanding, and appreciation for the creative writing process, or both? What types of questions does the interviewer ask, and what disciplinary thought do the questions reflect?
  o Assess your potential use of the interviews as a resource for your own research.

**Session 7**
**Integrating Knowledge in a Fictional World**

Discussion leaders present preliminary research reports and lead discussions for class consideration (60 minutes each) (topics TBD. We’ll discuss presentation guidelines in class).

**Due Next Session: Assignments**

• **Reading**
  o Read at least two of the assigned articles, plus
  o **Read Martin**
  o Come prepared to discuss them in class, as stand alone exemplars of integrative thinking, and as they informed your reading of the novel.
  o Remember, Essay #2 due Session 10

• **Texts**
  • Martin, Ch. 5: “Mapping the Mind”
  • Denman
  • Holton
  • Alaimo

• **Journal entry #6**
  o Review your notations in the novel. What themes, topics, issues, etc. are resonating most for you?
  o Propose your research topic. What discipline or disciplines, in addition to creative writing, will you investigate? See Paper #2 below.
  o Comment on what you’ve learned about the novel from the articles. What has the author said that further informs your topic of interest, your understanding, and appreciation for the creative writing process, or both? What types of questions does the interviewer ask, and what disciplinary thought do the questions reflect?
  o Assess your potential use of the interview as a resource for your own research.

**Session 8**
**Integrating Knowledge into a Fictional World, cont.**
Discussion leaders present preliminary research reports and lead discussions for class consideration (60 minutes each) (topics TBD. We’ll discuss presentation guidelines in class).

Due Next Session: Assignments

- **Reading**
  - Continue your library research
  - Review the novel as it can informs your final assignments
  - Read all reviews of *Wild Seed*, and study them for your journal assignment (see below)
  - Remember, Essay #2 due Session 10

- **Texts**
  - Butler, *Wild Seed*
  - Lynn, Elizabeth A. Review of *Wild Seed*. Contemporary Literature Criticism Online: Octavia E. Butler (available via DePaul Library database: Literature)
  - Easton, Tom. Review of *Wild Seed*. Contemporary Literature Criticism Online: Octavia E. Butler (available via DePaul Library database: Literature)

- **Journal entry #7**
  - Imagine that you are asked to write a review of the novel from the perspective of integrating knowledge, featuring creative writing and your chosen academic discipline.
  - Write your own review from the perspective of “integrating knowledge,” and illuminate what you believe are the most important ideas that your audience should know about the text.
  - Provide examples in the text to illustrate your points.

Session 9
Integrating Knowledge into a Fictional World, cont.

Integrative thinking in the fictional world

Due Next Session: Assignments

- **Digication Presentation – Your (approved) Topic of Interest**
  - Integrates at least two disciplines (Creative Writing + another) to understand and analyze themes, issues, or ideas illuminated in Butler’s *Wild Seed*. Reference pages must accompany any brief quotes from the text. See the Digication template for e-portfolio organization.

- **Journal entry #8**
  - Review your journal entries (1-7). Summarize your learning about the novel, the author, the texts, as well as integrative thinking as a way of investigating an issue, topic, or problem.
  - Discuss your success and challenges in the class. What are you especially proud of?

- **Essay #2** Note: *To complete this assignment additional library research is expected. 5-6 pages, not including Works Cited*
Potential research topics as they pertain to the novel are not limited to:

• History (a topic in)
• Science (a topic in)
• Speculative fiction
• Science fiction
• Literary traditions
• Religion
• Dyslexia and the Writer
• Women’s issues (a topic in)
• Mythology, superstition, and folk practices
• An approved topic in consultation with your instructor

- Analyze *Wild Seed* in terms of one or more academic disciplines, with particular focus on a topic of interest.
  - Why is this topic of interest to you?
  - Describe your analytical process.
  - How does the author integrate the disciplines that you’ve selected?
  - Describe your research, its scope, and your findings. What have you discovered?
  - In what ways has your research enriched or informed your appreciation for writing in general, Butler and/or the novel in particular?
  - Discuss the ways your attention to integrative thinking can support your learning in the future.

**Session 10**
**Synthesis – Presentations & Closing discussion; CELEBRATION!**

- **Presentations** (Digication – guidelines provided in class)

- **Annotated bibliography**

**Texts**
- Butler, *Wild Seed*
- All additional sources related to your presentations

**Session 11**
**Octavia Butler’s *Wild Seed* Surveying the Fictional World** – Individual Meetings, as needed

**Assignments**
- Presentations, cont. as needed
- Individual consultations as needed
Course Policies

SNL Attendance Policy

Attendance is both mandatory and essential in SNL courses. Students and faculty are expected to arrive on time, and to actively participate in every scheduled class session. Specific course policies may be listed in the course syllabus. Acceptance of the syllabus indicates agreement to policies outlined in that document.

Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Students who miss class due to illness or other significant personal circumstance are required to complete the Absence Notification Process through the Dean of Students Office (DePaul Center #1100) in order to have their absence excused. Two absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure of the course.

Missing class makes assessment a difficult process; students who miss any class work are subject to a grade reduction. Students who miss more than 10% of any given course are subject to failure. This means that if you miss participating in more than two classes you may not have met the requirements for a passing grade. For example, missing one all-day (two sessions) class (9 am – 4 pm) = 20%. It is within your instructor’s right to fail you—just so you know.

Your instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are small group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact your instructor immediately.

Time Management and Attendance

SNL's courses, be they on-ground or online, are not self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter. You are required to prepare assignments as well as prepare for discussions.

You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.
Your Instructor's Role

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not your instructor's responsibility to make sure you participate regularly and submit your assignments. You will receive feedback on written assignments submitted on time.

Your Role as a Student

As a student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning. You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

Please also note that this is a course offered by DePaul University's School for New Learning (SNL), a college for undergraduate and graduate degree-seeking students 24 years and older. SNL welcomes the perspectives and encourages the participation of all DePaul students, and students who take this course should respect and be mindful of SNL's mission in supporting a diverse and inclusive environment. More information about SNL can be found here.

Late Submissions

This course will demand a significant investment of your time and energy. Readings will include sections from various texts, along with selections from the DePaul's eReserve site and other resources. In discussions, you will be asked to reflect upon readings and course exercises. You will also write formal and informal papers, plans and assessment documents.

Some assignments will require research. All assignments, however, are designed based on your attention to the learning activities and exercises that precede them. It is, therefore, essential that you read the materials associated with each assignment thoroughly and carefully.

If you are unable to complete an assignment by the established deadline, you should contact me immediately for guidance on how to proceed. The expectation of receiving satisfactory credit, beyond quality and quantity, on any course deliverable (discussions, assignments, assessments, etc.) depends on timely submission. Exceptions to this policy will be considered only in cases involving extreme circumstances (emergencies) in which you have notified me. Remember: timely feedback requires a timely submission. I will deduct points for late work, and I reserve the right to refuse late submissions. You are responsible for meeting all deadlines.

Attitude

A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measureable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: taking issue with discussion points out of context due to tardiness; unwillingness to participate in class activities; talking to others when your instructor is speaking; mocking another's opinion; cell phones ringing; emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer when not requested specifically by your instructor. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. Your instructor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.
Civil Discourse

DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be Socially Responsible Leaders. It is the expectation that all dialogue (discussions, informal interactions, one-on-one meetings, etc.) associated with this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of all participants--each student and your instructor. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. Your instructor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

Course Netiquette

Class discussions, both online and on-ground, are an important part of your overall academic experience. To ensure a positive learning environment, please follow the following minimum expectations. Use your common sense, as not all situations can be covered:

- Be polite
- Respect other participants’ views or opinions
- Think before you write or speak, and ask yourself if you would say the same thing in person
- Use positive phrases (i.e., "Good idea!" or "Thanks for the suggestions," etc.)
- Be sensitive to cultural differences
- Avoid hostile, curt or sarcastic comments
- No objectionable, sexist, or racist language will be tolerated
- Create a positive community, both on-ground and online, by offering assistance and support to other participants.
- Use correct grammar and syntax at all times

Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the discussed topic; use the rubric provided in class to self-assess the quality of your participation. Participation allows your instructor to “hear” each student’s voice when grading papers. Secondly, your instructor will call upon students so that they may offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the readings to participate in class discussions and activities.

Phone/Fax/Email Etiquette

Emails: Feel free to email questions to me through D2L. Be as comprehensive in your message as possible, and provide your student identification number and other pertinent information. To practice safe emailing, please include in your subject line: Advanced Elective. If you send me a message through D2L, I should get it without difficulty. Messages without this subject heading may be considered spam and the DePaul system may not deliver it.

Phone: Email is my preferred means of communication, but sometimes it’s necessary to reach me by phone. Please be kind. Speak clearly, leave a detailed message and phone number, speaking S-L-O-W-L-Y, twice. If you don’t leave a phone number, I’ll assume you don’t want me to return your call. I’ll return your call as soon as possible, usually within 48 hours during the business week.
Attached Assignment, Faxes, and D2L: Please do not attach documents to email messages unless previously arranged. Upload all assignments to D2L Submissions.

Cell Phones/On Call:

If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. If you need to answer a call during class, leave the room in an undisruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and your instructor, texting is never allowed in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise your instructor at the start of the course.

Syllabus changes

A revised syllabus will be posted during the first meeting week of the course. Students will be notified of any minor changes or updates to it thereafter via communication tools within Desire 2 Learn (D2L). Any significant changes to it will be discussed in class and with student consensus approval.

University-wide policies

This course includes and adheres to the college and university policies described in the links below:

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Incomplete Policy
- Course Withdrawal Timelines and Grade/Fee Consequences
- Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability
- Protection of Human Research Participants

Course Resources

Writing Assignments

*This course will follow the MLA citation format. All writing assignments are expected to conform to basic college-level standards of mechanics and presentation.*

- For help with organizing your ideas, grammar, citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, sample SNL assignments and much, much more, see the SNL Writing Guide, linked below.

- Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your assignments for this course or any others. You may schedule appointments (30 or 50 minutes) on an as-needed or weekly basis, scheduling up to 3 hours worth of appointments per week. Online services include Feedback—by—Email and IM conferencing (with or without a webcam). All writing center services are *free.*
Writing Center tutors are specially selected and trained graduate and undergraduate students who can help you at almost any stage of your writing. They will not do your work for you, but they can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts, and polish your writing. They can answer questions about grammar, mechanics, different kinds of writing styles, and documentation formats. They also can answer questions and provide feedback online, through IM/webcam chats and email.

Obviously, the tutors won’t necessarily be familiar with every class or subject, but they are able to provide valuable help from the perspective of an interested and careful reader as well as a serious and experienced student-writer.

Schedule your appointments with enough time to think about and use the feedback you’ll receive. To schedule a Face-to-Face, Written Feedback by Email, or Online Appointment, visit www.depaul.edu/writing.

University Center for Writing-based Learning
SNL Writing Guide
Dean of Students Office

**Instructor Brief Bio**

Deborah Wood Holton is an associate professor at DePaul University’s School for New Learning (SNL). She received her BFA in Theatre and Drama with an emphasis in playwriting from Howard University; her MA in English with a concentration in African and African American literature from Atlanta University; and, her Ph.D. in American Theatre Studies from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, with joint foci in Literature, History, Criticism, and Theory and African American History; and, Scene Design and Art History. While Holton’s scholarly work explores a range of topics such as African American culture and literature, her own creative endeavors re-envisions African and women-centered folklore, myth and culture. A fiction writer and poet, Holton holds a Creative Writing MFA from Solstice at Pine Manor College. Her creative work and critical essays have appeared *Essence, Jump Up and Say, the Eugene O’Neill Review, Staging Difference, Black Theatre, and Adult Education and Theological Interpretations* among other collections. A Black Earth Institute Fellow Emeritus, she is a recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute Fellowship on the Black Aesthetic (2014). She has taught courses on Zora Neale Hurston at SNL over the years as well as at Chicago’s Newberry Library. Holton’s own speculative fiction novel that draws from ancient Egyptian mythology and the Black Aesthetic, “The Amen Prophecy,” is currently in progress. “Little Sparrow,” a short story developed from that work, appeared in *Heart of the Sun: An Anthology in Exaltation of Sekhmet* (2011). A recent publication, “Musings on Octavia Butler’s *Parable of the Sower*,” in *About Place*, a literary online journal (2014), reflects a merging of Holton’s ongoing Butler research and her NEH work on the Black Aesthetic.