ARLT 100g: Reading "Black Love"

Fall 2014 Lecture 35226R T/TH 11-12:20PM THH 215

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Office Hours: T/TH 10-10:50AM; also by appt. You can also contact me Monday-Friday via email.

Required Texts:

1. Gwaltney, John Langston. 1993. Drylongso: A Self Portrait of Black America. New York: The New Press.

- 2. Hurston, Zora Neale. 1990 [1935]. Mules and Men. New York: HarperCollins.
- 3. Hurston, Zora Neale. 1998 [1937]. Their Eyes Were Watching God; with a foreword by Mary Helen Washington. New York: HarperCollins.
- 4. Hurston, Zora Neale. 2006 [1943]. Dust Tracks on a Road: An Autobiography. New York: Harper Perennial.

Optional Texts:

- 5. Gregory, Dick. 1995 [1964]. Nigger: An Autobiography, with Robert Lipsyte. New York: Pocket Books.
- 6. Zinsser, William. 2001. On Writing Well (6th Edition). New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

NOTE: All texts are on reserve in Leavey Library.

Course Description: What is love, let alone "Black" love? Can love be qualified in relationship to race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. and their many intersections? What broader stakes (e.g., intellectual, personal, political) underlie the scholarly quest to understand "Black love"? This inaugural course interrogates these questions through a close and passionate reading of Zora Neale Hurston's canonical texts, *Mules and Men*, Their Eyes Were Watching God (TEWWG), and Dust Tracks on a Road: An Autobiography. At once known then lost in literary obscurity, Hurston was found again – first by African American author Alice Walker and later by Oprah Winfrey, who famously brought TEWWG to the big screen. Hurston's story about "black love" in TEWWG was a bit before its time; it sought and, arguably, still seeks to radicalize the ways we think about Black gender role expectations, social class, and racial inequality in relationship to various indices of love (e.g., intimacy, desire, communion) and "not-love" (e.g., lust, control, domination, sexual violence). We will interrogate these works and the extent of Hurston's intervention by first situating her as ethnographer/writer via a close reading of Mules and Men. We will then read TEWWG, a seminal text of the Harlem Renaissance, along with Hurston's autobiography, Dust Tracks on a Road. Along the way, we will routinely ask "where is the love"? We will also investigate interdisciplinary theories of race, gender, sexuality, humor, and "love" that will ultimately help us understand Hurston and her texts anew. Our primary objective will be to "read" deeply within and beyond Hurston's texts for insights into what it means to love and be loved, see and be seen, know and be known in regard to that most mysterious category – love – ever-complicated (still) by our focus on race. We will employ the tools of literary, social, and visual analysis to unpack the sensorial (e.g., tactile, aural, visual), representational, and affective dimensions of "Black love." We will also "queer" heteronormative understandings of "Black love" in the context of Hurston's work and life, as well as the present day, by unpacking notions of gender and authenticity; namely, we will ask what does it mean to be a "real" Black man and woman and what defines "real" "Black" "love"? At the end of our time together, we will gain a scholarly appreciation for Hurston (as an author) and TEWWG as a teachable-text concerning the affective (e.g., felt), intersubjective, and politically fraught nature of "Black love."

Learning Objectives:

ARLT 100g aims to:

- (a) cultivate skills in reading and analyzing literature and qualitative and multi-disciplinary research concerning race, gender, sexuality, authenticity, and "love"
- (b) increase understandings of the cultural complexities and moral stakes of racial, gendered, etc. authenticity and intimacy as it plays out in peoples' everyday lives
- (c) help students translate their own findings/discoveries concerning matters of race, gender, class, authenticity, "love" and their many intersections using close and critical readings/literary analysis and interdisciplinary qualitative analysis

Accordingly, you will have ample opportunity to critically engage several books, chapters, poems, articles, films, and music clips via critical readings, in-class presentations, and critical dialogue. This course will afford an opportunity to better understand the affective, political, and intellectual complexities of "Black love." You will also gain insight into the political stakes of this very category, from past to present, through close readings (i.e., careful and sustained interpretation of a passage of text).

Grading: There will be a <u>midterm</u> and <u>final</u> exam covering assigned readings, films, audio-visual clips, and guest speakers. The midterm and final are worth 30% (30 points) and, thus, 60% (60 points) of your overall grade. Each of the exams will include short-answer and essay questions and will be non-cumulative. In addition, 10% (10 points) of your grade will be determined by your <u>class participation</u>. As such, you are strongly encouraged to be punctual and stay abreast of assigned readings so that you are adequately prepared to participate in class discussions. The remaining 30% (25 points) of your grade will be determined by a <u>5-7 page essay</u> (excluding bibliography of 3-5 sources) examining a Hurstonian-informed "Black love" story/text (e.g., Dick Gregory's (1964) autobiography, *Nigger*), film (e.g., *Love Jones, Waiting to Exhale, Think Like a Man*), song(s), poem, image(s), etc. The paper will be due in my mailbox in the Anthropology Department in KAP 352 by 5PM on **Thursday, November 13th**. (Do <u>not</u> email papers.) All essays **must adhere** to the following format: double-spaced, 12 point-font, 1" top, bottom, right, and left margins, pages numbered consecutively in upper right hand corner. (Additional guidelines for papers will be posted in Blackboard.) A total of 4 extra-credit points can be earned on the midterm and final exam via a two-point bonus questions based primarily on "optional" readings. The grading scale is as follows:

Grading Scale:

$$94-100 = A$$
 $87-89 = B+$ $77-79 = C+$ $67-69 = D+$ $\ge 59 = F$
 $90-93 = A 84-86 = B$ $74-76 = C$ $64-66 = D$
 $80-83 = B 70-73 = C 60-63 = D-$

GRADE BASIS

Midterm: 30% Essay: 30% Final Exam: 30% Participation: 10%

An Official Note on Examinations: Make-up exams will only be given under extraordinary circumstances and will require documentation from a physician. The content and form of any make-up exam will be at my discretion. In any case, you should inform me via email or phone <u>prior</u> to missing an exam. If you feel you must reschedule an exam on account of having (a) two additional exams scheduled at the same time or (b) three exams in a 24-hour period, inform me *at least* two weeks prior to our scheduled mid-term. The final exam **must** be taken at the time noted below. Also, late essays will only be accepted in exceptional cases and will be deducted a minimum of 3 points.

Attendance: A grading percentage will not be given for lecture attendance. However, consistent and punctual attendance in seminar is strongly encouraged to increase your understanding of course materials. Your record of attendance may also be considered in the case of borderline grades. It is ultimately *your* responsibility to be aware of class lectures and assignments. Should sickness, family emergencies, or other events necessitate your absence from class, please consult your peers or Blackboard for lecture notes.

Class Dynamics: Class meetings will consist of lecture and discussion, with a clear emphasis on the latter. As such, it is essential that you keep up with the weekly readings and that you submit assignments on time. I also welcome you to actively participate in class by asking questions and sharing your perspectives and personal experiences as they relate to the course in a critical and collegial manner.

Class Resources: Resources for this course are available through Blackboard. Consult ARLT 100g in Blackboard for access to the course syllabus, grades, essay guidelines, announcements, mock essay and short answer questions, exam study guides, and other helpful information. The optional readings for this course are also highly recommended. Zinsser's accessible and extremely helpful book (*On Writing Well*) is useful for further honing your writing skills. Consider adding this text to your library and read it at your leisure. Gregory's autobiography (*Nigger*) is but one of several texts concerning "Black love" that you will have the option of analyzing this term.

Students with Disabilities: Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability should register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when necessary documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible, preferably by or before fifth week. DSP is located in Student Union (STU) 201 and is open from 8:30AM-5PM, Monday through Friday. Their contact information is as follows: 213-740-0776 (Phone), 213-740- 6948 (TDD Only), 213-740-8216 (Fax); Email: ability@usc.edu; and Webpage:

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html

Academic Integrity: USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General Principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, The Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/ Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: http://usc.edu/studentaffaris/SJACS/ Information **USC** on intellectual property at is available at: http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html

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READING & EXAM SCHEDULE*

COURSE INTRODUCTION, SITUATING ZORA NEALE HURSTON

Week 1: COURSE INTRODUCTION

8/25 8/27 • Walker: Looking for Zora [in RDR] -

To access articles in Reader (RDR), go to Blackboard, click on "Course Documents." Then click on "Course Resources" and THEN click on "Reader." Readings are listed alphabetically by author's last

- Film: Zora Neale Hurston: A Heart with Room for Every Joy (2005; 42 minutes)
- AFRICAN AMERICAN ETHNOGRAPHY/FOLKLORE

Week 2: 9/2 No Class

9/4

- Hurston: How It Feels to Be Colored Me [in RDR]
- Hurston: Court Order Can't Make the Races Mix [in RDR]
- Gwaltney: Introduction; A Nation within a Nation [in <u>Drylongso</u>]
- Jacobs-Huey: The Natives are Gazing and Talking Back [Optional; in RDR]

Washington: Introduction – Zora Neale Hurston, A Woman in Half Shadow [in RDR]

• Film: The Deadly Deception (1993; 60 minutes)

Week 3: THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION AND MULES & MEN

9/9 9/11

- Boyd: Mules, Men, and Maroons [in RDR]
- Boyd: A Glance from God [in RDR]
- Hurston: Mules & Men Part I
- Reviews, Mules & Men [1935] [in RDR]
- Film/Clips: To Be Announced (TBA)

Week 4: FOLKTALES, THE "DOZENS, AND WIT-LARGE IN MULES & MEN

9/16 9/18

- Gwaltney: More than Mere Survival [Optional; in <u>Drylongso</u>]
- Hughes: Jokes Negroes Tell on Themselves [in RDR]
- Jacobs-Huey: Introduction, From the Kitchen to the Parlor [Optional; in RDR]
- Jacobs-Huey: Gender, Authenticity, and Hair in AfAm Stand-up Comedy [in RDR]
- Film: Why We Laugh: Black Comedians on Black Comedy (2009; 95 minutes)

EXCAVATING "BLACK LOVE" IN ZORA NEALE HURSTON'S SEMINAL TEXT (TEWWG)

Week 5: READING "BLACK LOVE": THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD (1937)

9/23

• Hurston: Their Eyes Were Watching God

9/25

- Reviews, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* [1937] [in RDR]
- Walker: Zora Neale Hurston's TEWWG: Black Novel of Sexism [Optional: in RDR]
- Wolff: Listening and Living: Reading and Experience in *TEWWG* [in RDR]

Week 6:

SCREENING "BLACK LOVE": THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD (2005)

9/30

• Marks: Sex, Violence, and Organic Consciousness in ZNH's TEWWG [in RDR]

10/2 Midterm

- Washington: "I Love the Way Janie Left Her Husbands": Emergent Female Hero [in RDR]
- Willis: Wandering: Hurston's Search for Self and Method [in RDR]
- Film: Their Eyes Were Watching God (2005; 113 minutes)

EXAMINING HURSTONIAN IMPERATIVES IN THE PRESENT

Week 7:

"BE REAL BLACK FOR ME": THE POLITICS OF RACIAL AUTHENTICITY

10/7 10/9

- Hathaway: The Unbearable Weight of Authenticity in Zora Neale Hurston's *TEWWG* and a Theory of "Touristic Reading" [in RDR]
- Kelley: Notes on Deconstructing "The Folk" [in RDR]
- Film/Clips: Black Is ... Black Ain't (1994; 87 minutes)

Week 8: "Who do you Love?": Hair, Skin Color, and other Markers of Lovability

• Gwaltney: The Many Shades of Black [in <u>Drylongso</u>]

Jacobs-Huey: Constructing and Contesting Knowledge in Women's Cross-Cultural

Hair Testimonies [in RDR]

• Films/Clips: A Question of Color (1993; 57 minutes); additional clips TBA

Week 9: [BUT WAIT...] "WHAT IS LOVE?": SCHOLARS WEIGH IN ON THE QUESTION

• Blum: Love Studies: Or, Liberating Love [in RDR]

• Kipnis: Adultery [in RDR]

• Kipnis: Will Love Endure [Optional; in RDR]

• Lindholm: Romantic Love and Anthropology [in RDR]

• Film/Clips: Alice Walker Talks About Self Perception and Love in Zora Neale Hurston's Work: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFW1CQSjWaA

Week 10: "DEEPER": QUEERING BLACK LOVE

• Abdur-Rahman: "The Strangest Freaks of Despotism": Queer Sexuality in Antebellum African American Slave Narratives [Optional; in RDR]

• Holland: (Queer) (Black) Love [in RDR]

• Ford: What's Queer about Race [in RDR]

• McDonald: Queering Whiteness: The Peculiar Case of the Women's National Basketball Association [Optional; in RDR]

• Film/Clips: *Killer of Sheep (1979; 83 minutes)*

Week 11: "TOUGH" [BLACK] LOVE - OR DISCIPLINING BLACK LOVE

• Banks: Beyond Race [in RDR]

• Clarke: Introduction: Inequality – What's Love Got to Do with It? [in RDR]

• Harvey: Our Love Is Not Like Your Love [in RDR]

• Films/Clips: *TBA*

Week 12: "RESPECT YOURSELF": INTERROGATING THE POLITICS OF RESPECTABILITY

• Harris: The Rise of Respectability Politics [in RDR]

• Paisley: Gatekeeping and Remaking: The Politics of Respectability in African American Women's History and Black Feminism [in RDR]

Rose: Introduction and Epilogue of Longing to Tell [Optional; in RDR]

• Smith: Michelle, Beyoncé, and the Fruitless Politics of Respectability [in RDR]

• Films/Clips: TBA

Essays Due on Thursday, November 13th by 5PM in Jacobs' Mailbox in ANTH DEPT- KAP 352

REVISITING ZORA: IN HER OWN WORDS

Week 13: READING DUST TRACKS ON A ROAD

11/18 11/20

Hurston: <u>Dust Tracks on a Road</u>

• Lionnet-McCumber: Autoethnography: The An-Archic Style of *Dust Tracks on a Road* [in RDR]

• Reviews, Dust Tracks on a Road [1942] [in RDR]

Week 14: REFLECT ON BLACK LOVE

• No class this week

11/27

11/13

Week 15:

"WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?" - REVISIONING "BLACK LOVE"

12/2

12/4 No Class

- Jones & Shorter-Gooden: Forging a Delicate Balance: Romance and Relationships Between Black Women and Men [in RDR]
- hooks: Our Right to Love [in RDR]
- hooks: For Women Only: Lesbian Love [in RDR]

FINAL EXAM (TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16TH, 8-10AM in THH 215)

*NOTE: Reading & Film List Subject to Change

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY (Books in Bold)

- Abdur-Rahman, Aliyyah I. 2006. "The Strangest Freaks of Despotism": Queer Sexuality in Antebellum African American Slave Narratives. African American Review 40(2): 223-237.
- Banks, Ralph Richard. Beyond Race. *In* Is Marriage For White People: How the African American Marriage Decline Affects Everyone (170-182). New York: Plume.
- Batker, Carol. 1998. "Love Me Like I Like To Be: The Sexual Politics of Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, The Classic Blues, and the Black Women's Club Movement. *African American Review* 32(2): 199-213.
- Boyd, Valerie. 2003. Mules, Men, and Maroons. *In* Wrapped In Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston (280-294). New York: Scribner.
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- Hamilton, Amy. 1993. Black Intellectual Life: bell hooks and Cornel West Break Bread. Off Our Backs [Breaking Bread: African-American Women and Men in Revolution], 23(7): 1-3.
- Harris, Fredrick C. 2014. The Rise of Respectability Politics. Dissent 61(1): 33-37.
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- hooks, bell. 2002. For Women Only: Lesbian Love. *In* Communion: The Female Search for Love (193-205). New York: William Morrow.
- hooks, bell. 2000. Mutuality: The Heart of Love. *In* All About Love: New Visions (145-165). New York: William Morrow & Company.
- hooks, bell. 2000. Romance: Sweet Love. *In* All About Love: New Visions (167-188). New York: William Morrow & Company.

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- Hurston, Zora Neale. 1990 [1935]. Mules and Men. New York: HarperCollins.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. 1998 [1937]. Their Eyes Were Watching God; with a foreword by Mary Helen Washington. New York: HarperCollins.
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- Washington, Mary Helen. 1979. Introduction, Zora Neale Hurston: A Woman in Half Shadow. *In A.* Walker (Ed.) I Love Myself When I am Laughing ...And Then Again When I Am Looking Mean and Impressive (7-25). New York: The Feminist Press.
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SUGGESTED FURTHER READING:

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