

Growing Up Girl: Bildungsroman in the African Diaspora

English 200, Section 4



Required texts:

Dangarembga, Tsitsi. *Nervous Conditions*

Kincaid, Jamaica. *Annie John*

Levy, Andrea. *Never Far from Nowhere**

MLA Handbook, 7th edition

other readings available on Sakai

* This text is out of print and while students are encouraged to purchase it through used book retailers, a photocopied version will be available on Sakai which you will be required to bring to class

Dr. A. Lockridge ~ alockrid@allegheny.edu ~ Oddfellows 217 ~ Office Hours: M/W 12:15- 2:15, Th. 2:45- 3:45

Course Overview:

This course is an introduction to literary fiction and literary theory. For many of you this course will also be an introduction to literature by and about people of African descent. While the focus of this class will be to think, read and write about fiction, the focus of your intense gaze will be fiction written by Black women in the African Diaspora. The novels selected for this course: *Nervous Conditions*, *Annie John* and *Never Far From Nowhere* feature young Black girls coming of age while living in various parts of the African Diaspora. In this course we will examine cross-continental and cross-cultural experiences, and determine to what extent the protagonists' subject positions play a role in their development as young Black women.

Course Policies:

1. Attendance Policy:

You are allowed two absences without question. Your final grade will be reduced by three percentage points (3%) for each additional absence.

2. *Reading*: Consistent, active reading is a requirement of this course. You will be expected to complete an aggressive reading schedule. If you do not have the time to devote to the course readings, I urge you to register for the class when your schedule permits. Texts are to be completed by the date assigned in the weekly syllabus and students are expected to bring the appropriate books/handouts/materials to class with them. Students who do not bring them will be asked to retrieve materials and return to class. Too many of these incidents will detrimentally affect your final grade. In addition, students who are unprepared for class discussion may be asked to leave and marked absent for the day.

3. *Sakai Quizzes*: There will be a reading quiz posted to Sakai every Saturday afternoon which will be due Monday at 10am. You will have a set amount of time to complete the quiz and will not be allowed to return to past questions or resubmit your quiz for any reason. Think carefully about your answers. Always complete course readings before taking the quiz. Also, please note that while you are being given the privilege of taking quizzes at your leisure, on an honor system. Dishonesty of any sort will be dealt with harshly. Under no circumstances will make-up quizzes be granted; failure to complete your quiz, for any reason, will result in a grade of zero. Your two lowest grades will be dropped as compensation.

4. *Class Participation*: Active participation is a necessary aspect of successful learning and will be rewarded in this class. My goal here is to stimulate intellectual engagement and the ability to make critical, relevant and thoughtful commentary ensures that you are indeed thinking critically. In order that everyone is able to mutually benefit from participation in discussions, please observe the following guidelines and grading criteria.

A participation is marked by its active nature, its consistency, and its quality. An **A** participant doesn't wait to respond to questions that the instructor poses but initiates discussion by coming prepared with questions, ideas, observations from the reading assigned that day. This participant will also be consistently engaged in class discussion, always letting me know that she/he has engaged the reading thoroughly and thoughtfully. Finally an **A** participant will not try to substitute **quantity** of participation for **quality** (being consistent is not the same thing as dominating a discussion). To earn the highest grade for your participation, you will want to make it possible for others to participate productively too (this is not a competition); thus, habits such as interrupting others and taking up too much conversational space will negatively affect your grade. It will also do you no good to participate if you haven't done the reading. I expect participation to be firmly grounded in careful and thoughtful reading.

A **B** discussant is less consistent than an **A** discussant in initiating discussion but is active in responding to questions or problems posed by the professor and other students. To get a **B** in participation, you will need to be in class and talk regularly-- more, certainly, than once during a class session once a week or so. Regular means regular. This level of class participation will also communicate clearly to me that you have done all the reading for the day and that you have done it thoughtfully. This level will also include productive discussion habits, such as engaging the ideas of others, not dominating, listening carefully, etc.

A **C** grade for participation means that you have contributed in an average way to the discussion. Your contributions have been less frequent than those of the **B** discussant or have made clear that you are not always keeping up with the reading. This is also the grade given for a discussant who constantly interrupts good discussion or attempts to dominate the discussion. In short, you have not been silent or absent or altogether uninvolved, but your involvement did not work consistently to make the class a productive learning experience.

A **D** grade means that you were there physically most of the time and maybe even piped up three or four times during the semester but that's it. It's just the grade it should be--a minimal passing grade.

An **F** grade should need no explanation and yet, this is the grade you will earn should your attendance be spotty and/or you consistently refuse to contribute to class discussions.

5. *Critical Essays*: There will be three short essays of 1000 – 1250 words (about three to four pages). The topics will be provided up to two weeks before the essay is due. Essays are to be carefully typed, edited and submitted **via Sakai only**. Essays not turned in on time will be downgraded a full letter grade for each day the paper is late. (Absence on the day a paper is due does not excuse any student from submitting the paper on time and as such the same rules apply.) After one week the paper will no longer be accepted and a grade of "F" and a score of zero will be recorded for the assignment.

6. *Plagiarism and the Honor Code*: Plagiarism is another word for stealing. When you plagiarize you directly or indirectly use the ideas and/or language of another person or persons without acknowledgement and claim these words and ideas as your own. Not only is it a serious offense and grounds for academic expulsion, it is also against the law. You are plagiarizing if you do any or all of the following, though please keep in mind that these are not the only ways to plagiarize: 1) Use others' words directly without proper citation and quotations, 2) Use others' ideas and wording so closely (paraphrasing) that you are essentially quoting them without proper acknowledgement, 3) re-use assignments not written for this class and pretend that they are written for this class, 4) Borrow, buy, steal, download (you get the idea) others' essays, ideas, words, language, etc. and pass them off as your own. Please consult an MLA handbook, at any time, if you have citation and documentation questions. Should I suspect any act of plagiarism, I will immediately report it to the Honor Committee and recommend that the student fail the course.

7. *Grading Structure:* Your grade will be assessed based on the following coursework:

- ✓ Sakai Quizzes 15%
- ✓ Class Participation 15%
- ✓ Essays (3) 70%

Grading Scale:			
94- 100	A	79- 77	C+
90- 93	A-	76-74	C
89- 87	B+	73- 70	C-
86- 84	B	69- 65	D
83- 80	B-	64- 0	F

*** All coursework must be submitted in order to complete this course successfully.**

8. *Extra Credit:* You eligible to earn up 15 extra points added to your **quiz average** throughout the semester by attending and submitting one page critiques of the events listed below. Each event has an assigned point value.

Date	Event	Location	Time	Points
1/25	Performance: Pistols and Prayers	Quigley Auditorium	11am	3
2/2	Black Studies Film #1	Carnegie 212	6:30pm	3
2/7	Keynote Lecture: Witnesses of History: Why We Are Not a Post-Racial Society	Campus Center 301/302	6:30pm	5
2/9	Black Studies Film #2	Carnegie 212	6:30pm	3
2/16	Black Studies Film #3	Carnegie 212	6:30pm	3
2/21	Lecture: American Ghost Dance: 21 st Century Nativism and the Battle to Maintain White Exceptionalism	Campus Center 301/302	6:30pm	5
2/23	Black Studies Film #4	Carnegie 212	6:30pm	3

9. *Office Hours:* A number of hours are set aside each week when I am available to meet with you individually in my office. Students are **strongly** urged to seek (and keep) appointments during those hours. While obviously, this is not required, having an appointment will assure that you skip ahead of the line that is invariably at my door each semester. These meetings are designed to assist you with course material or to provide guidance regarding essay writing in this class. To be clear, I **do not** read essay drafts but am happy to discuss essay ideas. For these types of meetings be sure to bring with you a complete outline and a number of possible theses. In general, the more specific your requests and questions, the more likely I am to be able to assist you.

10. *Other Information:*

- Student emails will receive a response within 2 business days.
- Students are held responsible for their behavior and are expected to be respectful to their fellow classmates.
- Turn cell phones off or on silent during class. If a cell phone rings during class, I will answer it.
- The schedule is subject to change as the semester progresses.

****Please Note:**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning challenge that may impact your ability to carry out assigned course work, I strongly urge you to contact John Mangine, the Director of Student Support Services, in the Pelletier Library at (814) 332-2898 or john.mangine@allegheny.edu. John Mangine and the staff at the Learning Commons will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is confidential.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

(subject to change at professor's discretion)

Wednesday	1/19	Requirements and Expectations
Monday	1/24	"Why Twelve Stories" (Sakai) & Process Writing
Wednesday	1/26	"In this Country", "Somebody Else" & "Why Don't You Just Stop Talking"(Sakai)
Monday	1/31	<i>Never Far from Nowhere</i> —p82 (Sakai)
Wednesday	2/2	<i>Never Far from Nowhere</i> —p143 (Sakai)
Monday	2/7	<i>Never Far from Nowhere</i> —p211 (Sakai)
Wednesday	2/9	<i>Never Far from Nowhere</i> —to end (Sakai)
Monday	2/14	...But I have nothing say: Coming up with a Thesis- Lecture Demonstration
Wednesday	2/16	What Goes Where: Putting Your Essay Together- Lecture Demonstration
Monday	2/21	"Girl" (Sakai), "Dutty Tough"
Wednesday	2/23	<i>Life and Debt</i> (film)
Monday	3/1	<i>Life and Debt</i> (film) Essay # 1 Due
Wednesday	3/3	<i>Annie John</i> , Chapters 1 & 2
Monday	3/7	<i>Annie John</i> , Chapters 3- 6
Wednesday	3/9	<i>Annie John</i> - to end
Monday	3/14	"How do I know I'm done?": Paragraph Construction- Lecture Demonstration
Wednesday	3/16	Rhythm in your Sentences: Sentences 1.0- Lecture Demonstration

Spring Break March 19th – March 26th

Monday	3/28	<i>Rain</i> (film)
Wednesday	3/30	<i>Rain</i> (film) Essay #2 Due
Monday	4/4	<i>Nervous Conditions</i> , Chapters 1- 4
Wednesday	4/6	<i>Nervous Conditions</i> , Chapters 5- 8
Monday	4/12	<i>Nervous Conditions</i> , Chapters 9,10 & Interview w. author
Wednesday	4/14	"That Thing around Your Neck" (Sakai)
Monday	4/19	Revision: Re-seeing your Subject- Lecture Demonstration
Wednesday	4/21	Sentences 2.0- Lecture Demonstration
Monday	4/26	"Drinking Coffee Elsewhere" & "Geese" (Sakai) Essay #3 Due
Wednesday	4/28	<i>Sakai Gunn Project</i> (film)
Monday	5/3	Muddying the Waters: Reflection as Part of the Process