



English 190 William Faulkner

Spring 2012
Section 00
MWF 9-9:50 a.m.
Oddfellows 221
faulknersouth.blogspot.com

Prof. Jeremy Wells
jwells@allegheny.edu
Office: Oddfellows 235
Office hours: M 11-2:30; Th 8:30-11 or by appt.
Office phone: x4322

I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and that I would never live long enough to exhaust it, and that by sublimating the actual into the apocryphal I would have complete liberty to use whatever talent I might have to its absolute top. It opened up a gold mine of other people, so I created a cosmos of my own.

— Faulkner, from a 1956 interview published in *The Paris Review*

This course will explore the writings of William Faulkner, the Mississippi-born novelist whose experimentations in form and subject matter made him among the most influential American authors of the early twentieth century, especially to those who would later write about the South and the problems of race in U.S. history. Our goals in this course will be several. Above all, we will work to become adept readers of Faulkner's fiction, which is no small goal, given its formal and thematic complexities. We will also engage questions of place, concentrating on the Yoknapatawpha County novels and how, in them, Faulkner "created a cosmos of [his] own," one in which he could explore the intersections of much larger social and historical forces. We will place Faulkner's fiction in multiple historical contexts, examining what they reveal about a Depression-era South still recovering from slavery and the Civil War even as it found itself on the verge of modernization, industrialization, and the emergence of the modern Civil Rights movement. We will also think about the novels in terms of Faulkner's own life and his reception among subsequent generations of literary critics.

Texts I have ordered the Vintage International editions of all novels. If you own another edition of any text and wish to use it, this should not be a problem. Check with me if you have any questions.

The Sound and the Fury (1929)

Light in August (1932)

Absalom, Absalom! (1936)

The Unvanquished (1938)

Go Down, Moses (1942)

Occasional shorter texts made available via Sakai

Optional: David Minter, *William Faulkner: His Life and Work* (1980/1997)

Learning outcomes The course description above outlines the major learning outcomes specific to English 190. Since the course is being offered as a corequisite with History 259, "The History of the American South," the following learning outcomes will characterize the two courses together:

1. Students will approach history and literature from an interdisciplinary point of view, understanding that this enriches our understanding of the subjects.
2. Students will actively engage in class discussion on Integration Days, which will deal with the intersections of history and literature.
3. Students will write argument-driven interdisciplinary essays based on appropriate sources.

Course schedule Tentative and subject to change

- 1/18 **Introduction to English 190 and History 259**
1/19 Introduction to the History of the American South
1/20 **“That Evening Sun” (Sakai)**

- 1/23 ***The Sound and the Fury*, pp. 3-75**
1/24 The Shape of the South (Hackney + FC 1-24)
1/25 ***The Sound and the Fury*, pp. 3-75 (cont.)**
1/26 The Forgotten Native South (Carson + FC 23-52)
1/27 ***The Sound and the Fury*, pp. 76-179**

- 1/30 ***The Sound and the Fury*, pp. 76-179 (cont.)**
1/31 South as America, America as South (FC 53-85; ADS 1-33)
2/1 **FILM (in class): *Faulkner’s Mississippi: Land into Legend***
(Also read the 1956 *Paris Review* interview; check the blog for a link to the article)
2/2 Otherness and Causes (FC 87-120)
2/3 ***The Sound and the Fury*, pp. 180-264**

- 2/6 ***The Sound and the Fury*, pp. 265-321**
2/7 Slaves in Yoknapatawpha (FC 121-156)
2/8 **FILM (in class): *The Sound and the Fury***
2/9 FILM (in class): *The Sound and the Fury*
2/10 ***The Unvanquished*, pp. 3-35**

- 2/13 ***The Unvanquished*, pp. 37-75**
2/14 Revolution and War (FC 157-213; ADS 34-66)
2/15 ***The Unvanquished*, pp. 77-118**
2/16 Revolution and War (cont.)
2/17 ***The Unvanquished*, pp. 119-186**

- 2/20 ***The Unvanquished*, pp. 187-210**
2/21 (Un)Vanquished South (FC 215-290; ADS 67-98)
2/22 ***The Unvanquished*, pp. 211-254**
2/23 (Un)Vanquished South (cont.)
2/24 **Integration Day: no assigned reading**

English 190 essay due

- 2/27 ***Light in August*, pp. 3-101**
2/28 A “New” South (FC 291-326; ADS 99-129)
2/29 ***Light in August*, pp. 102-169**
3/1 Faulkner’s Town (FC 327-383)
3/2 ***Light in August*, pp. 170-231**

- 3/5 ***Light in August*, pp. 232-286**
3/6 A Peculiar Institution (AS ix-62)
3/7 ***Light in August*, pp. 287-361**
3/8 The Old South & Slavery (AS 63-132)
3/9 ***Light in August*, pp. 362-465**

- 3/12 **Light in August, pp. 466-507**
 3/13 Living the Slave Life (*LS* 133-168)
 3/14 **“Faux Faulkner” projects: no assigned reading** “Faux Faulkner” projects due
 3/15 The Ideology of the White South (*LS* 169-199 + Hammond) History 259 essay due
 3/16 **Absalom, Absalom! pp. 1-22**

3/17-3/25 SPRING BREAK

- 3/26 **Absalom, Absalom! pp. 23-45**
 3/27 The C.S.A. and its Aftermath (*LS* 200-249 + Stephens)
 3/28 **Absalom, Absalom! pp. 46-69** Deadline for research essay conferences to have occurred
 3/29 Southern Media Assignment Southern Media assignment due
 3/30 **Class does not meet**
 Your professor will be at the Society for the Study of Southern Literature conference in Nashville, attending, he is sure, more than one panel on Faulkner. Expect a full report when he returns.

- 4/2 **Absalom, Absalom! pp. 71-140**
 4/3 Integration Day: no assigned reading
 4/4 **Absalom, Absalom! pp. 141-234**
 4/5 When Did Southern Segregation Begin (*WDSB* 3-102) Research essay proposals due
 4/6 **Absalom, Absalom! pp. 235-287**

- 4/9 **Absalom, Absalom! pp. 288-303**
 4/10 When Did Southern Segregation Begin (*WDSB* 103-163)
 4/11 **Go Down, Moses, pp. 3-29**
 4/12 Growing Up Southern (*CAM* entire + *SP* entire)
 4/13 **Go Down, Moses, pp. 157-180**

- 4/16 **Go Down, Moses, pp. 183-243**
 4/17 Growing Up Southern (*cont.*) (*CAM* entire + *SP* entire)
 4/18 **Go Down, Moses, pp. 243-315**
 4/19 The Problem of a White Southern Identity (*ADS* 185-260) Voluntary draft of research essay due
 4/20 **“Letter to a Northern Editor” and other Civil Rights-era writings (Sakai)**

- 4/23 **Go Down, Moses, pp. 319-348**
 4/24 A (Post) Modern South? (*ADS* 261-339)
 4/25 **Go Down, Moses, pp. 351-365**
 4/26 FILM (in class): *Song of the South* + Walker
 4/27 **FILM (in class): *Song of the South***

- 4/30 **Go Down, Moses (cont.)**
 5/1 Integration Day: no additional reading Joint research essay due in class

Course policies and procedures

Contacting me In addition to my regular office hours, I am available for appointments. You will need to e-mail or talk to me before or after class to arrange one. *I tend to do most of my e-mailing in the morning and early afternoon.* I cannot be counted upon to check e-mail during the evening, though, so if you’re wanting to correspond about an upcoming paper or reading assignment, do not wait until the evening before to contact me.

Readings You should complete the assigned reading before each class and be ready to discuss it. Longer readings are divided into sections, and you are responsible only for those pages assigned for that day.

To borrow a line from a great teacher of mine, you should also think of reading as a contact sport. Active reading requires writing, so be sure to mark your text, noting specific passages, questions, etc. you would like to discuss in class.

Attendance and participation The success of the course depends on the enthusiastic participation of each and every member. I thus expect you to arrive to every class having completed the assigned reading and prepared yourself to contribute to class discussion. Come with responses to the questions I may have posed during the class before. Come also with questions and comments of your own—and, more generally, with a willingness to involve yourself in the give-and-take of that day's discussion. I do a fair amount of preparation to ensure productive discussions, but my favorite classes are inevitably those that assume lives of their own (which is to say, those in which students take the lead and work collaboratively to address the issues they find most compelling).

You may wish to e-mail or meet with me before or after class if there are specific issues you would like to discuss. I consider these forms of participation, too, though they cannot entirely substitute for active in-class participation.

Your participation grade (20% of your final grade) will reflect how well you make these contributions. The student who does not miss class and comes always prepared, always willing to contribute insights of his or her own, and always willing to respond thoughtfully to the questions and comments of others will receive a grade in the "A" range. The student who does not miss class but contributes less frequently will receive a "B." The student who misses class routinely (four or five unexcused absences) will receive a "C," as will the student who shows up but participates infrequently and/or unpreparedly. The student who receives a "D" participation grade likely has six unexcused absences. The student who has seven or more unexcused absences simply fails the course.

Excused absences generally involve family emergencies, illness, or activities related to other collegiate commitments (athletics, e.g., or the occasional field trip required by another course). Excused absences do not generally involve personal travel plans; if your ride home for spring break necessitates that you leave campus a day early, you do so at the expense of an unexcused absence. In the case of illness, you are required to provide a doctor's note. Should you miss class for any reason, you are responsible for knowing what went on, including any changes to the syllabus or revisions to assignments.

Essays You will write two essays for this course. The first (the "English 190 essay") will be approximately 5 pp. (1500 words) in length and will be based on a set of prompts I will provide by Feb. 10. It will be assigned credit in English 190 only. The second (the "joint research essay") will be based on a topic of your choosing and should be interdisciplinary in nature. It will be jointly graded by Profs. Binnington and Wells and will count for credit in both History 259 and English 190. You should have had a conversation with the professors about possible topics by **Wed., March 28**. You will write this essay in stages, with a proposal (final statement of topic and full bibliography) due on **Thu., April 5**. You may submit a voluntary rough draft by **Thu., April 19** and the final version will be due on **Tue., May 1**. Your paper should be approximately 12 pages, or 3,600 words, in length.

Plagiarism Article III, section 3 of the Allegheny College Honor Code defines plagiarism as "using the ideas or words of another without citing the sources from which the ideas or words are taken." We will devote a portion of an upcoming class to discussing plagiarism and how to avoid it. Know now simply that I take it very seriously, that it will result in an "F" for the course, and that I will refer any instance of it to the Honor Committee.

"Faux Faulkner" project You may find, as you read more and more Faulkner, that you start to think, perhaps even to dream in a language similar to his. The vocabulary will become much more familiar, as will the cadences of the sentences, the ways in which he violates the rules of grammar, etc. This is good. It means you're learning to think in "Faulkner." The "Faux Faulkner" project will provide you the chance to write in "Faulkner." Details will be discussed well in advance of the due date (**Wed., March 14**).

Exams There will be no exams for this course. You will show that you are keeping up with all readings by way of class participation and online journaling (see below).

Class Journal The interdisciplinary nature of the student experience in History 259 and English 190 requires attention. While we will offer Integration Days during which time students can explicitly draw connections and ask questions, it makes sense that such reflection be an ongoing part of the student experience. Therefore, we are requiring students to journal as part of a class blog, "The Actual and the Apocryphal" (<http://faulknersouth.blogspot.com>). This will count for credit in both History 259 and English 190. As Blogger is part of the Googleverse, you can log on with your allegheny.edu username and password. Our rules for blog journaling are as follows:

- In rotation, students are responsible for blogging class, posing questions and connections. Professors Wells and Binnington will model this for you at the start of the semester.
- Students may also blog about class readings, discussion questions, class conversations, etc. As detailed below, these posts may be used to supplement your participation grade.
- You may also post links to items related to the South and Faulkner from pop culture, the news media, other literature, the Internet, etc.
- Posts and comments should be substantial and add something to the conversation. "I agree" for example is neither substantial nor additive!
- No anonymous postings. You may change your screen name (from Julia to Jules for example), but it must remain recognizably you.
- You should act in a professional, academic manner when posting or commenting. This is an intellectual exercise and should be respected as such.
- The blog postings of your classmates and professors are confidential and should not be shared outside the class.

Grading Your grade for the course will be computed as follows.

Participation	20%
English 190 essay	20%
Joint research essay.....	35%
Class journal	20%
Faux Faulkner project	5%

Disability concerns Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Services at (814) 332-2898. Disability Services is part of the Learning Commons and is located in Pelletier Library. Please do this as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Religious accommodation If you need to miss class due to a religious observance, then please speak to me in advance to make arrangements to cover material from that day. See <http://sites.allegheny.edu/religiouslife/religious-holy-days>.

