

HONR250 – HM Proposal

Check here if you agree to submit a Humanities Course Proposal True

Effective catalog term:

Department:

Course Number:

Course title (official title for catalog):

Abbreviated title for class schedule (26 characters or less):

How many credits is this course worth?

When you click submit, a copy of your submission will be automatically emailed to you. Please include your full email address here:

Please enter your department chair's email here:

Today's Date:

Is this proposal the result of program review?

If so, what year was the review completed?

If this is a topics course, please list specific title this request applies to:

MOST RECENT Official course description:

If this is a topics course, please list description for this specific topic:

the above description is from:

Semester and Year designation would begin: Spring 2016

Is this a NEW course? no

If yes was answered for #5, please give date it was approved:

applied for: GE

received:

Instructor(s): Yvette Piggush

Are there any prerequisites for registering for this course? no

If yes, please list prerequisites

1. What documents and/or primary sources will students analyze? This course introduces students to the genre of slave narrative, one of the most significant genres of United States literature, and to this genre's lasting impact on literary expression. The students will read both contemporary novels that deploy the slave narrative and nineteenth-century non-fiction narratives by former slaves. Contemporary novels that students may read in this course include Ishmael Reed's *Flight to Canada*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Octavia Butler's *Kindred*, Fred D'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts*, and Edward P. Jones's *The Known World*. Students may also read all or part of nineteenth-century non-fiction slave narratives that include William Grimes's *Life of William Grimes*, Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave*, Harriet Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, and Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery*. In addition, students will be encouraged to use nineteenth-century primary text databases such as *American Periodicals*, websites such as the *North American Slave Narratives* (<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/>), and nineteenth-century periodicals held by the HMML and the CSB/SJU libraries to discover and analyze additional narratives by or about enslaved Americans.

2. Describe how students will demonstrate that they have engaged a text with the analytic, critical, sympathetic, and/or speculative methods of one of the Humanities disciplines. Students in this course will primarily engage texts using the methodologies of literary analysis. Students will identify basic elements and conventions of the slave narrative genre such as the "I was born" introduction, the links between spiritual and physical liberation, the importance of literacy, and the role of authenticating materials by white editors and supporters. Students will also analyze narrative point of view, plot structure, and the symbolic and formal continuities between nineteenth-century and contemporary slave narratives. Students will demonstrate their engagement with texts using the methods of literary analysis through short, in-class writing about their interpretation of the text; through seminar discussions; through writing analytical essays arguing for an interpretation of a text; and through annotating part or all of a slave narrative of their choosing.

Students in this course will secondarily engage texts using the methodologies of historical analysis. Students will read historians' accounts of slavery in the nineteenth-century, particularly accounts focusing on the role of gender in the experiences of enslaved persons and their enslavers. Students will compare the historians' accounts to the evidence of the primary sources and assess

strengths and weaknesses of this relationship. Students will also conduct basic historical research into the nineteenth-century context of slavery, engage in basic assessments of the value of these sources, and use these sources to support their textual analysis. Students will demonstrate their engagement with historical methods for analyzing slave narratives through short, in-class writing; through seminar discussions; through writing analytical essays that take the historical context of slavery into account; and through annotating part or all of a slave narrative of their choosing.

3. Describe how students will demonstrate critical thinking and effective communication through writing and discussion of the examined texts.

Students will demonstrate critical thinking by identifying and responding to problems of interpreting slave narratives. For example, as they become familiar with the basic outlines of the genre, they will be able to see an author's decision to deviate from the conventions of the genre as a textual problem that demands analysis: The author knew "the rules" and broke them—why? How does this affect us as readers? How does it affect the story? How do we know? Students will be particularly attuned to the problems of silences or gaps in these narratives—what isn't said—and the multiple dimensions of ghosts or hauntings that often relate to these silences. In other words, students will recognize and articulate the significance of what is not present and is not said as well as the significance of the words on the page before them. In literary analysis, the goal of identifying such textual problems is not to "fix" them by supplying missing information, but to argue for their relationship to larger processes of creating identity, identifying purpose, finding meaning, and ultimately being human. Students will demonstrate that they have thought critically about these problems through short, in-class writing assignments; through formulating questions for discussion; through engaging in discussion of their interpretations; through argument-based essays on interpretations of slave narrative; and through annotating all or part of a slave narrative of their choosing.

Students will demonstrate effective communication by composing argument-based essays analyzing slave narrative; through posing questions and formulating responses in discussion; and through presenting their research on slave narrative to the class. I will evaluate students' argument papers for their effectiveness in convincing a reader that their interpretation of the text is valid. Students will be expected to play an active role in discussion by formulating the questions they want to discuss as well as offering possible responses to them. Finally, students will be expected to make at least one formal presentation of their research work to their classmates.
