Course Goals and Objectives: This course is intended to increase your knowledge of the literary and cultural history of the U. S. South. This knowledge will include:

- awareness of the wide range of literary texts that were written in this period,
- familiarity with topics, themes, and literary techniques of some of these works,
- a deeper knowledge of works by eight writers,
- an understanding of how these works reflect the eras and cultures in which they were written, and
- familiarity with ways this literature has been interpreted and appreciated by others.

This course is also designed to increase your skills in analyzing and interpreting literary texts, as well as your skills in writing, critical reading, and oral communication. Since this is an upper-level English course, I am assuming you have already begun developing these skills and are ready to use them on a challenging collection of texts.

We’ll begin the semester with selections that exemplify some of the most prominent themes in Southern literature, then will turn to a more in-depth study of several individual writers. I have not attempted to cover all the “major” Southern writers—that list is long and widely contested. Instead, I’ve selected an array of 8 writers that I think will be interesting to study alongside each other. I’m looking forward to exploring these works with you.

Texts:

- *Go Down, Moses*, William Faulkner
- *Rich In Love*, Josephine Humphries
- *Collected Stories*, Flannery O’Connor
- *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere*, ZZ Packer
- *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, Janisse Ray
- *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim*, David Sedaris
- *Stories, Essays, and Memoir*, Eudora Welty

Course Requirements and Course Grade Percentages

**Papers**

Paper I. Comparative analysis (4 pages, 10%): You’ll analyze two texts by two different authors, choosing from the assigned readings of the first 4 weeks. Write a comparative analysis of the two texts’ presentation of a particular aspect of Southern society and culture. Your paper should argue that the two texts’ presentations are more similar or more different than readers might expect.

Paper II. Analysis with secondary sources (8-10 pages, plus annotations for 4 sources, 20%): This paper will focus on works from our syllabus on one of the following writers: Yusef Komunyakaa, Eudora Welty, William Faulkner, Janisse Ray, Flannery O’Connor, David Sedaris and/or ZZ Packer, Josephine Humphreys.

After reading the author’s work, you’ll study the articles or chapters I’ve selected that present a variety of interpretations of its significance. In addition, you’ll need to locate two more sources that add to your understanding of the writer: biographies, interviews with or essays by the author on his/her own work, or other scholarly analyses. You’ll then create an annotated bibliography for 4 of these sources with varying approaches to the writer. All the students who’ve worked on this author will participate in a class discussion of critical interpretations of this author.

In the paper, you’ll support your own interpretation of an aspect of this writer’s work that you believe deserves closer examination. You may also use information from interviews and biographies as support for your ideas. Primarily, however, you’ll support your own interpretation with textual evidence. If you wish, you may participate in a draft workshop (outside of class) a week before the paper is due.
I’ll assign each student to a writer, but if you have strong preferences, I’ll do my best to assign you to an author you’re eager to write about. Paper II preferences must be submitted on a notecard no later than September 9th. I’ll give you further directions and a grading rubric for this paper after I’ve assigned everyone to a group.

Paper III. Essay on a Southern custom (4 pages, 10%): This will be a researched analysis of a cultural phenomenon that has been reflected in one or more of our texts. You’ll use academic sources as well as some primary research to determine whether the custom or experience depicted in the text is still in existence in the contemporary U.S. South.

- A particular Southern food (subtopics could include barbecue, holiday foods, grits, soul food, southern snack foods, etc.)
- Southern poverty (evidenced by conditions such as employment, housing, nutrition and health, crime and incarceration, public services, air and water quality, etc)
- Customs associated with being a “lady,” or genteel Southern womanhood (dance or music lessons, debutante parties, courtship & marriage)
- Southern manners (forms of hospitality and entertaining, and/or expectations for social interaction)
- Music (subtopics could include the blues, gospel, country, “roots” music)
- Gardening
- Hunting (and/or other customs associated with manhood)
- Commemorations of the Civil War
- Herbal/root medicine
- Religious customs (worship services, Sabbath observances, funerals, etc)
- Customs of childhood in the South (subtopics could include child care and supervision, child labor, schools, children’s summer or leisure pastimes)
- Southern accent(s)
- Jewish communities/traditions
- Native American traditions

If you have any preferences, please write your top 3 choices on a notecard and submit this to me by September 3rd. I will distribute more detailed directions and a grading rubric when I assign the topics.

The two hour tests and the final exam will include objective questions, short essays, and some longer essays that you prepare in advance. They’ll require you to recognize important examples of the works we studied and to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the literature and of concepts we’ve discussed in class. The final exam will cover all the material we’ve studied. I’ll provide study guides for all of these.

The in-class reports will be short, fairly informal presentations of some of the research you are doing for the second and third papers. I’ll include instructions for these reports along with the paper assignments.

Participation includes regular attendance, notecards prepared for 9 of our classes, and 5-10 paragraphs that I’ll ask you to write during class. In the first week I’ll distribute more detailed instructions for the notecards and give you a chance to practice writing one. I also expect you to bring copies of the literature that’s assigned for that day. If you don’t have a copy with you, it’s your responsibility to find a classmate who does have a copy and who’s willing to let you look on during class. I’ll lower your grade if you come to class without your text often enough that I start to notice it. More than 3 absences, for whatever reason, will lower your final course grade. Late arrivals, or departures before class is over, count as ½ an absence. Students should plan to stay in the classroom during the entire 50 minutes, and should not ever leave the room during the class period unless you are compelled to do so by illness. Cell phones should always be silenced and stowed away during class.

Grading Scale: Number grades translate into the following letter grades and GPA values.

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Academic Dishonesty: The College of Charleston enforces a strict policy of academic honesty, as detailed in The College of Charleston Student Handbook: A Guide to Civil and Honorable Conduct, <http://www.cofc.edu/studentaffairs/general_info/studenthandbook.html>. Any student who incorporates the words or ideas of others in an essay without proper acknowledgment, or who commits any other form of academic dishonesty, will be turned in to the College Honor Board. An
Honor Board conviction will result in an "F" for the entire course, and may incur other penalties as specified by the honor system (for more information, see <http://www.cofc.edu/studentaffairs/general_info/honor_system/>). If you are unsure about whether you are using proper documentation, refer to a MLA style manual or talk to me about your questions.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply at the Center for Disability Services located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me one week before accommodation is needed. Should you have questions about disability services at the College of Charleston, please contact the Center for Disability Services at 953-1431 or visit their website at <http://www.cofc.edu/~cds/>.

**Schedule of Readings:** Please read assignments before coming to class on the day they are due. Texts for the first 3 weeks of class come from your anthology unless otherwise indicated.

Note: This schedule may be modified if necessary during the semester. I will inform the class of any changes.

**Week 1**
8/26 Introduction to course; overview of topics in literature of the American South.
8/28 The "Old South" Readings: John Pendleton Kennedy, from Swallow Barn (58-66); Daniel Decatur Emmett, “Dixie’s Land” (note on 1108, 1110-1111) Henry Timrod, “The Unknown Dead,” (242-3); Tate, “Ode to the Confederate Dead” (477-482)

**Week 2**
9/2 Southern Ladies and Gentleman (Gender and Sexuality) Reading: Tennessee Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire (628-690)
9/4 The Backward South Readings: H. L. Mencken, “Sahara of the Bozart” (368-378); James Agee, from Let us Now Praise Famous Men (574-582)

**Week 3**
9/9 Southern Families Readings: Katherine Anne Porter, “He” (594-603), Ernest Gaines, “The Sky is Gray” (885-908); Eudora Welty. “The Little Store” and part of “Listening,” (in Welty volume, 819-26 and 839-861)
9/11 Southern Storytelling and Music Read selections in anthology in “Storytelling and Humor” section (1137-55); on WebCT, listen to examples of spirituals, gospel, ballads, blues, work songs; also read two Lowcountry tales, “The Army of the Dead,” and “Daid Aaron”

**Week 4**
9/14 Test 1

**Week 5**

**Week 6**
WEEK 6, CONTINUED


WEEK 7

9/28  Welty, “June Recital” (333-399)  
9/30  Welty, “Moon Lake” (412-450)  
10/2  Interpretations of Welty, “The Wanderers” (525-556).  

WEEK 8

10/5  William Faulkner, Go Down, Moses: “Was”  
10/7  Faulkner, “The Fire and the Hearth”  
10/9  Faulkner, “Pantaloon in Black,” “The Old People”  
10/12  {Fall Break}  
10/14  Faulkner, “The Bear” Komunyakaa papers due.  
10/16  Interpretations of Faulkner “Delta Autumn,” “Go Down, Moses.”  
10/19  Test 2  
10/30  O’Connor, “Good Country People,” “The Artificial Nigger.”  

WEEK 9

11/2  Interpretations of O’Connor, “Everything that Rises Must Converge,” “Revelation.”  
11/4  Faulkner papers due. David Sedaris “State or Carolina?” “Ashes,” “You Can’t Kill the Rooster” (see WebCT) 
11/16  Ray papers due. Humphreys, 70-175.  
11/18  Humphreys, 176-end. Interpretations of Humphreys.  
11/19  Catch-up day!  

WEEK 10

11/23  Discuss research for Paper 3. O’Connor papers due  
11/25—11/29: Thanksgiving holiday  

WEEK 11

12/2  Present Paper 3 field research. Packer/Sedaris papers due.  

WEEK 12

12/7  Prepare for exam. Humphreys papers due.  
12/11  Final exam, 8-11 AM