

Topic: “Beauty, Truth, Justice: African American Autobiographical Writing”
Elizabeth Gentry

Course Description: This course will seek to explore the aesthetic, personal, and political purposes of writers of short and long-form autobiography from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries who have an historically complex relationship with mainstream white publishing and diverse reading audiences. Our texts will include both traditional and innovative autobiographies, essays, a graphic novel, and a film by writers such as Frederick Douglass, Zora Neale Hurston, Lorraine Hansberry, John Lewis, Ta-Nehisi Coates, and Patricia Williams. We will conclude the semester by writing our own autobiographical essays that blend memories with family interviews, artifacts, and other forms of archival research.

Topic: “Wide Open Spaces: The American West in Fiction”
Kristina McCue

Course Description: Is “the West” still wild? Where do tall tales meet grim reality? What happened to cowboys and bad guys? What about independence and adventure? We will address these questions and others in novels, short stories, a play, and films about farmers and cowhands, outlaws and lawmen, loners and seekers. Discussion topics range from the Old West, to the New West, to the True West - from the classic Western fiction of the stereotypes, to what happens when civilization fences in the frontier, to whether and where we can find the West now. Short responses and one formal paper satisfy WC requirements.

Topic: “Tennessee Women in Literature”
Julia McLeod

Course Description: This course examines authors connected to the state of Tennessee by birth, employment, or subject matter and whose work explores the experiences of women from the late nineteenth century to today. Readings -- including poetry, along with local color, domestic, historical, modernist, and post-modernist fiction -- reflect the rich literary heritage of the state and engage with the important social and political questions of our time. Authors include Emma Bell Miles, Marilou Awiakta, Ida B. Wells, Wilma Dykeman, Amy Greene, and Dolly Parton.

Assignments: weekly reading journal entries, text/context presentation, one close reading essay, one research essay/webpage, final exam.