

## GSTR 100 Stories: Journeys

**Instructor:** Jill Bouma  
**Office Hours,** Frost 213  
MWF, 9-10:30 MWF, 2-3 Th  
and by appointment

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**Fall, 2004, 11:00-11:50 MTWF**  
**Frost, Rm 8, MWF**  
**Rm 218, Tues**

### **Course Description:**

In this course you will engage with stories and novels in ways that tap your creativity, develop your analytical skills, and, hopefully, capture your imagination. All of the characters in the stories embark on journeys, both literally and figuratively. Some travel to new countries. Others travel backward in time. Some explore new types of education, religion, community, or politics. All make the journey, sometimes painful, into new areas of understanding and personal insight. The stories span different countries and historical periods, but all focus on issues of race, class, and gender, and the personal growth that results from encountering people different from oneself.

### **Required Texts:**

Butler, Octavia. *Kindred*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979.

Giardina, Denise. *Storming Heaven*. New York: Ivy Books, 1987.

Owen, Howard. *Littlejohn*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.

Warmbrunn, Erika. *Where the Pavement Ends*. Seattle: The Mountaineers Books, 2001.

Lunsford, Andrea. *The St. Martin's Handbook*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's Press, 2002. [abbreviated as SMH in course outline]

### **General Outline of Readings:**

We will begin by reading *Storming Heaven*. In this novel, we hear the accounts of four characters as they battle the destructive forces of a coal company that ravage their town and ultimately, their lives. We will see how the geography of the Appalachian region intersects with education, religion, and politics to shape the lives of different characters. Next, we will move on to the story of Littlejohn, an illiterate dirt farmer from contemporary North Carolina. An old man seemingly at the end of his life, he sets out on the first page to commit suicide. Through the book, we travel across the generations, meeting Littlejohn's daughter and grandson, learning the secrets and hopes of each and the common concerns that bring them together. Our third book is *Kindred*, in which we'll meet Dana, an African American woman from the Southwest. Through inexplicable twists of time travel, she finds herself on an antebellum Southern plantation. Her confrontations with ancestors, including a White slave owner, bring into question fundamental

views of family and kinship. Finally, we'll make a rather abrupt turn to our final book, *Where the Pavement Ends*. Here we meet an intrepid traveler who bicycles from Mongolia to Vietnam, learning both about foreign cultures and what it means to be American. The characters in each of these stories challenge the status quo and in so doing, challenge and transform themselves.

The attached course outline offers detailed assignments for our first book, *Storming Heaven*. Regular attendance will keep you informed about the writing and reading assignments for the other books.

### **Convocations:**

In addition to reading and writing about the four listed books, we will also be conducting research and writing about convocations. We are quite fortunate at the series of excellence convocations being offered this year. For this class, we will be researching, discussing, and writing about a minimum of four of the Fall convocations. I'll ask you to work in small groups to research background information relevant to a particular performance and then help lead a discussion on the Friday following the convocation. On the first day of class, I'll hand out a list of convos, and you can start thinking about which convos you'd like to research, write about, and discuss in class. It is expected that you will attend the majority of convocations this Fall. Note that four convocations, September 16 (8:00), October 21, November 4 (1:30-3:30) and November 11 (8:00) are required for this class. Please mark your calendars now and clear up any conflicting commitments with your labor supervisor or others.

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. *Essays:* During the term there will be several different types of writing assignments, ranging from creative responses to the readings to documented essays involving library research.
2. *Oral Presentations:* Several class meetings will be devoted in part to oral presentations by class members. The presentations will deal with historical, geographical, or cultural materials pertinent to the readings and convocations.
3. *Class Participation and Quizzes:* Before you come to class, please carefully read the day's assigned text, take notes on the key ideas, and formulate your own questions or comments related to the readings. Each day when we are reading the novels, I will start class with a brief quiz to make sure you are keeping up with the reading and following the main ideas. You may drop one quiz, but there will not be any make-up quizzes.

### **EVALUATION:**

Quizzes and in-class writing	10%
Convocation assignments: presentations and papers	15%
Library Assignments and Oral Presentations	20%
Essays	40%
Final Exam	<u>15%</u>
	100%

**Attendance:** The success of the course depends heavily on your level of preparation and readiness to discuss the materials. Class participation is a vital part of this course, and attendance

is required. Frequent absences will lower your grade: more than five absences may result in an F. Except for dire circumstances (medical emergency or death in the immediate family), no missed class work can be made up.

**Office Hours:**

My office hours are from 9-10:30 on MWF and 2-3 on Thursday in 213 Frost. If these hours aren't convenient, I'm happy to meet with you at another time. Please call (3812) or email to set up another time. The best way to reach me is through email. I strongly encourage you to visit me during office hours, especially if you feel shy talking in class. Come by if you have questions or problems with the reading or assignments, or drop by just to chat.

**[ next time, need to read *Storming Heaven* more quickly]**

**Course Outline:**

- Wed 9/1: Introductions and Orientation
- Fri, 9/3: **In-class writing assignment** on first two chapters of *Storming Heaven*
- Mon., 9/6: Discussion of *Storming Heaven*  
READ: pages 30-85
- T 9/7: Library Workshop - MEET IN LIBRARY at the Reference Desk
- Wed.,8 *Storming Heaven*  
READ: pages 89-115
- Fri., 9/10 *Storming Heaven*  
READ: pages 119-162  
Video: "Even the Heavens Weep"
- Mon., 9/13 *Storming Heaven*  
READ: 163-232  
Choose topics for group presentations
- Tues, 9/14: Library Day – Meet in Hutchins Library – Research for Presentations
- Wed., 9/15 Special Presentation on Jazz: Chuck Turner, Music Department  
READ: 235-257
- Thurs., 9/16: CONVO – Marcus Roberts Trio: New Orleans Meets Harlem  
8:00 pm
- Fri., 9/17: Discussion of Convocation:  
WRITE: One-page (typed) response paper about Convo  
Assign Paper on *Storming Heaven*

Mon., 9/20	<i>Storming Heaven</i> - Writing Workshop READ: pages 258-293
Tues., 9/21	In class preparation of Presentations
Wed., 9/22	Presentations
Fri., 9/24	Presentation
Mon., 9/27	Peer Review of Paper 1 DUE: Typed Draft of Paper MEET in the Learning Center, Draper 106
9/28-10/19	Class discussions and work on <i>Littlejohn</i>
10/22-11/12	Class discussions and work on <i>Kindred</i>
11/15-end of term	Class discussions and work on <i>Where the Pavement Ends</i>