

Appalachian Literature

English 188-01 Spring 2015 Georgetown University

Patricia E. O'Connor, PhD

Office: 312 New North 202 687 7622 ooconnorp@georgetown.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 3-4 p.m. and by appt.

Class meets in Maguire 103 12:30-1:45

This course interrogates what it means to be "Appalachian," "hillbilly," or "from the mountains." In this course we will investigate the literature, the history, culture, and stereotypes of the Appalachian region. We will focus on the mountains as they figure physically and metaphorically in the language and lives of those who have hunted in, lived in, stayed put in, extracted from, left, returned to, or been haunted by the remoteness and the richness of the region and its acceptance or rejection of "insiders" and "outsiders." We will examine history and literature of people of color in the region including the native Cherokee and Shawnee, the disputed heritage of Melungeons, Affrilachians, and recent Latino migrants. We will look at the consequence discussed in Wendell Barry's 2012 Jefferson Lecture at the National Endowment for the Humanities in which he contemplates Wallace Stegner's concepts of "boomers" who "pillage and run" and "stickers" who "settle and love the life they have made and the place they have made it in."

In addition to reading literature by Appalachians we will study geological, historical, sociological, religious, economic and cultural analyses of the region. We will question designations of Insider and Outsider as they figure into the concepts of the mountain people as demonstrated not only in the literature but also in current concepts of the region. We will celebrate the culture in an Appalachian feast in which we enjoy foods, music, dance, and storytelling of the region. Students will write two papers, do a music presentation, and complete a digital story project illustrating their understanding of the region in literary, historical, geographical, socio-cultural, and economic contexts. **Students who have participated in (or are planning to do) Alternative Spring Break in the Appalachian regions are most welcome.**

Texts include: *River of Earth*, by James Still; Jack Weller's *Yesterday's People*; *Oral History* by Lee Smith; the *Stories of Breece D'J Pancake*; *Salvation on Sand Mountain* by Dennis Covington; Harriet Arnow's *The Dollmaker*; poetry by Wendell Berry, Nikky Finney, Crystal Wilkinson, Frank X. Walker, etc.; John A. Williams' *Appalachia A History*; and *Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes*, edited by Billings, Norman, and Ledford.

Lee Smith *Oral History* Ballantine
1996 0345410289 Required

James Still *River of Earth* Univ. Press of Ky 1978 0813113725 Required

Jack Weller Yesterday's People Univ. Press of Kentucky 1980
0813101093

Harriette Arnow. *The Dollmaker*. Scribner; Reissue edition (June 9, 2009)
ISBN-10: 1439154430 **ISBN-13:** 978-1439154434 Required

Dennis Covington *Salvation on Sand Mountain*
Penguin Books ISBN: 0140254587 Required

Breece Pancake *Stories of Breece Pancake*
Little Brown/Back Bay ISBN: 031571597-2 Required

John A. Williams *Appalachia, A History* UNC Press 2002
ISBN 978-0-8078-5368-9 Required

Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes, edited by Billings, Dwight, Gurney Norman, and Katherine Ledford. 2000 Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.
ISBN-10: 0813190010 | ISBN-13: 978-0813190

Goals of the course:

1. To appreciate the oral narrative (and its written and musical counterparts) in historical, cultural, and contemporary perspectives;
2. To situate the practice of stereotyping of groups in the larger praxis of identity formation;
3. To experience the relationships between geology, topography, and economy in the mountains;
4. To investigate land use/abuse/ownership and the interactions of these with wealth and poverty;
5. To investigate the urban reaches of Appalachian culture;
6. To develop broad resources on Appalachia;
7. To appreciate the cultural (particularly music, culinary, and literary) contributions of the Appalachian region;
8. To articulate knowledge using various technologies that increase our powers to interrogate, synthesize, analyze, and display knowledge.

Appalachian Feast

Join in the potluck experience of Home Cooking-- Mountain style. Usual features: Country Ham, soup beans, cornbread, biscuits and gravy, country green beans, grits, sweet potato pie, blackberry pie, cranberry cobbler. Performances in song and dance are welcome. Tentative date: Week of March 24-26. Volunteers to organize this event are needed.

Outdoor Adventures: We can work with GU GOAT staff and guides to arrange a field trip and or service hike to appreciate the terrain of the nearby Appalachian region. Volunteers to organize such events are welcome and will coordinate with GU Outdoor Ed.

Music Assignment: Music Presentation (5 minutes): Sign up for at least one music presentation. With a partner, prepare a 5-minute presentation of a musical selection that educates the class about music from the Appalachian region. (You may use cd-rom/video/ or live music). By 10 p.m. the night prior to the class presentation, make a BlackBoard entry in our **Songcatcher** thread on Discussion Board that shows the lyrics (if it is not a totally instrumental piece) and that discusses the selection, its history (Who performs this version? Who wrote it? What instruments are featured? Etc.) and its contribution to understanding the course. Note in particular excerpts from readings that this musical piece addresses. Include a bibliography at the end of the entry in MLA form. As the course progresses, **you will update your entry** when your selection makes connections to materials studied later in the course. All students will comment on at least three other music presentations. Each presentation will begin a class. Careful timing is essential: please practice your presentation and time your remarks to include playing a portion of the selection as well as your mini-lecture on the song and its relationship to the course. Also practice using the video/cd-rom technology in the classroom BEFORE your day of presentation. In any oral presentation--Make good eye contact with the audience. (Make a printout of your remarks and outline for your spoken parts. DO NOT read from your BlackBoard posting when it is demonstrated on the screen as this can result in not facing the audience, and undue attention being given to your backside!) If you want the class to do any singing, provide the lyrics as handouts or print them in large type in the Blackboard posting.

Bluegrass Music: Local FM radio 105.5 features Bluegrass music that may help you in selecting your music presentation. This station also broadcasts news of local performances. You are invited to organize outings for the class.

Attendance: As this is an interactive class, one in which knowledge is made in concert, all students are expected to attend all classes. Absences beyond three will result in grade reductions. For example upon the fourth absence, a grade of **A** would become an **A-**; at the fifth absence it would become a **B+**, etc. Persistent lateness will be treated as absence. If you must be absent, please e-mail/phone the professor as it may interfere with the plan for work in class and adjustments will need to be made. University holidays begin at the hour and on the day designated in the Registrar's calendar, NOT the day before. Students who travel to represent the University in music, sport, forensics, etc., must have their coach/sponsor let me know in advance in writing of any absences due to these events. Work due during that time should be done in advance.

Honor Code: Please be sure that you are in compliance with the University Honor Code. See: <https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/policies> for details on the Honor Code and a copy of the handbook. Be sure to cite all sources for direct quotations and for paraphrased materials and ideas. See also: <http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9> for more information on how we can all show our academic integrity through better assignments and classroom practices as well as shaping better products.

Grades: Grades will be determined from the papers and projects, oral reports and class participation (includes quizzes). Papers: 40%; Digital Story Project 30%; Music Presentation 10%; quizzes, and BlackBoard Postings & Class Participation 20%.

Conferences: Please be a frequent visitor to office hours or make arrangements for appointments at other hours (by e-mail, please)

Syllabus for Georgetown University Eng 188-01 Appalachian Literature Spring 2015

Prof. Patricia E. O'Connor

*Office hours 2-3 Tuesdays & Thursdays and by appt in 312 New North
202 687 7622 oconnorp@georgetown.edu*

Class meets in Maguire 103 T & Th 12:30 -1:45

****Items with asterisks occur outside the T-Th regular class meeting times****

Week 1: TH Jan 8 Introduction: Geography/History/ Stereotypes
Part 1 of Lecture on history of land and settlement
Image assessment Life Magazine's photos by John Domini
1964: <http://life.time.com/history/life-in-appalachia-photos-from-a-valley-of-poverty-1964/?iid=lb-gal-viewagn#1>

American Memory Website with photos: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cmnshtml/cmnshtml.html>
Reading for next week: Williams, John. *Appalachia: A History* Intro and Chapter 1 (pp. 1-81) 1540-1840

Photo assignment: Part 1: Examine carefully the photo you choose by describing in detail what you see when you look at the picture. What first draws your eye? What particularities can you describe? What frames or contextualizes the photo within the photo itself? If appropriate, discuss what positions humans are given or what positionings humans take up in the photo?

What juxtaposition does this photo have in the book or archive/or magazine you are examining i.e. what surrounds it? Precedes it? Follows? What caption? Who is the photographer? Can you date the photo? What is the goal of the book/magazine, etc.? (is their an overview or intro to help answer this?), Who is the Audience? How does the

Week 6	T	Feb 10	Music _____ - _____ Discussion 1 of <i>Oral History</i> by Lee Smith pp 1-166
	Th.	Feb 12	Music: _____ Discussion 2 <i>Oral History</i> by Lee Smith pp 167-end
Week 7	T	Feb 17	Music: _____ Arnow's <i>Dollmaker</i> Homeplace vs. Diaspora
	Th	Feb 19:	Music: _____ Arnow's <i>Dollmaker</i>

Paper 2: Consider an abiding stereotype of Appalachia and discuss its evolution and impact inside and outside the region. What will you propose or argue about this stereotype? How do course texts amplify your understanding of the behavior/condition that has been stereotyped? What outside materials could contribute? In a 6-7 page (double-spaced) paper, analyze the stereotype and discuss how various characters (or situations in the texts) depict and/or overturn that stereotype. For example, if Appalachians are stereotyped to be bigoted, how do Arnow's and Pancake's characters challenge (or support) this depiction? Due: Monday Mar 16 by 4 p.m. 312 New North

Week 8	T	Feb 24	Music: _____ Arnow's <i>Dollmaker</i>
	Th	Feb 26	Music: _____ Pancake: "Hollow", "Salvation of Me"

*Conferences on Stereotype paper drafts

Week 9	T	Mar 3	Music: _____ <i>Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes</i> Lewis: "Beyond Isolation and Homogeneity: Diversity and the History of Appalachia." pp. 21-46, Maggard: "Coalfield Women Making History"; 228-250 & Eula Hall "If There's One Thing You can Tell Them" pp 191-202. Poetry by Jeff Mann (Handout)
--------	---	-------	--

	Th	Mar 5	Music: _____ Work in the mountains beyond coal Pancake's "Scrapper", "Room Forever" Poetry (handout) Santee Umbach poetry (handout)
--	----	-------	--

*Conferences on Stereotype paper drafts

March 6-15 Spring break

Week 10 *M Mar. 16 Stereotype Paper due by 4 p.m. 312 NN

T	Mar.17	Music: _____ <i>Salvation on Sand Mountain</i> by Dennis Covington
Th.	Mar. 19	Music: _____ <i>Salvation on Sand Mountain</i>

Digital Story Project: You will illustrate your understanding of the region in literary, historical, geographical, socio-cultural, and economic contexts by creating a digital story on a topic of your interest. You will work as a team of 2-3 people to increase your ability in close reading, associative thinking, and contextualized knowing in relation to the course and the particular topic you choose. See this Lauinger library guide on digital stories: <http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/digitalstory>

After you have thoroughly researched, you will use depict one of the following:

- 1) In collaboration with Center for Social Justice, you will research one of the many **Spring Break in Appalachia** programs. You will create a 6 minute digital story to describe, annotate, and analyze the preparation for and experience of doing service in the mountains and relate it to course readings;
- 2) In collaboration with the GU Outdoor Education program's **outdoor adventures in the Appalachian region** you will research and create a 6 minute digital story on these experiences and situate them within an understanding of the course, the region, its economy, and eco-tourism in Appalachia;
- 3) In a 6 minute digital story you will address a **thematic topic** that cuts across texts in the course and argue a stance in regard to such topics. (For example topics might include Spirituality in a part of the Appalachians; Gendered expectations; Class, work, unions, globalization; Land use; Mountain Top Removal; Minority presence; Health and healing; Education; Tourism; etc.) See p. 8 of syllabus for more info. Post your topic in BB in Digital Story thread in Discussion Group.

Week 11	T	Mar 24	Dubin room Lauinger Locating Resources: Librarian Melissa Van Vuuren
	Th	Mar 26	Gelardin Room Lauinger Digital Story Workshop: Nikoo Yahyazadeh

** please review before the workshop: <http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/digitalstory>

Week 12	T	Mar 31	Loving it/Losing It--Working class lives: <i>Stories of Breece Pancake</i> "A Room Forever"
Appalachian Feast: TBD			

Conferences on Projects

April 1-6 Easter Break

Week 13	T	Ap 7	Review Williams, Ch 4 "Standing the Times" 1880-1940
---------	---	------	---

	Th	Ap 9	Working class lives: Film <i>Fast Food Women</i>
Week 14	T.	Ap 14	Stephen Drake Ch. 12 “The New Appalachia” (handout/BB from <i>A History of Appalachia</i>)
	TH:	Ap 16	Preview of Presentations: Peer review
Week 15	T	Ap. 21	Digital Story Presentations
	Th	Ap 23	Digital Story presentations & Course eval. (Bring laptops)

See following pages for some expansions of the assignments for the class. Additional crafting of the projects will come in class sessions and in conferences.

Assignments

Photo analysis: 4-pages--: Examine carefully the photo you choose by describing in detail what you see when you look at the picture. You may choose from the books I bring to class or from images in the Library of Congress American Memory photo archive: “Tending the Commons”: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cmnshtml/cmnshtml.html> . Or from the Life Magazine 1964 portraits: <http://life.time.com/history/war-on-poverty-appalachia-portraits-1964/#1> Or other archives you find.

What first draws your eye? What particularities can you describe? What frames or contextualizes the photo within the photo itself? (If appropriate,) discuss what positions are humans given or what positionings do humans take up in the photo? What juxtaposition does this photo have in the book you are examining (i.e. what surrounds it? Precedes? Follows? What caption? Who is the photographer? Can you date the photo? What is the book’s goal? Audience? How does the picture interact with its surroundings?) After fully exploring and describing such particularities, tell us what generalizations you draw from the picture. Reduce this exploration into a carefully worded, typed, double-spaced 4 page (12 pt. type). Attach a copy of the image and a bibliography listing in MLA style for the source of the photo (and any other materials you cite).

The making sense of evidence website at George Mason U has several essays and interviews with scholars which help students know how to deal with various types of images (ads, photographs, etc.)

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/browse/makesense/>

Draft due Jan. 15 in class; Final paper due Mon Jan 14 4 p.m. 312 NN

Music Presentation: Prepare a 5-7 minute presentation of a musical selection that educates the class about music from the Appalachian region. (You may use cd-rom/video/ or live music). By 10 p.m. the night prior to the class presentation, make a BlackBoard entry in our **Songcatcher** thread on Discussion Board that shows the lyrics (if it is not a totally instrumental piece) and that discusses the selection, its history (Who performs this version? Who wrote it? What instruments are featured? Etc.) and its contribution to understanding the course. Note in particular excerpts from readings that this musical piece addresses. Include a bibliography at the end of the entry in MLA form. As the course progresses, you will update your entry when your selection makes connections to materials studied later in the course. All students will comment substantively on at least 3 other postings. Sign up for a music presentation. Each presentation will begin a class. As careful timing is essential, please practice your presentation and time your remarks to include playing of the selection as well as your mini-lecture on the song and its relationship to the course. Also practice using the video/cd-rom technology in the classroom BEFORE your day of presentation.

In any oral presentation--Make good eye contact with the audience. (Make a printout of your remarks and outline for your spoken parts. DO NOT read from your BlackBoard posting when it is demonstrated on the screen as this can result in not facing the audience.) If you want the class to do any singing, provide the lyrics as handouts or print them in large type in the Blackboard posting.

Essay on a stereotype: 6-7 pages. Consider an abiding stereotype of Appalachia and discuss its evolution and impact inside and outside the region. What will you propose or argue about this stereotype? How do course texts amplify your understanding of the behavior/condition that has been stereotyped? What outside materials could contribute? Bring to the early February conference a 3x5 note card with (on the lined side) your name, e-mail, phone number and a short working title and two sources for your paper; on the blank side provide at least four ideas & images that you help you pursue this topic. Final of this paper is due: * March Mon. 16

Digital Story Assignment:

This project will help develop skills of a constructivist learner. You will work as a team of 2-3 people to increase your ability in close reading, associative thinking, and contextualized knowing in relation to the course and the particular topic you choose. See this Lauinger library guide on digital stories: <http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/digitalstory>

After you have thoroughly researched, you will use depict one of the following:

- 1) In collaboration with Center for Social Justice, you will research one of the many **Spring Break in Appalachia** programs. You will create a 6 minute digital

story to describe, annotate, and analyze the preparation for and experience of doing service in the mountains and relate it to course readings;

2) In collaboration with the GU Outdoor Education program's **outdoor adventures in the Appalachian region** you will research and create a 6 minute digital story on these experiences and situate them within an understanding of the course, the region, its economy, and eco-tourism in Appalachia;

3) In a 6 minute digital story you will address a **thematic topic** that cuts across texts in the course and argue a stance in regard to such topics. (For example topics might include

Spirituality in a part of the Appalachians;

Gendered expectations; Class, work, unions, globalization;

Land speculation/claims/use/abuse;

Minority presence;

Health and healing;

Mountain Top Removal

Education;

Tourism; etc.)

In all these options you will settle on one “starter” passage from one course text as an “opener” to guide us into your claim about the topic through the variety of texts, interviews, archives, and other sources you find to “argue” a proposition about your topic. (Ex: Using a paragraph from one of the *Oral History* narrators-- Granny Younger- I could build a story that draws from many texts and current research to argue that “Unequal access to health care in Appalachia necessarily blends folk remedy with modern remedies.” Or, refuting a Jack Weller statement about fatalism I could construct a commentary that argues that religion offers hope and draw upon varieties of resources that show the growth of religions (including Muslim, Pentecostal, Catholic, etc. in 21st c Appalachia.)

NOTE: Many meetings in conjunction with the digital storywork and with the extra-curricular experiences will take place outside regular classroom hours. Your group should schedule a research session with librarian Melissa VanVuuren (msv37@georgetown.edu,) to facilitate your project. Extra sessions with Nikoo Yahyazadeh (ny86@georgetown.edu) may also be helpful. Other meetings with those with whom you work in this project must be carefully planned as so many students have heavy course, work, athletic and volunteer schedules. In the final materials collected about the hypertext work you will evaluate your own and your group members' participation in the project.