



**Prison Literature**  
**English 345**  
**Online Course**  
**Summer Session I — 2011**  
**SLN: 45115**  
**Prof. Lockard**

**SYLLABUS**

Prison and execution literature have been part of American literary production from its earliest period until the present day. This course considers prison literature as an integral feature of US literary and rhetorical history; as a vehicle for civil disobedience; as exposition of socially invisible worlds; as resistant autobiography and demand for expressive autonomy; and as a genre model for US social self-comprehension.

Course requirements include five 4-page papers and online discussion.

English majors (Literature): fulfills post-1900 requirement.

**Dates**

May 30 – July 1, 2011

**Texts**

Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience" (1849) [available online]

Martin Luther King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963) [available online]

Ken Lambertson, *Time of Grace* (2007)

Jimmy Santiago Baca, *A Place to Stand* (2001) and *Immigrants in Our Own Land & Selected Early Poems* (1990)

Execution sermons (Increase Mather, Samson Occum) [available online]

Stanley Tookie Williams, *Blue Rage, Black Redemption* (2007)

Judith Scheffler, *Wall Tappings* (2002)

Additional critical readings will be posted.

## Coursework

- **Journaling** (30 percent). Students will be expected to post journal entries of 500-600 words discussing some aspect of the reading assignments or talks. Journal entries should demonstrate mastery of the reading and talks. Five entries are due each week of the course. They may be posted at any time during the week on the Discussion Board. At least half your entries should take cognizance of the entries of other students and respond to them. Journal entries for each week may be posted until midnight Sunday of that week. Neither catch-up nor advance posting will be accepted. The reason for this lies in an emphasis on creating a group discussion, not in enabling individual students to speed ahead on their own in order to complete the work early. There will be a special summarizing discussion during the last two days of this course: this discussion will be weighted at one-third of the total journaling grade.
- **Paper-writing** (70 percent). **Five** 4-page (double-spaced) weekly papers, a total of 20 pages. Paper assignments will be announced. Papers will be due by midnight Sundays, except the final paper due July 1.
- **Advice:** Do not let the reading, talk-listening, journaling and paper-writing remain for Sundays, when it will require much catch-up time and 2000-2500 words of writing to submit the coursework timely. In this course, consistent daily work is more likely to be successful than irregular bursts of work.

## Grades

Grades on journaling and papers will be posted each Monday for work done the previous week. Grades will appear in the Grades Center, located under Tools at the myASU Blackboard site. In order to provide clarity on the grading standards for this course, note the following information.

**Grading standards for journaling:** journaling entries should be well-written, incisive comment on the week's reading. Personal reaction ("I think," "I believe," "This was a great read!" etc.) will not be graded as well as identification and discussion of key concepts or passages within a text. As noted above, two or three of each week's entries should relate to entries by other students. Journaling grades will be whole grades only.

**Grading standards for papers:** A successful paper should begin with a well-framed argument based on an abstract concept. It will elaborate that initial conceptual argument through the length of the paper, without meandering, and employ sufficient evidence from the text under discussion. Further instructions will be provided together with the first paper assignment, and anonymized examples of more successful papers will be made available with student consent. Paper grades will include plus/minus grades. *This is not a writing course, so paper comments will be summary. If you wish to have more detailed comment on your paper, contact the instructor.*

The instructor is a liberal grader and those who complete the coursework can usually expect at least a B-range grade. However, if the coursework is not complete (e.g. missing journaling or papers), then the grade will be a fail. *Important: all work must be completed and accomplished timely for a passing grade.* No extensions or incompletes will be given.

Grades may be queried and appealed for reconsideration. Every student has the right to do so without concern for adverse instructor reaction. If you wish to appeal a grade, send me an e-mail stating the reason succinctly.

### **Technologies**

This course will use a myASU Blackboard course site, accessible via <https://myasucourses.asu.edu>. This site contains course materials, and will be where students do their open journaling and drop their papers.

If there are technical issues that create obstacles, please contact the instructor for advice. Responsibility for resolution of technical difficulties, however, resides with the student.

### **Online Work Standards**

**Writing quality** is a crucial issue in online work, and this course requires consistently high-quality writing that includes well-expressed, concise argumentation. Your writing will be evaluated on the presence of these qualities. Online postings should be written with full benefit of correct spelling, grammar, and a complete assembly of writing skills. [Note: It may be useful to write offline and then cut-and-paste the posting text.] Online coursework will be evaluated on quantity as well as quality; meager responses or inadequate papers indicate lack of engagement with the readings. Discussion prompts will be provided for some assignments; other assignments will rely on undirected discussion.

**Public writing** is a feature of online life and of this course. Just as you should anticipate that anything you write online can and will be read by others, so too your journal entries in this course will be open and available for reading by the entire class. During the course, students will read the journaling of other students and the instructor may, at his discretion and with student permission, post anonymized student papers for general reading. All instructor comments and grades remain private information. Students will finish the course by posting their final paper on global banned literature in discussion space for comment.

### **Course Communications**

All course announcements will be made both via announcements on the myASU course website and via e-mail to your ASU e-mail account. E-mail will not be sent to non-ASU addresses; if you wish to receive e-mail at a non-ASU account, please set forwarding at your ASU e-mail account.

### **Paper Due Dates**

All papers are due by Sunday at midnight. The due dates are June 5, 12, 19, 26 and July 1.

### **Instructor**

I am available via e-mail at [Joe.Lockard@asu.edu](mailto:Joe.Lockard@asu.edu) and generally respond quickly, Monday thru Friday. I will not be available on weekends.

## **Work Schedule**

### **Week 1 (May 30 – June 5)**

- Read Thoreau, 'Resistance to Civil Government'
- Read King, 'Letter from Birmingham Jail.'
- Journaling
- Paper 1 (4 pages) due June 5

### **Week 2 (June 6 – June 12)**

- Read Lamberton, *Time of Grace*
- Journaling
- Paper 2 (4 pages) due June 12

### **Week 3 (June 13 – June 19)**

- Read Baca, *A Place to Stand* and *Immigrants in Our Own Land*
- Journaling
- Paper 3 (4 pages) due June 19

### **Week 4 (June 19 – June 26)**

- Read Mather and Occum execution sermons
- Read Williams, *Blue Rage, Black Redemption*
- Journaling
- Paper 4 (4 pages) due June 26

### **Week 5 (June 27 – July 1)**

- Read Scheffler, *Wall Tappings*
- Final discussion period June 30 - July 1
- Journaling
- Paper 5 (4 pages) due July 1

Supplementary readings will be posted for each week for background to journal entries and paper-writing.