**Lost in Translation**

English 322: Topics in African American Literature



**Course Overview:** In much of American culture there are specific expectations of high and low brow art. When Black literature is under consideration, however, there is a collapse of these expectations, i.e. Black literature is not seen as “good” unless it is also popular. Black writers often construct texts which address specific racial and ethnic, cultural and historical experiences. It is questionable however, how often and to what effective degree, that their unadulterated voice reaches the public. It seems that for most Americans the moment of contact with the other can only happen when the voice of the underrepresented is “revisioned” onto the silver screen. It is through the medium of film that the public attempts to “see” the other. Unfortunately these interpretations rarely offer reliable points of encounter. This course will center on the myriad of issues surrounding the filmic adaptations of major African American texts to film. Essentially we will attempt to answer the question: what happens to images of Blackness when Black texts are made into films for public consumption?

**Required texts:**

Hansberry, Lorraine. *Raisin in the Sun.*

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God.*

Morrison, Toni. *Sula*.

Naylor, Gloria. *The Women of Brewster Place*..

Nichols, Grace. *I is a Long Memoried Woman.*

Shange, Ntozake. *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide when the Rainbow is Enuf.*

Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*.

**Reading and Assignment Schedule**

(subject to change)

Wednesday 1/16Introduction to course

**Monday 1/21 Martin Luther King Day- Class Cancelled**

Wednesday 1/23 *Their Eyes Were Watching God*-to the end of Chapter 6

Monday 1/28 *Their Eyes Were Watching God*-to the end

Wednesday 1/30 *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

(see film by 2/4)

Monday 2/4 *Their Eyes Were Watching God*- film discussion

Wednesday 2/6  *A Raisin in the Sun*- Act I

Monday 2/11 *A Raisin in the Sun* – to end

Wednesday 2/13 *A Raisin in the Sun*

Monday 2/18 *A Raisin in the Sun* (in class film)

Wednesday **2/20** *A Raisin in the Sun* film & discussion- **1st essay due**

Monday 2/25 *The Color Purple*- to end of p149

Wednesday 2/27 *The Color Purple*

**Thursday 2/28 Poster Presentation in Campus Center Lobby 12-1:30pm**

(see film by 3/5)

Monday 3/3 *The Color Purple*-to the end

Wednesday 3/5 *The Color Purple*

Monday 3/10 *The Color Purple*- film discussion

Wednesday **3/12Midterm exam**

Monday 3/17 Spring Break

Wednesday 3/19 Spring Break

Monday 3/24 *The Women of Brewster Place*- to the end of “Luciella Louise Turner”

Wednesday 3/26 *The Women of Brewster Place*

 (see film by 4/2)

Monday **3/31** *The Women of Brewster Place*- to the end **- 2nd essay due**

Wednesday 4/2 *The Women of Brewster Place*- film discussion

Monday 4/7 *For Colored Girls…*- read entire text

Wednesday 4/9 *For Colored Girls…*

(see film by 4/16)

Monday 4/14 *For Colored Girls…*

Wednesday 4/16 *For Colored Girls…*- film discussion

Monday 4/21 *I is a Long Memoried Woman*- read entire text

Wednesday 4/23 *I is a Long Memoried Woman*-

Monday **4/28** *I is a Long Memoried Woman* film and discussion

 **Annotated Bibliography Due**