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Office Hours: on Zoom,  
by appointment

EWRT 1A  
Section 69 Z, 76Z  
Fall 2024  
Asynchronous, on Canvas

## **English 1A: Composition and Reading – On Reading, Writing, and Race/Racism**

### Description of the Course Theme and Objectives

In this course, we will focus on developing college-level critical thinking, reading, and writing skills by studying the history of reading and writing, particularly how we learn to read and write and what kinds of connections we can draw between reading, writing, and thinking. We will also focus on becoming independent readers this quarter, completing an independent reading project and thinking deeply about what kind of readers we are and hope to become. Why, we will ask, is reading important and why is critically thinking and writing about how and why we do it central to our education? As we think through this issue, we'll also turn to historical and contemporary discussions of race and racism in the United States to think about how the history and experience of racism has been understood and "read" in the historical past and how we "read" racism and race in our contemporary moment. Reading, this unit suggests, is crucial for understanding the history of race and racism as well as the project for racial justice today.

As we explore these topics, we'll concentrate on discovering and honing our own voices, reading different genres, or types of texts, along the way, such as poems, essays, journalism, epistolary nonfiction, literary criticism, a short story, and a genre of your choosing. These different types of texts will help us think through the questions of reading, writing, and race/racism that we will be studying this quarter. Our aim in our reading, writing, thinking as well as in our discussions with each other on Canvas is to examine the function and significance of the issues raised in our readings, determine what they tell us about our contemporary society and communities, figure out a range of possible ways to respond to our texts, and determine how they relate to our present time and lives. As our texts search for ethical ways to speak about and address important issues, so we will search in our writing and thinking to find our own voices, to figure out what we think about the issues that face us and our communities, and to discover how our voices and thinking relate to some of our society's most pressing concerns.

At the same time as this course is designed to encourage you to wrestle with big ideas, it is also designed to help you develop and strengthen your reading, writing, and vocabulary skills. We will review and practice fundamentals of grammar, syntax, and writing that will give you a strong foundation for writing different kinds of informal assignments as well as a range of formal essays, from personal and persuasive essays to analytical essays. My goal is for you to leave the class feeling prepared to read and write in college and with a renewed confidence in your reading, writing, and critical thinking abilities. I also hope that you will leave the class with a clear understanding about the fundamental importance of reading and writing in your education and your lives. I'm excited to embark on this journey together this quarter, and I look forward to working with you all. Welcome to the course!

## Student Learning Outcomes

In English 1A, students will practice writing as a multi-step process, including planning and revising with attention to varying purposes, audiences, and rhetorical strategies. Students will also read and analyze rhetorically and culturally diverse narrative and expository texts from a variety of perspectives.

## Remote Course Organization

This course is going to be taught online in an asynchronous format using Canvas for our course platform and Zoom as our office hours platform. This means that our class will be fully online and that we will not meet together as a class over Zoom or in person. While you will be working individually on assignments during your own time, we will have regular weekly assignment deadlines, weekly public Canvas posts, peer-editing requirements that involve coordinating with other students in the course, and weekly Zoom office hours. If there is interest, I may add group office hours as a way for students to connect with each other and me over Zoom.

## Course Texts

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (1963, Vintage, ISBN-10: 9780679744726)

Toni Morrison, *Recitatif: A Story* (1983, Knopf, ISBN-10: 0593315030)

Course Reader

Independent Book

Our two course texts are available at the De Anza [Bookstore](#), and the course reader will be provided to you on Canvas. Your independent book will be chosen by you in the early part of the quarter. You must purchase the Baldwin and Morrison books in print form (not digital copies); in Week 4, I will require you to upload a picture of you with your books, so be sure to order them at the beginning of the quarter. The bookstore has an online ordering system, but you can also purchase books in person if you will be on campus this quarter. You may also order the course texts elsewhere, but please use the ISBN numbers provided above so that you purchase these exact editions; this is especially important with the Baldwin text, as there are many different editions of this book. I will also add readings throughout the quarter, particularly on writing and grammar as I become more familiar with your writing skills, and these will be provided to you on Canvas.

On the print copy requirement: we will be reading a lot about the issue of print vs. digital reading this quarter, particularly how they are different types of practices, and I want you to have the experience of reading our longer course texts in print form. Please make sure to only purchase print copies of the two course texts and please let me know at the start of the quarter if you are having trouble accessing hard copies of these books.

## Course Grading Breakdown and Portfolio Process

Participation (Canvas engagement, weekly discussion posts and responses, familia participation, WRC participation) – 10%; Reading Journals, Quizzes, Homework Videos, and Homework Assignments – 20%; Essays and Prewriting – 70% (Personal Essay – 10%, Persuasive Essay – 10%, Analytical Essay – 20%, In-Class Reflective Essay – 15%, Independent Reading Project and Reflection – 15%). You must submit and complete all major assignments in order to be eligible to earn a passing grade.

Our course will involve a portfolio process, which means that you will submit a portfolio of work at the end of the course in lieu of a having a final exam. The portfolio will include your revised analytical essay, an in-class essay, and another essay of your choosing (either your personal essay or your persuasive essay). In order to pass the course, your portfolio must pass the portfolio process.

Thus, your final grade in this course depends on two processes:

1. If you complete all of your work in the class, you will submit a portfolio of selected writing for review by members of the English Department at the end of the quarter. If these readers agree that your portfolio demonstrates the appropriate skills for a student who has completed a quarter of EWRT 1A, you will pass the class. If your portfolio does not demonstrate the appropriate skills, you will not pass the class.
2. If the English Department determines that your portfolio should pass, your actual final letter grade (A, B, or C) will be determined by the percentage of points you earned throughout the quarter. For example, if your percentage on your assignments throughout the quarter in this class is 89% and you pass the portfolio process, you will receive a B+ in the class; however, if you do not pass the portfolio process, you cannot pass the class, regardless of your current grade in the course.

This means that, in order to pass this class with a good grade, you need to:

- complete all of your work and score as many points as possible during the quarter.
- revise and polish selected essays in order to assemble a strong portfolio at the end of the quarter.

My grades on your essays will be a signal as to whether you are likely to pass the portfolio process, so you will definitely know where you stand well before you submit your portfolio; however, you should keep in mind that—ultimately—you will not be able to “make up” for non-passing portfolio essays by earning lots of participation points or homework points. Those points will not affect the assessment of your portfolio, even if they affect your grade.

## Course Requirements

Remote Participation, Canvas Protocols, and Office Hours: Active engagement is important to the success of this course as a whole and to your individual success in it. For asynchronous online courses, active engagement is measured by the timeliness of your assignment

submissions, the thoroughness of your work, the frequency of time spent on Canvas, your participation in writing families, and your lively participation on our course discussion board where you will also interact with your classmates. It is also measured by your frequent communication with me, whether this be over email, Canvas, in office hours, or via your assignments. The best way to get in touch with me is by [email](#). I check my email frequently throughout the week, but I generally sign off at the dinner hour. If you email me in the evening, I will likely not respond until the next day. If you haven't received a response from me within 24-hours, please resend your email or try to message me on Canvas; it is likely that I didn't receive your email. If I send you an email, Canvas message, or note on one of your assignments on Canvas, please respond in a timely manner. Failure to respond will adversely affect your participation as well as your overall grade in the course, as online communication is the main way we will be interacting this quarter.

I will also be available for office hours on Zoom by appointment during the week. Please email me to set up an appointment and offer several times that are convenient for you. The Zoom link for office hours is in the "College and Course Resources and Guides" module on Canvas (the first module), and we will be using that link all quarter.

Overall, the most important thing this quarter is to be in open communication with me about any challenges that you are facing meeting any of the course expectations. I'm here to help you succeed and will do whatever I can to make that possible. Please do reach out!

Student Workload: This is a 5-unit course, and typically one unit equals one hour of classroom work at De Anza. Students should expect to spend two hours of outside preparation for each course unit in addition to the in-class time, which for us is asynchronous. For our course, this means that you should expect to spend a maximum of 15 hours/week on this course. In other words, this course is a significant time commitment. While I will try to help you work as efficiently as possible, it is important to realize that this course will demand a significant amount of your time every week. Please reach out if you have concerns about the time commitment required for this course.

Planning: If you do not have a planner, I would strongly encourage you to get one now. Using a planner to map out your assignments for this course and your other responsibilities (including eating and sleeping!) is crucial for you to determine how you will manage your time this quarter and when you will complete the work necessary to succeed in this course. I'm happy to talk about time-management strategies and offer suggestions about planning your schedule, so please reach out if you need help with this!

Reading Tips: Reading is a very demanding and difficult task, especially when done well and especially in our digital age when so many distractions are possible. We'll be talking a lot about reading strategies this quarter, but I have some initial suggestions that I hope you'll take up and experiment with this quarter: 1) turn off your cell phone while you read for class, or put it far away from you, somewhere that is difficult to reach. 2) Only use your computer to look up definitions of words or to write down notes as you read. 3) Clear your workspace. 4) Before you read, take some time to think about the genre of the reading and look up important contexts: Who is the author? When were they alive? When was this piece written

and in what publication? What is it generally about? Why did the author write it? 5) Read slowly and take breaks, especially if you're feeling uninterested or tired. Getting up and moving around every half hour or so helps us stay focused when we're reading and keeps our mind fresh.

Lecture Recordings: I will post various recordings over the course of the quarter to introduce writing concepts, explain key ideas of the readings and assignments, introduce paper prompts, and review our weekly reading and assignments. These recordings will be in our modules, and you should plan to watch them by the end of the day on which they are posted. Especially important will be the recordings I post on Monday mornings, which will review the upcoming readings and assignments for each week.

Reading Assignments: You are expected to complete the reading assignments by the due dates listed in the reading schedule below and in the modules, having annotated the reading, taken extensive notes, and completed any homework associated with it. I will occasionally ask you to upload your annotations to show how you are engaging with the readings.

Homework Assignments: Quizzes, CRIT Exercises, Keywords, Reading Questions, Reading Journals, Response Videos, etc.: I will assign various reading and writing homework to help us analytically engage with our texts, sharpen our reading and writing skills, and prepare for our essays, one of these being a CRIT exercise, which is short for Close Reading Interpretive Tool and is a step-by-step explanation of how to closely analyze a passage of a text; another assignment will be keyword exercises that ask you to do outside Internet research to learn about the various contexts for our reading. I will also often give you reading analysis questions to help guide your reading and reading quizzes to make sure you stay caught up with the reading and to gauge the level of your reading comprehension as well as your ability to write about it. Some of these questions will be given as timed quizzes and some as open-ended homework questions. I will also sometimes ask you to make videos in response to our course texts and themes. Throughout the quarter, we will keep reading journals to help navigate our independent reading, which overall will help us track our thinking about our chosen text and the experience we are having reading it. I know this may sound like a lot to juggle right now, but, don't worry, I'll provide instructions for all of the assignments and will have them clearly marked in our Canvas modules. I just want to give you an idea of the types of homework assignments you will encounter in the course.

Class Discussion Posts and Responses: Each Friday of the quarter, you will be required to submit a post in the Class Discussion section of Canvas in response to a question (or sometimes a series of questions) that I pose there. In addition to your Friday post, you should set aside time over the weekend to read through your classmates' posts and respond to at least one post or comment; your response will be due each week by Sunday. Please wait until Sunday to comment on a post (i.e. don't comment and post at the same time on Friday). Due to the volume of posts that will be generated on our discussion board, I won't be able to accept late posts or responses on discussion threads, so be sure to submit them on time to receive participation credit for the week.

Writing Assignments and Turnitin.com: You are required to complete five papers—a personal essay, a persuasive essay, one analytical essay, a timed reflective essay, and a final

reflective essay on your independent reading project. Aside from the timed essay, all papers will involve extensive drafting and planning as well as peer editing in our writing familias (see below for info). All papers are due on Canvas, and they will be cross-checked by turnitin.com on our Canvas site. Late papers will be docked one letter grade for each day the paper is late and papers over one week late cannot earn a passing grade, although they must still be submitted for credit to ensure that you will be eligible to pass the course. I have an open revision policy on all papers except the timed essay, so you are welcome and encouraged to revise your work throughout the quarter. Some revisions will be required this quarter, and you are also welcome to revise papers as many times as you would like. If you are planning to revise a paper, please check in with me beforehand so I can send you the revision guidelines that I require students to follow while completing revisions.

Late Work Policy: Late assignments will be docked 10% for each day they are late. This means that late papers will be docked a letter grade for each day the paper is late; papers over one week late cannot earn a passing grade, although they must still be submitted for credit to ensure that you will be eligible to pass the course.

Writing Familias: We will be forming familia groups in which you will receive feedback on your writing from your classmates. Please see the Google doc dedicated to familia sign-ups available in both the first module and the Week 1 module and sign up for a familia by the designated due date. I will post more instructions on how familias will work once you begin drafting your first paper.

Writing and Reading Center Resource—Tutoring Requirement: The [Writing and Reading Center](#) at De Anza is an incredible resource for students like us who are honing our reading and reading and writing skills, and we are very lucky to have access to it. Everyone is required to complete three WRC tutoring sessions this quarter. See the WRC link above for how to sign up, and see the Resources module on Canvas for information and videos that introduce you to the Center. The deadline for completing each tutoring session is in the reading, writing, and assignment schedule below, but feel free to complete them before the deadline and to sign up for as many as you would like. I will also include the deadlines in our Canvas modules throughout the quarter, and I will offer extra credit if you attend extra sessions.

Academic Integrity and Citation: Academic integrity is crucial in all aspects of academic life, but especially in a course geared toward developing and improving your own thinking and writing. Academic integrity means being open, honest, and clear about the work you do and giving proper credit to people, websites, or chatbots that you might borrow from or rely on. Thus, whenever you refer, indirectly or directly, to ideas that are not your own, you must indicate the source. This applies to paraphrase and summary as well as to quotation; it also applies to the ideas and passages that you use in your homework and papers. And, of course, it certainly applies to purchasing essays online and passing them off as your own. It also applies to using large language model resources, such as ChatGPT. While we may do a little experimentation with ChatGPT writing in this course, overall you should not be using ChatGPT. If you do, you will be dropped from the course immediately, as such use has become a *huge* issue in writing courses, especially asynchronous ones like ours. As your instructor, I will be paying close attention to your writing and ideas, helping you refine and

improve them, but, to do this, you must adhere to a basic level of integrity, that is, meeting me with *your* writing and ideas not something AI generated. All of this is to say, academic dishonesty constitutes *any* information or language from a source that is left unidentified or incorrectly cited as well as more egregious forms of plagiarism. As long as you cite any outside material that you reference and avoid using ChatGPT you will do well in this course. If a student plagiarizes any assignment (including drafts and journals), they will fail the assignment, may risk failing the course, and will be reported to the College's Dean of Students. See the [De Anza Student Handbook](#) for an explanation of academic integrity.

In terms of citation style, you will be graded on the correct use of MLA citation and are required to write all papers using MLA format, which we will review throughout the course. We will be using [Purdue University's Online Writing Lab](#) as our citation reference manual. Please familiarize yourself with the website and the basics of MLA format outlined there.

Weekly Discussion Board Environment: Our course has typically been taught as a discussion-based seminar, and as we have made the transition to offering asynchronous classes, it is important that we still all work to foster the kind of space that is crucial for face-to-face seminars as well, that being an inviting, respectful, non-judgmental, and lively environment. I hope that our remote classroom is a space in which we are trying out ideas, voicing a variety of opinions, and attempting to figure things out together. I expect everyone to come to the course each week ready to actively engage with the course material and each other, share ideas, and expand and challenge our thinking.

#### Key Add/Drop Dates:

Sunday, October 6: Last day to add a class and to drop a class without a "W"

Friday, November 15: Last day to drop with a "W"

#### Additional Resources

Disability Support Services: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability or if you need any type of supplementary assistance in this course, please see me in my office hours during the first two weeks of the quarter with the appropriate documentation from Disability Support Services. You can reach the DSS office for appointments via phone (# 408-864-8753) and [email](#).

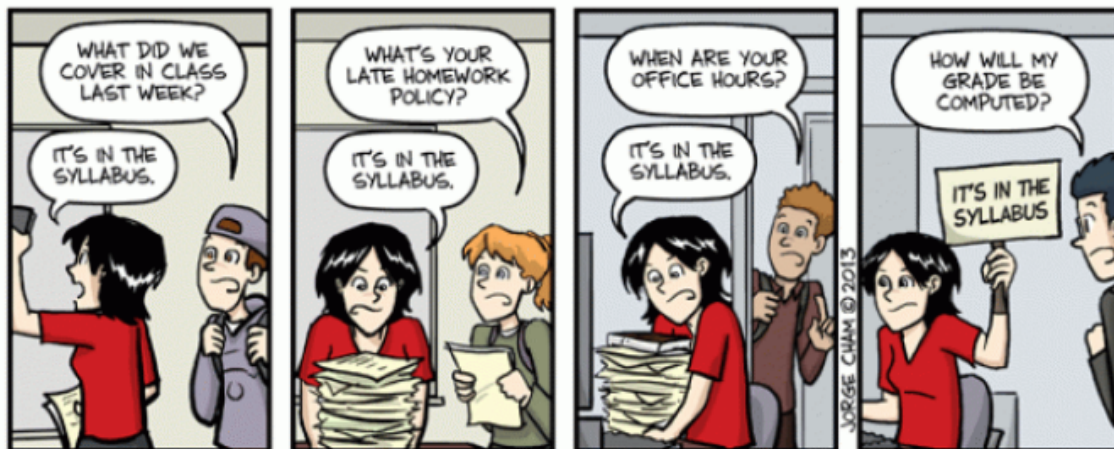
Student Health Resources: Student Health Services is open for in-person appointments and limited virtual appointments.

Food, Technology, Financial, Internet Access Resources, and more: You have access to an array of food resources as well as funds for technology and Internet needs. See this [site](#) for details and how to access these resources and more.

Reading and Writing Homework Assignment Schedule—Canvas Modules and Syllabus: All of your reading and writing homework assignments will be listed and linked to in the modules on our Canvas homepage. The assignments are due on the day on which they are listed in the



modules; you will also see these assignment due dates in your assignments section on Canvas. I will roll out the modules on a week-by-week basis, so be sure to check them frequently so that you stay up to date. I will aim to publish each week's module by Friday of the previous week, if not before. Major paper assignments as well as the reading schedule and some homework assignments are listed in the reading and writing schedule below, but you may have additional daily homework in the modules, especially as the quarter picks up and I become more familiar with your writing. Please use the syllabus schedule below to plan ahead and to stay up to date with your major reading and writing assignments. All readings and assignments are due by the end of the day on the assigned date.



# IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

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## Reading, Assignment, and Paper Schedule

### Unit 1: Reading and Writing as a Conversation

#### Week 1: Introduction to Composition and Reading—Discovering Our Voices: How and Why Do We Read and Write? How Do Names Relate to Our Identities and Destinies?

Monday, September 23: Introduction to the Course—Syllabus and Canvas Review; “Getting to Know You” Survey; “Where Do You Know From?” Assignment Review; Writing Familia Sign-Up

\*Due on Canvas: “Getting to Know You” Survey, Writing Familia Sign-Up; Question or Comment Post on Class Discussion Board (Optional)



Tuesday, September 24: Mortimer Adler, “How to Mark a Book”; Natalie Goldberg, “Be Specific”; “What is a Genre?”

\*Due on Canvas: Adler Reading Questions, Goldberg Reading Questions (at end of the Goldberg essay: “Thinking Critically about this Reading” and “Questions for Study and Discussion”); “Where Do You Know From?” Video Post

Thursday, September 26: Sandra Cisneros, “My Name”; CRIT Handout; Jesse Singal, “Is Your Name Your Destiny?”

\*Due on Canvas: Annotations and CRIT Exercise on “My Name”; Singal Reading Questions

Friday, September 27: Weekly Discussion Board Post Due on Canvas (see Canvas Discussions for Questions)

Sunday, September 29: Weekly Discussion Board Response Due on Canvas (respond to a classmates’ post, or respond to someone else’s comment on your original post; please do not post your response until after Friday and until you’ve read through your classmates posts)

Week 2: Finding Our Voices: How and Why Do We Read and Write? How Do Names Relate to Identities and Destinies?; Paper #1 Workshop

Tuesday, October 1: Verlyn Klinkenborg, selections from *Several Short Sentences About Writing*

\*Due on Canvas: Klinkenborg Reading Questions

Wednesday, October 2: **Full Draft of Paper #1 Due on Canvas for Workshop at 5pm** (See the Google Doc in the Modules for Peer-Editing Partners and Instructions for the Workshop Assignment; I will send out a message once you submit your papers and the partners are finalized)

Thursday, October 3: **Peer Editing Worksheet on Partner’s Draft Due on Canvas and to Your Partner**

Friday, October 4: Weekly Discussion Board Post Due on Canvas

Sunday, October 6: Weekly Discussion Board Response Due on Canvas; **Paper #1 Due: Personal Essay on Names, Identities, and Destinies (Final Version)**

Week 3: How and Why Do We Read and Write? – Independent Reading Project and Print vs. Digital Reading

Tuesday, October 8: Nicholas Carr, “The Deepening Page,” from *The Shallows* and “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”

\*Due on Canvas: Carr Questions

Thursday, October 10: Tina Jordan, “How to Be a Better Reader”

\*Due on Canvas: Independent Reading Project Journal #1

Friday, October 11: Weekly Discussion Board Post Due on Canvas

Sunday, October 13: Weekly Discussion Board Response Due on Canvas; Independent Reading Video Post Due

Week 4: How and Why Do We Read and Write?—Independent Reading Project and Print vs. Digital Reading

Tuesday, October 15: Maryanne Wolf, “Letter Three—Deep Reading: Is it Endangered?” and “Letter Four—What Will Become of the Readers We Have Been,” from *Reader, Come Home*

\*Due on Canvas: Wolf Questions

Thursday, October 17: Maryanne Wolf, “Letter Eight—“Building a Biliterate Brain,” from *Reader, Come Home*; “Reading with and Against the Grain”; Noam Chomsky, “The False Promise of ChatGPT”

\*Due on Canvas: Wolf and Chomsky Questions; Photo of You with Your Print Copies of the Course Texts

Friday, October 18: Weekly Discussion Board Post Due on Canvas

Sunday, October 20: Weekly Discussion Board Response Due on Canvas; Independent Reading Project Journal #2 Due

Week 5: Persuasive Essay

Tuesday, October 22: **Paper #2 Full Draft and Draft Work Due on Canvas for Workshop—Persuasive Essay on “Deep Reading**

Thursday, October 24: **Peer Editing Worksheet on Paper #2 Full Draft Due**

Friday, October 25: Weekly Discussion Board Post Due on Canvas; **Complete WRC Tutoring Session #1 by today**

Sunday, October 27: Weekly Discussion Board Response Due on Canvas; **Paper #2—  
Persuasive Essay on “Deep Reading” Due (Final Version)**

**Unit 2: Difficult Conversations—Racism in the U.S.**

Week 6: Racism in the U.S.: Racial Justice and the Persistence of Racism

Tuesday, October 29: James Baldwin, “My Dungeon Shook,” from *The Fire Next Time* (pp. 3-10)

\*Due on Canvas: Baldwin Questions

Thursday, October 31: Baldwin, “Down at the Cross,” from *The Fire Next Time* (pp. 13-47)

\*Due on Canvas: Baldwin Questions

Friday, November 1: Weekly Discussion Board Post Due on Canvas

Sunday, November 3: Weekly Discussion Board Response Due on Canvas; Independent Reading Project Journal #3 Due

Week 7: Racism in the U.S.: Racial Justice and the Persistence of Racism

Tuesday, November 5: Baldwin, “Down at the Cross,” from *The Fire Next Time* (pp. 47-82)

\*Due on Canvas: Baldwin Questions

Thursday, November 7: Baldwin, “Down at the Cross,” from *The Fire Next Time* (pp. 82-106); John Trimble, “How to Write a Critical Analysis”

\*Due on Canvas: Baldwin Questions

Friday, November 8: Weekly Discussion Board Post Due on Canvas

Sunday, November 10: Weekly Discussion Board Response Due on Canvas; Independent Reading Project Journal #4 Due

Week 8: Analytical Essay on Baldwin

Tuesday, November 12: **Outline, Brainstorming, and Introduction to Analytical Essay on Baldwin Due**

Thursday, November 14: **Paper #3—Full Draft of Analytical Essay on Baldwin—Due on Canvas for Workshop**

Friday, November 15: **Peer Editing Worksheet on Analytical Essay Due; Complete WRC Tutoring Session #2 by today**

Sunday, November 17: **Paper #3 Due—Analytical Essay on Baldwin (Final Version)**

### **Unit 3: Fictions of Race and Racism**

#### Week 9: Racism in the U.S.: Racial Codes, Reading, and Fiction

Tuesday, November 19: Toni Morrison, “Recitatif” (pp. 3-40) read the story first, not the introduction)

\*Due on Canvas: Morrison Questions and Reflections

Thursday, November 21: Zadie Smith, “Somebody in There After All,” Introduction to “Recitatif”

\*Due on Canvas: Smith/Morrison Questions and Reflections

Friday, November 22: Weekly Discussion Board Post Due on Canvas

Sunday, November 24: Weekly Discussion Board Response Due on Canvas; Independent Reading Project Journal #5 Due

### **Unit 4: Reading and Writing Independently**

#### Week 10: In-Class Essay

Tuesday, November 26: **Paper #4 Due—In-Class/Timed Essay on Morrison’s “Recitatif” (completed on Canvas)**

Thursday, November 28: *Thanksgiving Holiday*

#### Week 11: Final Portfolio and Independent Reading Project Reflection

Tuesday, December 3: **Paper #5 Due—Independent Reading Project Reflection (Final Version); Final Portfolio Work**

Thursday, December 5: Final Portfolio Work

Friday, December 6: **Final Portfolios Due on Canvas; Final Paper Revisions Due**

Week 12: Final Exam Week— **No Final Exam; the Final Portfolio is our Final Exam**