

Survey of Contemporary Literature
English 4/6933, Fall 2014
Section 1, 10:00-10:50 MWF

Prof. Robert West
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BOOKS:

Atwood, Margaret. *Moral Disorder and Other Stories*. (ISBN-13: 978-0385721646)
Carson, Ciaran. *Collected Poems*. (ISBN-13: 978-1930630451)
Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. (ISBN-13: 978-1400078776)
Morrison, Toni. *A Mercy*. (ISBN-13: 978-0307276766)
Spencer, Elizabeth, *The Southern Woman: Selected Fiction*. (ISBN-13: 978-0812980769)
Walcott, Derek. *Selected Poems*. Ed. Edward Baugh. (ISBN-13: 978-0374531119)

One or two plays, to be determined.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We'll examine work by several English-language authors active in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, focusing on these issues:

- Questions of value(s). Why is a given work worth reading? What behaviors and ways of thinking and feeling does it seem to espouse?
- Theory vs. practice. What aesthetic does an author articulate in essays, interviews, and elsewhere—and how does that relate to his or her artistic practice?
- Tradition vs. innovation. How does a contemporary literary work participate in the history of its form or genre?
- Questions of canonicity. How does a contemporary work (or a contemporary author) become widely regarded as “major”?

WRITTEN WORK:

There will be two exams, two papers (8-10 pp. each), and a reading journal.

