

2018-
2019

The University of Mississippi Common Reading Experience Resource Guide

Integrating
Collected Stories of
William Faulkner
into the Classroom



Written by EDHE, Library, and
Writing and Rhetoric
Faculty and Staff
2018-2019

Table of Contents

	Page Number
1. Using <i>Collected Stories</i> of William Faulkner in the Classroom	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why does UM have a Common Reading Experience program?• Why was <i>Collected Stories</i> of William Faulkner selected?• Who is William Faulkner?• How do I teach a short story collection?• How do I encourage students to read?• How do I lead a class discussion?• How do I deal with controversial topics?• How do I build instruction around the book's themes?• What library resources are available?• What events or speakers are being planned for the fall semester?• What if one of my students has a disability and needs the book in a different format?	
2. For Anyone Anxious About Teaching Faulkner	7
3. Mississippi Writers, Dialect Guide, and Faulkner's Three Wars	10
4. Integrating <i>Collected Stories</i> of William Faulkner into Residential Learning	15
5. Integrating <i>Collected Stories</i> of William Faulkner into EDHE 105/305	20
6. Integrating <i>Collected Stories</i> of William Faulkner into WRIT 100/101	28
7. Appendix	38
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sample rubrics	

**An electronic version of this Guide is available in the EDHE_105-305_Instructors_2018-2019_Fall Blackboard course and on the Department of Writing and Rhetoric website at <https://library.cwr.olemiss.edu/guides/cre/>.*

Chapter 1: Using *Collected Stories* of William Faulkner in the Classroom

Why does UM have a Common Reading Experience?

The Common Reading Experience provides a shared intellectual experience for new members of the UM community. Through reading and considering a common book, new students engage with each other and with UM faculty in exploring issues relevant to today's global community. The Common Reading Experience helps students understand the expectations of college-level academic work, the nature of scholarly inquiry, and the values of an academic community. The program also enriches new students' campus experiences through co-curricular programs and events related to the book. The Common Reading Text is used in EDHE classes, Writing 100/101 classes, and other classes on campus. For more information about the Common Reading Experience visit <http://umreads.olemiss.edu/>.

Why was *Collected Stories* of William Faulkner selected?

The Common Reading Text is chosen by a committee made up of UM faculty, staff, and students. This year's selection was chosen so incoming UM students could engage and work with Oxford's most famous author. Faulkner's collection features many of his popular short stories such as "A Rose for Emily" and "Barn Burning," but it will expose readers to many lesser-known pieces, providing a broader sense of who he is as a writer. Though the stories are older than the material usually selected for the Common Reading Text, Faulkner's works feature many timeless themes such as race, family, morality, community, and many others that allow for connections to modern Oxford and the world. Readers will see Oxford and Lafayette County portrayed under the fictional names of Jefferson and Yoknapatawpha County, which allows them to gain a better historical sense of their current home.

Who is William Faulkner?

William Faulkner is a native Mississippian, born near UM in New Albany. He spent much of his life in Oxford and was enrolled at UM for three semesters, though he never graduated. Later well known for stylistic techniques such as long, drawn-out sentences and stream of consciousness, Faulkner enjoyed writing at a young age and wrote his first novel, *Soldiers' Pay*, in his mid-twenties. Though he wrote canonical works such as *The Sound and The Fury*; *As I Lay Dying*; *Light in August*; and *Absalom, Absalom!* in the late 1920s and 1930s, he did not make a lot of money from these books, and he supplemented his income by working as a Hollywood screenwriter. Faulkner later achieved global fame for his works, winning the 1949 Nobel Prize for Literature, the National Book Award for Fiction in 1951 for *Collected Stories*, and two Pulitzer Prizes for Fiction in 1955 and 1963 for his novels *A Fable* and *The Reivers* respectively. He is also the namesake of the prestigious PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, which is given annually to the best pieces of fiction by living American authors. Faulkner died after suffering a heart attack on July 6, 1962. He is buried at St. Peter's Cemetery in Oxford.

How do I teach a short story collection?

The Common Reading Experience provides students and teachers in all disciplines a chance to interact with a shared text. Critical analysis of texts may feel like foreign territory to some teachers; however, analysis is a skill that is useful in all areas of education and beyond and can be approached in ways with which teachers are comfortable. Writing classes use the common reading text as the basis of a major project, but work with the book in other classes does not need to be so in-depth or take up entire class periods. Try to implement short in-class discussions, homework assignments, response papers, or journal writings using the themes and prompts listed in this guide. Or ask students to examine the choices Faulkner makes as a writer (style, structure, dialect, dialogue, etc.) and how they impact us as readers. Remember that you can concentrate on a few stories that relate specifically to the themes of your course. This resource guide should provide starting points for discussions, homework, and/or writing assignments that will challenge students.

How do I encourage students to read?

Before assigning reading:

- Preview *Collected Stories* of William Faulkner with students. Introduce the book during class. Explain how the book will be used in the course and how it will help students meet learning outcomes. Share your own excitement about the book, perhaps describing some favorite passages, events, or people.
- Help students understand the depth of reading required. Display a passage, and model critical reading strategies such as text annotation and marginalia.

As students read:

- Provide focused questions for students to consider while they are reading. Ask them to respond to those questions in writing before the next class.
- Have students identify and submit a discussion topic or question via email or Blackboard after they have read an assignment but before the next class meeting. Use their topics and questions as the basis for class activities.
- Require students to keep a reading response journal in which they comment on or question the reading assignment.
- Ask students to underline/highlight several passages from a reading assignment. In class, ask students to discuss one of their underlined/highlighted passages.

After students have read:

- Use class time and activities to build on, rather than summarize, the reading assignment.
- At the start of class, assign a one-minute paper in which students identify both the most crucial part of the reading assignment and an unanswered question they have about the reading assignment.
- During the first few minutes of class, ask students to write about links between the reading assignment and the topic being discussed in class.
- Distribute one or two questions that build on the reading assignment. Use the think-pair-share protocol. Students first consider the question(s) on their own. Then they discuss the question(s) with a partner. Finally, they share their results with the class.

How do I lead a class discussion?

A good class discussion, like any part of teaching, should be structured yet open to improvisation. Following are some pointers for leading a discussion based on what students have read (or even their attendance at an event).

Preparation before the class meeting:

Though you may have already read the stories, be sure to review what the students are reading for your class meeting. Make a list of what you would like your students to learn from this exercise in order of importance.

- For instance, you might make priority one that students understand what they read.
- Then you might select a couple of scenes or events in the book that seem important or interesting (or even puzzling – just because you are leading class discussion does not mean you need to have all the possible answers).
- Perhaps you have selected several themes in the stories as your focus. You might choose scenes that relate to poverty, stereotypes, or the power of community.
- You might also ask students to respond to a specific quotation or passage.
- Jot down a few notes so you can access them easily during your class discussion.
- Annotate your own text.

Class time:

- Establish respect. Class discussion is a time for exploration, and the classroom is a safe environment for students to say what they are thinking. Remind students of the first rule of the University creed: “I believe in respect for the dignity of each person.” Be sure students are listening carefully to each speaker and taking his or her ideas seriously.
- Before discussion, ask students to reflect on a directed, yet open, question in a five- to ten-minute writing. Encourage students to keep writing throughout the allotted time even if they run out of things to say. They will surprise themselves with this unstructured writing. This writing is not a quiz with one correct answer. Ask them questions such as “What do you think is the significance of X?”; “How has X changed over time?”; “Why did X do what he or she did?” You could also ask them to do a close reading of a particular passage, perhaps even comparing it to another passage.
- Avoid general questions such as “What did you think of the reading for today?” or “What did you find interesting?” These are dead-end questions that will lead to short discussions.
- To mix things up, you may also have them work together in small groups to find discussion starters or answers to your questions.

Other ideas and approaches:

- Different classes have different personalities. Just make sure the environment in which students speak is a safe one, and continue to encourage discussion in different ways if something is not working.
- Some students will direct their comments just to you. Encourage them to talk to each other.
- If you had them write a response, invite students to share what they wrote.
- If you had them work in groups, invite representatives from each group to share what they found.

- Encourage students to point to specifics in the text. Ask them where they see what they see.
- Invite students to read sections out loud.
- Be open to where the conversation takes you. Sometimes students will pick up on details that you didn't see.
- Try not to let the class discussion go over fifteen to twenty minutes. Students are most productive in that time frame.
- At the end of the discussion, recap the major points made or ask students to do so.
- Course-specific discussion prompts are included in the course-specific sections of this guide.

How do I deal with controversial topics?

Some issues in *Collected Stories* of William Faulkner may spark controversy in the classroom. Issues that may generate controversy include but are not limited to cultural stereotypes, cultural identity, sexism, racism, tradition, pedophilia, war, and substance abuse. The Yale Center for Teaching and Learning's [Teaching Controversial Topics](#) can help you consider different approaches to discussing these issues.

Remember that the common read discussion should always serve your course outcomes. If a student raises an issue with which you have no expertise or are uncomfortable tackling, you might respond by explaining the topic is more suited for discussion in a different course (such as English, Sociology, or Political Science). For example, you might say, “[Controversy X] is an important issue, and it’s one that you can study in depth in [Course Y]. [Course Y] is taught by an expert in that field. For the purposes of this course, let’s keep the focus on [your course outcome Z].” Additional guidelines are below.

If a student raises a controversial issue unexpectedly, you may want to:

1. Acknowledge the student’s remark.
2. Acknowledge that other students may hold different views or positions.
3. Assess your willingness to continue the discussion further.
4. Assess other students’ willingness to continue the discussion further.

The following guidelines may be helpful for facilitating planned discussions of controversial issues:

1. Articulate a clear purpose for the discussion (for example, how the discussion is related to course objectives).
2. Establish ground rules, such as listening without interrupting the speaker, questioning ideas rather than criticizing individuals, offering at least one piece of evidence to support each point made, using “I” statements rather than “you” statements.
3. Be an active facilitator by redirecting students who are off topic or participating too actively, ensuring students are not put on the spot as spokespersons for certain groups, providing opportunities for all students to participate (orally or through writing), and being attuned to students’ emotions.
4. Summarize the discussion at the end of class and obtain student feedback.

How do I build instruction around the stories' themes?

The stories weave many themes: family, cultural stereotypes, cultural identification, gender stereotypes, tradition, class identification, small town or rural life, pride, nationalism, and others.

1. A class focusing on the theme of small town or rural life might look like this:
 - a. Individually, students identify and write about a passage that illustrates the theme of small town or rural life. (five to seven minutes)
 - b. As a class, students discuss the passages they have chosen. (ten to fifteen minutes)
 - c. With partners, students list what the depictions of small town or rural life mean in a bigger picture sense. In other words, what are Faulkner's intentions and what might different readers think about the depictions? Why? (five to ten minutes)
 - d. Student pairs report their findings to the entire class. (ten to fifteen minutes)
 - e. Homework: Students use the Internet or other resources to identify other depictions of small town or rural life. Here are some questions for them to consider: What is being written about/covered and why? Do the depictions match what Faulkner wrote about? How so or how not, and why is that relevant? What stereotypes about small town or rural life are present? Why? Why do stereotypes matter in terms of larger perception?

What library resources are available?

Visit the [UM Libraries Common Reading Research Guide](#). Explore this website about *Collected Stories* of William Faulkner featuring full text articles, videos, suggested readings, upcoming events, and more.

Extra copies of the book

Two paperback copies of the book are on reserve at the J.D. Williams Library at the first-floor West circulation desk for three-day checkout. Two additional copies are located in the main library stacks for regular checkout.

What events or speakers are being planned for the fall semester?

Thought-provoking events are an excellent way to get students involved with the book outside of the classroom. Please consider encouraging your students to attend an event and reflect on the overall message being delivered. For the most up-to-date list, visit the [UM Libraries Common Reading Research Guide](#).

What if one of my students has a disability and needs a copy of the book in a different format?

Students with disabilities should visit Student Disability Services in 234 Martindale as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester. SDS provides classroom accommodations to all students on campus who disclose a disability, request accommodations, and meet eligibility requirements. SDS will be able to help your student acquire a copy of the CRE book in an appropriate format. The SDS website, <http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/sds/SDSFaculty.htm>, has some helpful resources for instructors.

Chapter 2: For Anyone Anxious About Teaching Faulkner

Prepared by Stephen Monroe
Chair, Department of Writing and Rhetoric
University of Mississippi

Faulkner wrote many books, but *Collected Stories* is perhaps the best introduction to his work. This year, as a community, we will gather together around ten stories from the collection. We will read the stories together. We will write and talk about them in EDHE, Writing, and other classes. At convocation, we will hear from one of the best Faulkner scholars in the country, our very own Jay Watson. This will be fun!

The ten stories were selected by students, faculty, and staff. They are worthwhile and challenging stories. Our first-year students were given *Collected Stories* at orientation this summer. During that ceremony, students were charged with reading the ten selections before the start of classes. Reading Faulkner is their first homework assignment of college. I am an optimist, and I believe that every one of our students will attempt to complete this homework.

Of course, reading Faulkner is not easy, and neither is teaching Faulkner. I've been asked to provide some encouraging thoughts for this resource guide. Below are some introductory ideas and resources that I hope will be helpful as you prepare your classes and guide your students.

William Faulkner lived and worked right here in Oxford. He was a special student at UM. He attended classes, went to dances, joined a fraternity, and borrowed books from the library. He walked where we are walking today. He knew the Grove, the Lyceum, the Square, and the old train depot, which was still an actual train depot in his time. Faulkner's favorite building on campus was the imposing Ventress Hall. When he was young, Faulkner worked on the university paint crew, and the story goes that he was the only person brave enough to be hoisted on a rope to repaint the turret.¹

William Faulkner was a local person, a product of this very place. He was also—eventually—one of the most famous and accomplished writers of his time. He won the Nobel Prize. He wrote for Hollywood. He travelled the world and was celebrated everywhere. Indeed, our very own William Faulkner is widely regarded—alongside William Shakespeare—as one of the greatest writers in the history of the English language.

For the rest of their lives, our students will have a special association with William Faulkner. Wherever they travel in the world, people will relate our town and our university with Faulkner. Educated people in Japan, Russia, and France will not know much, if anything, about our football team, but they will know about William Faulkner.

So, of course, our students need to know about William Faulkner, too.

The short stories are the best place to begin. They are his most accessible works, but even they can push back, especially on first-time readers. Faulkner’s fiction can be dense and difficult to understand. If your students are having trouble, encourage them to persevere. Remind them that college is a time to challenge yourself, to read difficult books, and to think creatively and actively about the world. Reading and thinking can be hard work, but reading and thinking are always rewarding.

The Faulkner scholar Noel Polk once reminded an audience that when first reading Faulkner, “it’s okay to be confused.”² Faulkner sometimes withheld facts from his readers. He did not want to make the world seem like an obvious place, a place with clear signposts telling us what was wrong and what was right. Such murkiness can frustrate his readers, but it can also lead us toward tremendous insights. In reading Faulkner, we are forced to think about the complexities of life, about ourselves, about, to use Faulkner’s own words, “the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself.”³ Again, we should encourage our students to read Faulkner closely and to bring their own ideas with them to the exercise. His work demands and rewards our attention.

We should also keep in mind that we are not asking students to love or venerate William Faulkner. He was a literary genius, but he was not a saint. He was a white man from Mississippi who both benefited from and questioned the racial inequities and injustices of his time and place. As Polk wrote, “Faulkner and Race” is “a hellishly complex topic.”⁴ Faulkner’s characters and narrators sometimes use disturbing language, including racist language. Students may have negative reactions or opinions about some of this language and about the unsettling themes and attitudes found in Faulkner’s work. As teachers, we should encourage our students to pursue those reactions and opinions through their writing and class discussions. We are not celebrating Faulkner this year; we are engaging (and sometimes critiquing) Faulkner.

For more ideas about teaching lessons related to race—and leading discussions about race and other sensitive, potentially painful topics—consult the following resources.

A superb site from the Teaching Tolerance project at the Southern Poverty Law Center:

<https://www.splcenter.org/teaching-tolerance>.

The Community Dialogue Toolkit (and other great resources) from the Winter Institute:

<http://winterinstitute.org/national-day-healing-toolkit/>.

Finally, let me emphasize the tremendous opportunity of teaching Faulkner at this university and in this town. There are dozens of Faulkner experts (and enthusiastic amateurs) on our campus and in our community. We have sights and sounds that inspired Faulkner’s fiction and that are recognizable in his work. We have a library with one of the world’s best collections of Faulkner materials. We have his beloved home, Rowan Oak.⁵ Use these places and resources as you teach Faulkner. My top suggestions:

Call Jennifer Ford at Special Collections. Plan a visit for your class. Call Bill Griffith at Rowan Oak. Plan a visit for your class. Tourists travel from across the world to meet these people and to visit these sites. We are lucky enough to be just steps away. Take advantage. Your students will benefit tremendously from a Faulkner field trip or two. When they connect their reading to their experiences, learning is inevitable.

Happy reading and teaching,

Stephen

¹ For details about Faulkner in Oxford, see one of the many books about his life. Here are some initial suggestions:

Faulkner: A Biography by Joseph Blotner

My Brother Bill by John Faulkner (William's brother)

William Faulkner and Southern History by Joel Williamson

One Matchless Time by Jay Parini

Our library has these books, plus a huge collection of Faulkner references. Start with a visit to section PS3511 in the stacks on the second floor.

² For an interesting panel about Faulkner, see "Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*" recorded in 2001 at a conference in New Orleans. Professors Noel Polk and Kenneth Holditch (a UM graduate) talk about the experience of reading Faulkner. Here is the link:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?169693-1/faulkners-the-sound-fury>.

³ This famous quote comes from Faulkner's Nobel speech of 1950. The transcript of the speech is available online, along with an audio recording in Faulkner's own voice. This is a great teaching resource. Part of this speech adorns a prominent wall on the second floor of our library. Here is the link:

https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1949/faulkner-speech.html.

⁴ Many good articles and books have been written about issues of race in Faulkner's life and works. See, for example, Noel Polk's *Children of the Dark House* and Thadious Davis's *Games of Property: Law, Race, Gender, and Faulkner's Go Down, Moses*.

⁵ For a virtual tour of Rowan Oak, hosted by UM's very own Donald Kartiganer, now professor emeritus, and Thadious Davis, see this 2002 C-Span program, which is full of insights and introductory information:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?169908-1/writings-william-faulkner>.

Chapter 3: Mississippi Writers, Dialect Guide, and Faulkner’s Three Wars

Mississippi Writers

Faulkner once said, “Everyone in the South has no time for reading because they are all too busy writing.” Below is a select list of writers from Mississippi.

- Ace Atkins
- Howard Bahr
- William Boyle
- Larry Brown
- Tim Earley
- John T. Edge
- John Faulkner
- Beth Ann Fennelly
- Ann Fisher-Wirth
- Shelby Foote
- Richard Ford
- Tom Franklin
- David Galef
- Ellen Gilchrist
- John Grisham
- Barry Hannah
- Greg Iles
- Kiese Laymon
- Jonathan Miles
- Mary Miller
- Willie Morris
- Chris Offutt
- Walker Percy
- Cynthia Shearer
- Elizabeth Spencer
- Donna Tartt
- Alice Walker
- Jesmyn Ward
- Catherine Anne Warfield
- Eudora Welty
- Neil White III
- Richard Wright
- Stark Young

Guide to Faulkner's Dialect

In an interview on 6 May 1958, Faulkner was asked, "To what degree do you consider dialect in speech important in characterization?" He replied, "I think you can't draw a character simply by putting dialect into his mouth. It is important as a part of the picture of the man, an indigenous picture of the individual. In that sense it's important, that is a man will speak according to his nature, his degree and his geography" ("What's the Good" radio program). It's clear that Faulkner viewed dialect as an important tool for conveying his message. Faulkner's use of dialect, though, can be a stumbling block for readers. The more Faulkner you read, the more comfortable you will become with the dialect. Still, it can be helpful to familiarize yourself with a few words that pop up frequently in the stories.

A

A-tall: at all

"And somehow I hadn't believed until then that he was going himself, but now I knowed he was and that he wasn't going to leave me go with him a-tall." ("Two Soldiers" 83)

Av-aytor: aviator

"It's Major de Spain's boy,' he said. 'In town. The av-aytor.'" ("Shall Not Perish" 103)

C

Cawfee: coffee

"Cawfee smell good too,' she said." ("Mule in the Yard" 260)

Chile, chillen: child, children

"Chile, run, git yo money." ("Mule in the Yard" 257)

"When even if I was sleeping on the floor in the room with your chillen, and the next morning there I am, and blood--" ("That Evening Sun" 307)

Clumb: climbed

". . . and then I clumb out like I used to watch Pete do when he was still jest seventeen and pap held that he was too young yet to be tomcatting around at night . . ." ("Two Soldiers" 88)

D

Dar: there

"Dar hit." ("Mule in the Yard" 250)

Dat: that

"You'll have to fix dat up wid her yo'self." ("Mule in the Yard" 260)

De: the

"Miss Mannie! Mule in de yard." ("Mule in the Yard" 249)

Dey: they

"Dey in de front." ("Mule in the Yard" 250)

Dis: this

“Now, ef you jest had nudder little piece of dis ham, no--.” (“Mule in the Yard” 261)

Durn: darn

“Pete looked at me a minute and put his hand on my head and rubbed my head durn nigh hard enough to wring my neck off and jumped into the bus” (“Two Soldiers” 87)

E

En: and

“But jest lemme git a whiff er cawfee en seem lak hit always whets me a little.” (“Mule in the Yard” 260-61)

Et: ate

“The next morning we et breakfast by lamplight because the bus would pass at six o'clock.” (“Two Soldiers” 87)

F

Fack: fact

“‘Fo God you wuz, en dat’s de fack.’ old Het said.” (“Mule in the Yard” 263)

Fer: far

“I reckon we ain't got as fer as the Pacific Ocean yet.” (“Two Soldiers” 82)

Fitten: suitable

“‘Likely hit ain't fitten for hawgs,’ one of the sisters said.” (“Barn Burning” 9)

Fo, fore: before

“Wipe yo foots, white man, fo you come in here.” (“Barn Burning” 11)

“I ain't done nothing; I swear ‘fore God.” (“Dry September” 179)

G

Gether: gather

“We'll gether hit and hide hit!” (“Barn Burning” 16)

Git: get

“‘If I thought enough of a rug to have to git hit all the way from France I wouldn't keep hit where folks coming in would have to tromp on hit,’ the first said.” (“Barn Burning” 13)

H

Hit: it

“Hit's big as a courthouse he thought quietly, with a surge of peace and joy whose reason he could not have thought into words, being too young for that: They are safe from him.” (“Barn Burning” 10)

Holp: helped

“Pete had give me his collection and he holp me with mine, and he would like to git the box out and look at them as good as I would, even if he was nigh twenty years old.” (“Two Soldiers” 88)

J

Jest: just

“I jest ain't going to put up with no folks treating the Unity States that way.” (“Two Soldiers” 83)

K

Ketch: catch

“I got to ketch that early bus in the morning.” (“Two Soldiers” 87)

Kin: can

“Wood and hay kin burn.” (“Barn Burning” 4)

L

Lief: gladly

“I’d just as lief be Will Mayes as Hawk, if he gets McLendon riled.” (“Dry September” 173)

M

Mo: more

“Dey’s mo in the front.” (“Mule in the Yard” 250)

N

Nome: no, ma’am

“‘Nome,’ I said. ‘I got to ketch the bus to Jefferson.’” (“Two Soldiers” 97)

S

Scaired: scared

“‘Nancy scaired of the dark,’ Jason said.” (“That Evening Sun” 293)

Set: sat

“Then we set there and I told them how Pete had jest left that morning for Pearl Harbor and I had aimed to go with him, but I would have to go back home to take care of maw and look after Pete’s ten acres, and she said how they had a little boy about my size, too, in a school in the East.” (“Two Soldiers” 98)

Sho, Sholey: sure, surely

“Only I made sho from his own mouth.” (“Two Soldiers” 84)

“He can sholy take care of this little shirttail of a farm while me and you are whupping them Japanese.” (“Two Soldiers” 84)

U

Udder: other

“Go roun de udder way en head um.” (“Mule in the Yard” 255)

Um: them

“Jest let um take their time.” (“Mule in the Yard” 255)

W

Wid: with

“I’d offer to strip dat cow fer you ef I wuzn’t so wo out wid all dis excitement we been had.” (“Mule in the Yard” 260)

Wo: worn

“I’d offer to strip dat cow fer you ef I wuzn’t so wo out wid all dis excitement we been had.” (“Mule in the Yard” 260)

Y

Yawl, Yawls': you, your

“What do yawl want to do?” (“That Evening Sun” 301)

“We had fun that night I stayed in yawls’ room, didn’t we.” (“That Evening Sun” 300)

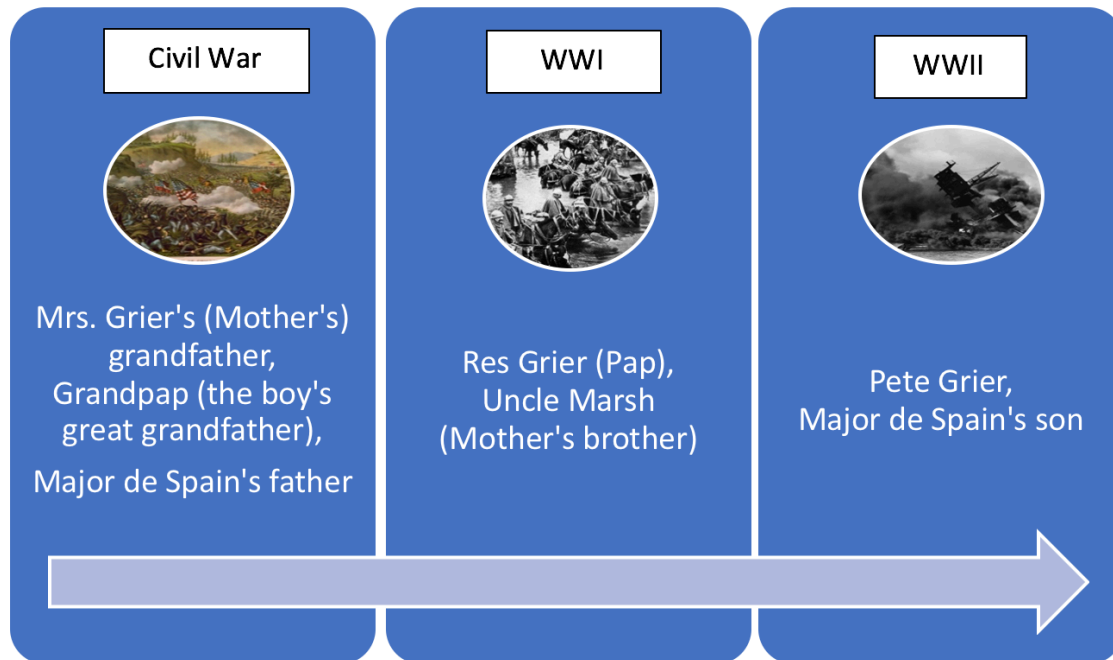
Yo: your

“Wipe yo foots, white man, for you come in here.” (“Barn Burning” 11)

Faulkner’s Three Wars

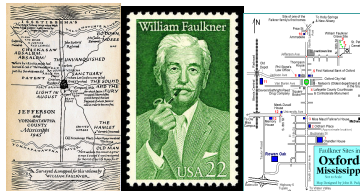
In, “So I, Who Had Never Had A War...’: William Faulkner, War, and the Modern Imagination,” UM Howry Professor of Faulkner Studies Emeritus Donald Kartiganer writes, “There were three wars at work in the mind of William Faulkner: the American Civil War, World War I, and World War II. He did not fight in any of them, nor did he write about them, if by writing we mean an account, factual or fictional, of what occurs or is likely to occur during military engagement. They are all there—in novels, short stories, essays, and letters—and yet not there: wars fantasized as reckless adventure, wars recalled as part of a legendary past or foretold as apocalyptic future, wars that have paused and are about to begin again” (*Modern Fiction Studies*, Fall 1998, 44:3, 619).

In “Two Soldiers” and “Shall Not Perish,” the Griers and Major de Spain speak frequently of family members who have served. The chart below identifies which family members served in which wars.



Chapter 4: Integrating *Collected Stories* of William Faulkner into Residential Learning

The Common Reading Experience provides a shared intellectual venture for new members of the UM community. Through reading and considering a common set of stories, new students engage with others in exploring issues relevant to today’s global community and their own lives. This section of the guide features quotes by and about Faulkner, as well as passages from the stories, that connect to issues in residential life. Also included are questions to generate conversation among community members.



“I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and that I would never live long enough to exhaust it.” ~ William Faulkner

Conversation Starters Using Quotes By and About Faulkner

- “I don’t think that I know what homesickness is either, in the sense you mean it. There are some times when I would like to hear rain on the roof of the back porch at my house, but I don’t especially want to go back there to hear it because I can imagine how pleasant it sounds from here just as well as to be there and hear it” (*Lion in the Garden* 149). *Do Faulkner’s words about homesickness resonate with you? What strategies might you use to combat homesickness?*
- “Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world . . . would do this, it would change the earth” (Graduation Address, 1952). *First-year students have many opportunities to learn and think about the UM Creed. How do Faulkner’s words echo the ideas of the Creed? How might you put these ideas into action in your living-learning communities?*
- When Faulkner was invited to visit Japan by the Japanese government, he at first declined, but later changed his mind, explaining, “. . . I thought that people should come to know one another, should make efforts, if there is anything that people of one nation can give to people of another nation, they should make that effort to do so. Even when they themselves doubted the result of it” (*Lion in the Garden* 135). *Interacting with new people from different backgrounds and/or cultures can be difficult for first-year students,*

just as it was for Faulkner. What are some strategies you might employ to facilitate and nurture relationships with new people?

- The critic Malcolm Cowley noted that, in his literary generation, “Faulkner was the only one who remained loyal to the neighbourhood he had always known, even while he lived as a foreigner among his neighbours . . . an ‘internal emigré’” (as qtd. in “Bard of the Bayou,” *The Guardian*, 20 September 1997). *Everyone sometimes feels like an insider or an outsider, a citizen or a foreigner. How do those feelings make us human? How can they connect or divide us? How will you navigate those feelings throughout the first year of college?*
- In discussing his characters (and people in general), Faulkner remarked, “There is the first stage, when you believe everything and everybody is good. Then there is the second, cynical stage when you believe that no one is good. Then, at last you come to realize that everyone is capable of almost anything—heroism or cowardice, tenderness or cruelty” (*Lion in the Garden* 32). *Members of a university community will find themselves experiencing a similar evolution in their understanding of other community members. Visit and read the contextualization plaques in front of Lamar Hall and Barnard Observatory to learn about the complicated individuals whose names appear on UM buildings. Then think about the complications in your own life and the lives of those you know. What strategies will you use to ensure that you are not overly naive or overly cynical about the actions or motivations of others?*

Conversation Starters from the Stories

- **“Barn Burning”**

“He got up. He was a little stiff, but walking would cure that too as it would the cold, and soon there would be the sun. He went on down the hill, toward the dark woods within which the liquid silver voices of the birds called unceasing,—the rapid and urgent beating of the urgent and quiring heart of the late spring night. He did not look back” (25). *In these closing lines of the story, the boy is sitting on the crest of the hill in the middle of the night, not quite sure where he is. He is leaving behind his old life and family and moving into an unknown future. Is he nervous or excited? How do you know? You, too, are in a new place, moving into an unknown future. Are you nervous? Excited? Both?*

- **“Two Soldiers”**

“Then Memphis begun. It seemed like, to me, it went on for miles. We would pass a patch of stores and I would think that was sholy it and the bus would even stop. But it wouldn’t be Memphis yet and we would go on again past water tanks and smokestacks on top of the

mills, and if they was gins and sawmills, I never knowed there was that many and I never seen any that big, and where they got enough cotton and logs to run um I don't know. Then I see Memphis. I knew I was right this time. It was standing up into the air. It looked like about a dozen whole towns bigger than Jefferson was set up on one edge in a field, standing up into the air higher than ara hill in all Yoknapatawpha County” (92-3). *Just as Memphis was a whole new world for the younger brother in this story, the UM campus and Oxford may be a whole new world for you. What has surprised you in your time here? What is as you expected it to be? How does it compare to your hometown?*

- **“Shall Not Perish”**

“There was an old lady born and raised in Jefferson who died rich somewhere in the North and left some money to the town to build a museum with. It was a house like a church, built for nothing else except to hold the pictures she picked out to put in it—pictures from all over the United States, painted by people who loved what they had seen or where they had been born or lived enough to want to paint pictures of it so that other people could see it too; pictures of men and women and children, and the houses and streets and cities and the woods and fields and streams where they worked or lived or pleased, so that all the people who want to, people like us from Frenchman’s Bend or from littler places even than Frenchman’s Bend in our county or beyond our state too, could come without charge into the cool and the quiet and look without let at the pictures of men and women and children who were the same people that we were even if their houses and barns were different and their fields worked different, with different things growing in them” (110-11). *The boy’s description of the museum in these lines is funny but, in some ways, true. Visit the University of Mississippi museum or take a look at their website at this address: <https://museum.olemiss.edu/>. In what ways is the boy’s description accurate? In what ways is the museum more complex? How can you incorporate what the museum has to offer into your college experience?*

- **“A Rose for Emily”**

This story may have been loosely based on the life of Mary Neilson, a member of the Neilson family who founded the department store on the Oxford Square. The Neilson family home (now the Neilson-Culley-Lewis House) is just a few blocks off the Square on Fillmore Avenue. It was built in 1857 by W.S. Neilson who owned what was then a dry goods store. His family occupied the house through the Civil War and into the next century (Sadler, Marilyn. “At Home in Old Oxford.” *Memphis Magazine*. 1 November 2018). *Take a stroll to the store and the house, and imagine what life must have been like there 100 or 150 years ago. What’s changed? Has anything remained the same? What do you imagine Oxford will be like 100 years after you have left?*

- **“Hair”**

“He made the payment each year, coming back and cleaning up the place. They said he would clean up that house inside like a woman, washing and scrubbing it. It would take him two weeks each April. Then he would go away again, nobody knew where, returning each April to make the payment at the bank and clean up that empty house that never belonged to him” (140). *In this story, Stribling returns to his hometown each year to fulfill what he considers a personal obligation. Family or hometown obligations can change or evolve as students set out for college. What changes in family or hometown obligations do you foresee? What do you want to hold onto from your hometown? What do you want to let go of?*

- **“Dry September”**

“You better go back North where you came from. The South dont want your kind here.’ ‘North what?’ the second said. ‘I was born and raised in this town’” (171). *The geographical stereotypes exemplified in this passage may have faded, but they still surface from time to time in the 21st century. How is your home state or region stereotyped? What stereotypes have you heard about Mississippi and the South? Have those stereotypes been confirmed in your experience?*

- **“Uncle Willy”**

“. . . and Uncle Willy reared up on the cot with his cap and goggles still on and his collar without any tie (it wasn’t fastened to his shirt at all: just buttoned around his neck) sometimes sideways and sometimes even backward like an Episcopal minister’s, and his eyes bright behind his glasses and his voice bright and fine. ‘And by Christmas we will be in California!’ he said. ‘Think of that. California!’” (242). *These lines reflect Uncle Willy’s enthusiasm for moving to a new place. How do you feel about moving to a new place? What is exciting to you? What is scary? What if the new place doesn’t match your expectations?*

- **“Mule in the Yard”**

“Now three or four times a year and as though by fiendish concord and as soon as they were freed of the box car, the entire uproar--the dust cloud filled with shouts earnest, harried and dismayed, with plunging demoniac shapes—would become translated in a single burst of perverse and uncontrollable violence, without any intervening contact with time, space, or earth, across where, in a certain hapless despair which abrogated for the moment even physical fear, Snopes ducked and doged among the thundering shapes about the house (for whose very impervious paint the town believed that he felt he had paid and whose inmate lived within it a life of idle and queen-like ease on money which he considered at least partly his own) while gradually that section and neighborhood gathered to look on from behind adjacent window curtains and porches screened and not, and from the sidewalks and even from halted wagons and cars in the street—housewives in the wrappers and boudoir caps of

morning, children on the way to school, casual Negroes and casual whites in static and entertained repose” (24). *This scene emphasizes the lack of privacy in small-town, Southern life. College dorms have a similar lack of privacy, and residents’ actions are often in public view. What are your reactions to your shared living space? Are you concerned about your lack of privacy or the privacy of others? What are the benefits of communal living? What are the drawbacks?*

- **“That Evening Sun”**

This story’s central theme is fear. Almost every character in the story talks about or demonstrates apprehension about something. *What fears do you have about the University of Mississippi? Dorm life? Oxford? What strategies can you develop to deal with those fears?*

- **“The Brooch”**

“She [Mrs. Boyd] was a widow, he [Howard] the only child. When he went away to college she went with him; she kept a house in Charlottesville, Virginia, for four years while he graduated” (647). *This story features an extremely protective mother. Most of your parents or family members won’t decide to move to Oxford to be close to you while you are in college, but all family members have to negotiate a new relationship when an individual leaves home for college. How have you negotiated that relationship with family and hometown friends? How often would you like to keep in touch? How often would your family and/or friends like you to keep in touch?*

Community Assistants may also be interested in forming book discussion groups for their residence halls, using *Collected Stories* of William Faulkner as the first selection. For help forming a book discussion group, please contact Melissa Dennis, Head of Research & Instruction Services & Associate Professor, at mdennis@olemiss.edu or 662-915-5861.

Chapter 5: Integrating *Collected Stories* of William Faulkner into EDHE 105/305

The common reading book selection is used each year in EDHE 105/305 courses primarily as a framework for class discussions, projects, and writing assignments that explore social themes and/or issues from the book. EDHE 105/305 instructors use the text (with a focus on those themes and issues) to teach students how to explore their personal reactions, to understand and appreciate both the things that make them different from their peers and the things that they have in common, and to effectively and respectfully voice their own opinions and viewpoints.

THEMES

	STORY	PAGES	RACISM	CLASS IDENTITY	GRIEF/ DEATH	FAMILY	SMALL TOWN LIFE
1	“Barn Burning”	3-25	X	X		X	X
2	“Two Soldiers”	81-99		X		X	X
3	“Shall Not Perish”	101-15		X	X	X	X
4	“A Rose for Emily”	119-30	X	X	X	X	X
5	“Hair”	131-48		X	X	X	X
6	“Dry September”	169-83	X	X	X		X
7	“Uncle Willy”	225-47	X	X	X	X	X
8	“Mule in the Yard”	249-64	X	X			X
9	“That Evening Sun”	289-309	X	X		X	X
10	“The Brooch”	647-65		X	X	X	X

See “How do I build instructions around the stories’ themes” for a sample class activity based on the theme of small town life.

CLASS DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. “Barn Burning”

EDHE 105 topic: Family Relationships

“You got to learn. You got to learn to stick to your own blood or you ain’t going to have any blood to stick to you” (8).

- What does Abner Snopes mean by this statement to his son?
- Who would be included in your “blood”?
- How important is your family to you?
- Have any of your family members or mentors mentioned things that you “got to learn” while in college?

2. “Two Soldiers”

EDHE 105 topic: Stereotypes

“The old one looked at me. ‘Somehow he doesn’t look like he lives in Memphis,’ she said. ‘He probably don’t,’ the Law said. ‘You can’t tell though. He might live anywhere, overhalls or not’” (91).

- What are these two adults discussing?
- How are they labeling or categorizing the young boy?
- Do you tend to put people in certain categories based on how they appear? If so, why?

3. “Shall Not Perish”

EDHE 105 topic: Diversity and Inclusion – Exploring Similarities

“So Father and I found out that Mother not only knew all the time it was going to happen again, but that she already knew what she was going to do when it did, not only this time but the next one too, and the one after that and the one after that, until the day finally came when all the grieving about the earth, the rich and the poor too, whether they lived with ten nigger servants in the fine big painted houses in town or whether they lived on and by seventy acres of not extra good land like us or whether all they owned was the right to sweat today for what they would eat tonight, could say, *At least this there was some point to why we grieved*” (103).

- What are the diverse groups of people described in this selection?
- What did the story-teller discover as a similarity among these diverse groups of people?
- Discuss other similarities that individuals in different social classes share.

EDHE 105 topic: Family Relationships

“‘Wait,’ said Major de Spain. He had turned again, facing us. ‘What you and his father gave him. You must know what that was.’ ‘I know it came a long way,’ Mother said. ‘So it must have been strong to have lasted through all of us. It must have been all right for him to be willing to die for it after that long time and coming that far’” (110).

- What did the parents give to the soldier who lost his life?
- How does the mother explain it?
- What are some values that you have received from family members or mentors?

4. “A Rose for Emily”

EDHE 105 topic: Traditions

“The day after his death all the ladies prepared to call at the house and offer condolence and aid, as is our custom” (123).

- What were other examples of Southern customs or traditions in this story?
- Discuss various customs related to mourning and funerals.
- How can traditions serve to help you? How can they hold you back?

5. “Hair”

EDHE 105 topic: Grit and Perseverance

“‘So he did what he promised her he would,’ Stevens said.

‘That’s what I told Bidwell,’ I said. . . .

‘So the old lady could rest quiet. I guess that’s what the pen was trying to say when it ran away from him: that now she could lie quiet’” (147).

- What did Hawkshaw promise to do? Did he succeed?
- Discuss what it took for Hawkshaw to keep his promise.
- Describe a time when you persevered in a task for a long period of time. How did you feel about it when you were finished?

6. “Dry September”

EDHE topic: Race and the University of Mississippi

“He looked at the speaker. ‘Do you claim that anything excuses a nigger attacking a white woman? Do you mean to tell me you are a white man and you’ll stand for it? You better go back North where you came from. The South dont want your kind here’” (170–71).

- This story takes place during the “Jim Crow” era between the 1890s and the 1940s. Read in the EDHE textbook about this time period.
- What was it like to be an African American in the South during this era?
- How would Will Mayes have felt?
- How has the South changed since that time?
- What more changes are needed?

EDHE 105 topic: Civility and the Active Bystander

“The barber wiped the razor carefully and swiftly, and put it away, and ran to the rear, and took his hat from the wall. ‘I’ll be back as soon as I can,’ he said to the other barbers. ‘I cant let –’ He went out, running” (173).

- What is happening in this scene from the story?
- Read the section in the EDHE textbook titled “Civility and the Active Bystander.” How was the barber standing up for Will Mayes as an active bystander?
- In what ways did the barber fail to stand up for Will Mayes?
- What would you have done if you were in the barber’s shoes?

7. “Uncle Willy”

EDHE 105 topic: Substance Abuse

“Then they made him quit dope. He had been using it for forty years, he told us once, and now he was sixty and he had about ten years more at the outside. . . . But they made him quit” (227).

- Read about Substance Abuse in your EDHE textbook, particularly focusing on “Bystander intervention techniques,” and discuss.
- Discuss how Mrs. Merridew and Reverend Schultz were trying to help Uncle Willy.
- What are some intervention techniques that you may need to use this year?

8. “Mule in the Yard”

EDHE 105 topic: Financial Literacy

“[Mrs. Hait] listened in cold, grim silence while the teller counted the money and the president and the cashier tried to explain to her the virtues of a bond, then of a savings account, then of a checking account, and [she] departed with the money in a salt sack under her apron” (253).

- How did Mannie Hait get a large amount of money?
- Were the bankers trying to help her or take advantage of her?
- After reading the chapter on “Financial Literacy” in the EDHE textbook, discuss the benefits and risks of keeping cash around instead of putting it in a bank.

9. “That Evening Sun”

EDHE 105 topic: Violence Prevention and Campus Safety

“‘Well, he’s gone now,’ father said. ‘There’s nothing for you to be afraid of now. ...’ ‘He aint gone nowhere,’ Nancy said. ‘I can feel him. I can feel him now in this lane. He hearing us talk, every word, hid somewhere, waiting’” (295).

- In this story, who is Nancy scared of and why? Is it a legitimate fear?
- The father tries to help her a few times. What did he do? Was it enough? Why, or why not?
- Read about relationship violence and the Green Dot initiative in the EDHE textbook. Discuss how these two topics apply to Nancy and this story.

10. “The Brooch”

EDHE 105 topic: Diversity and Inclusion – Class Identity

“Her name was Amy, daughter of a railroad conductor ... She lived now with an aunt who kept a boarding-house – a vivid, daring girl whose later reputation was due more to folly and the caste handicap of the little Southern town than to badness ...” (648).

- What does the writer attribute her “later reputation” to?
- What is “the caste handicap”?
- Discuss differences in social class and their effects on individuals.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

1. Small Town/Big City

- a. Divide the class into groups based on hometown size: small town, medium town, big city.
- b. Each member of the group should have one of the following roles:
 - Discussion Facilitator
 - Recorder
 - Brainstormer
 - Presenter

- c. Within each group, discuss the pros/cons of each hometown size. Each group member contributes to the discussion and also serves in his or her assigned role.
- d. After a set amount of time for discussion, the “presenter” of each group will present a five-minute summary of the findings of his/her group.
- e. Possible discussion questions for the entire class:
 - Do you know what size town you would like to live in after you graduate? What are the reasons for your choice?
 - What stereotypes are associated with towns of different sizes? Are these fair generalizations?
 - Since you have moved to Ole Miss, what have you learned about people from hometowns that are different from yours?

2. In-Class Debate

Choose one of the controversial issues or themes described in this guide and write a proposition statement. For example:

Example #1 – Resolved: Loyalty to country overrides loyalty to family

Example #2 – Resolved: Small town residents take care of each other

Divide the class into two or more groups with one or more sides taking the affirmative position and the other side(s) the negative. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for research and drafting arguments. Each side then presents its case in the following format:

- a. Affirmative constructive speech
- b. Negative constructive speech
- c. 5-minute work period
- d. Negative rebuttal speech
- e. Affirmative rebuttal
- f. 5-minute work period
- g. Negative rebuttal
- h. Affirmative rebuttal
- i. Decision

Variation: Require research and preparation outside of class. Make teams of 2-3 and use the debate as the group project assignment.

FAULKNER YEARBOOK ACTIVITY

Show students examples of illustrations and poems that Faulkner contributed to the yearbook as a student, as well as a photo spread from the *Intruder in the Dust* premiere in Oxford. Use these and the surrounding yearbook pages as a starting point for the following discussion questions:

1. Faulkner became a world-renowned author, but he clearly enjoyed and had a talent for illustration and could potentially have made a career out of it. What talents and skills do

you have outside of the major you have selected, and how could you potentially use them in an alternate career path?

2. What do these illustrations indicate about the difference in student life at Ole Miss in the late 1910s and early 1920s versus today? What do you think is the same?
3. Consider Faulkner's "To a Co-ed" poem. What does this tell you about the differences in relationships and dating then and now?

Finding Aid for all Faulkner Ole Miss yearbook images:

http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/general_library/archives/finding_aids/MUM00161.html#ref19

Some specific examples can be found via the following links:

1918:

- Social Activities Section Illustration:

<https://library.cwr.olemiss.edu/files/olemiss1918.pdf#page=113>

- Red and Blue Club:

<https://library.cwr.olemiss.edu/files/olemiss1918.pdf#page=114>

1920:

- Ole Miss Staff photograph (Faulkner in lower right corner):

<https://library.cwr.olemiss.edu/files/olemiss1920.pdf#page=115>

- A.E.F. Club Illustration:

<https://library.cwr.olemiss.edu/files/olemiss1920.pdf#page=153>

- Social Activities Section Illustration:

<https://library.cwr.olemiss.edu/files/olemiss1920.pdf#page=163>

- "To a Co-ed" poem:

<https://library.cwr.olemiss.edu/files/olemiss1920.pdf#page=182>

1921:

- Marionettes Club Illustration:

<https://library.cwr.olemiss.edu/files/olemiss1921.pdf#page=143>

- "Nocturne" poem and border:

<https://library.cwr.olemiss.edu/files/olemiss1921.pdf#page=222>

1950:

- Photo spread for *Intruder in the Dust* Premiere in Oxford:

<https://library.cwr.olemiss.edu/files/olemiss1950#page=180>

PROJECTS (NOTE: These can be assigned to groups or individuals.)

1. Faulkner Scavenger Hunt

Have your students visit some or all of the Oxford locations listed over the course of the semester or within a specified period of time. Students can either be required simply to take a selfie in the location, or for a more substantial project, have students provide a short reflective response to the questions provided (or create your own!).

1. **Rowan Oak:** Take some time to explore the grounds around the house and hang out. Were others on the property, and what were they doing? How do you think that Rowan Oak benefits the University and town aside from serving as a historic home?
2. **St. Peter's Cemetery:** What have you learned about community traditions surrounding Faulkner's grave? How do you think he would feel about this tradition? Or, find the nearby grave of Faulkner's brother Dean, who died at 28 in a plane crash. Faulkner chose the inscription on the stone from his novel *Sartoris*. How do you think this shows the connection between writing and real life for Faulkner?
3. **The Lyric:** The world premiere of *Intruder in the Dust* happened here in 1949. In what other ways do you think that Faulkner has made and continues to make Oxford a more worldly and cosmopolitan city?
4. **Faulkner bench sculpture outside City Hall:** Consider Faulkner's line "The past is never dead. It isn't even past." What do you think about this line when you see Faulkner still relaxing on the Square, often taking pictures and socializing with today's visitors?
5. **Lafayette County Courthouse plaque with Faulkner quote from *Requiem for a Nun*:** Faulkner's writing was shaped by Oxford and Lafayette county. How do you think that Oxford especially has been shaped in return by the legacy of Faulkner?
6. **University Archives' display in J.D. Williams Library:** Why do you think that it is important for a community and/or university to tell the story of its people and their accomplishments through preserved documents, photographs, etc.? Explain how this might be meaningful to have in addition to written histories.
7. **J.D. Williams Library Wall Quote:** Explain when and where Faulkner made this statement, and discuss why he said it.
8. **Thompson Chandler House:** This house and the youngest son of the family who lived there were Faulkner's inspiration for *The Sound and the Fury*. Faulkner observed and was inspired by the people and details of the world around him, which might have seemed mundane to most people. Describe some of the seemingly mundane people, places, and details in your life that might provide you creative inspiration if you observed them further.

2. Teach the Class

Note to instructor: Consider encouraging your students to use library resources found at [UM Libraries Common Reading Research Guide](#). Your assignment is to teach your classmates about one of the short stories by engaging them in discussions or activities built around themes and issues presented in the story you select. Each presentation must be 10-15 minutes long. On the day of the presentation, each group must submit a brief outline or study guide that provides the main points of your presentation. The only rule is that you are not allowed to simply recite what you believe to be the main points. Develop a class activity or game, write a song, perform a skit, make a video, use visual aids, etc. Be creative! Using presentation tools such as PowerPoint and Prezi is welcome but will NOT count as a visual aid or activity on its own. To get started, read

your group’s assigned story carefully. Develop a list of the main themes and points that appear in the story, and consider how you could get the class to discuss what the author is trying to tell us about these themes and points.

Alternate Option: Pick a Theme

Each group picks one theme and discusses how various stories address that theme.

3. Set the Stage

Early in the semester, groups can give short presentations on some basic topics to “set the stage” for future class discussions of the stories in the book. Possible topics could include:

- Bio of Faulkner
- An overview of Faulkner’s world
- Rowan Oak
- Impact of wars on the South: families, way of life, coping with aftermath, etc.
- Faulkner’s influence on Oxford
- Life in Oxford and Lafayette County in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s

Chapter 6: Integrating *Collected Stories* of William Faulkner into WRIT 100/101

The first-semester, first-year writing courses—WRIT 100 and WRIT 101—use the Common Reading Text as the basis for the initial major writing project. This project emphasizes the critical reading, critical thinking, analysis, research, and synthesis skills that are vital to college writing. In this assignment, students are given a prompt pertaining to the Common Reading Text and asked to compose an essay that integrates the Common Reading Text with outside sources and/or the student’s own ideas. The prompts are intentionally complex to introduce students to the expectations of college thinking and writing. First-year writing courses use the Common Reading Text as a basis for student reading and writing rather than as a literary study.

Discussion Starters

“Barn Burning”

- Why do you think the judges seem to go easy on Abner Snopes both times he is in court?
- Discuss the female characters in this story. What is their role in the family? In the larger society?
- Discuss the relationship between parents and children. Would you characterize their relationship as loving? Dutiful? Something else?

“Two Soldiers”

- In this story, the brothers get their information from a neighbor’s radio as they listen from outside the house. Do you think Faulkner is using some sort of metaphor here? If so, what?
- Many of the adults in the story enable the young boy to get to Memphis and back even when they seem unsure about doing so. Why is this? Would a situation like this happen in 2018 or 2019? Why or why not, and what does your answer mean in a larger sense?
- In this story, some of the characters struggle with prioritizing family and country. Why do some people put country over family and vice versa?

“Shall Not Perish”

- Major de Spain declares that his son “died for an illusion” (108). What does he mean? Why would some agree with this statement and others not?
- Some of Faulkner’s story titles such as “Uncle Willy” and “Mule in the Yard” are straightforward. “Shall Not Perish,” though, is more abstract. What do you think the title of this story means? Why?

“A Rose for Emily”

- The manservant lets guests in for Emily’s service and then leaves out the back door, never to be seen by the townspeople again. In many ways, this can be seen as a metaphor for the changes happening in the South. Continue discussing why this is so, or identify other metaphors you see in the story and discuss them.
- Is the druggist complicit in Homer’s murder? Why or why not? Why is he scared of Emily?
- Why do so many people in Jefferson cover for Emily Grierson? Could this type of situation happen nowadays? Why or why not? Can you think of a comparable modern example where people in a community cover for someone for whatever reasons?

“Hair”

- Why does Hawkshaw seem to have such a keen sense of loyalty? What might be the deeper meaning there?
- What role does the barbershop play? Why is this relevant?
- What seem to be the townspeople’s expectations for how girls/women should behave? Why?

“Dry September”

- This story has connections to a very serious and current topic: allegations of sexual assault and/or sexual harassment. What is our responsibility as a society to take seriously allegations of sexual harassment and/or assault? Why? What do we owe the accused? Why?
- What role does the barbershop play? Why is this relevant?

“Uncle Willy”

- Why does Willy marry a prostitute? What are some of the bigger picture ideas behind this occurrence?
- Why does Job tell on Willy near the end of the story? What does it mean that he did so?
- What are the motivations of the townspeople/family who seek to rehabilitate Willy?

“Mule in the Yard”

- Why does Snopes claim that Mrs. Hait would win if they went to court just because she is a woman (258)?
- What are the talents and/or strategies the women employ to “win” in this story? Think about, for example, why Mrs. Hait does not trust the bank or why she sends Het to deliver the money.

“That Evening Sun”

- Why is the character of Mr. Lovelady introduced briefly (308)?
- Why is Nancy afraid of Jesus? Why does she think she can feel him?

“The Brooch”

- Why do you think Howard is so loyal to his mother?
- Why does Howard’s mother anticipate that he will end up with a girl just like Amy (648)?
- Many of the stories in the collection feature dialect, often heavy dialect, yet there is none in “The Brooch.” Why might this be?

Assorted Stories

- Faulkner uses a lot of metaphors in his writing. Identify a few metaphors that stand out to you and discuss why.
- Faulkner uses child narrators in several of his stories, including “Two Soldiers,” “Shall Not Perish,” and “That Evening Sun.” What rhetorical purposes does this achieve? Is this an effective choice? Are there drawbacks to such a choice? If so, what are they?
- Faulkner characterized his frame of reference in this line, “I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about.” Are there elements within Faulkner’s stories that are recognizable in the 21st century South?
- How does Faulkner portray the North in his stories? Do you think this is a complete picture of the North? Why, or why not? What might be missing? Why?
- Faulkner drew several maps of Yoknapatawpha County. (See an example on the opening page of Chapter 4 of this guide). What purposes might these maps serve for Faulkner as a writer? What purposes might they serve for a reader? What do they suggest about Faulkner’s perception of his subject?
- Faulkner scholars have created digital maps of Yoknapatawpha County at the website Digital Yoknapatawpha (<http://faulkner.iath.virginia.edu/>). Visit the digital map of the stories, and consider why scholars might have created this website. What can readers gain from using the digital maps? What do the maps show us that might not be evident through reading the stories? What might readers lose by looking at the maps rather than reading the stories? How is reading a story different from viewing a map?
- Faulkner once said about the South, “Well, I love it and hate it. Some of the things there I don’t like at all, but I was born there, and that’s my home, and I will still defend it even if I hate it” (*Lion in the Garden* 101). Talk with students about the effect of hometowns and home regions on their thinking and work. How are writers shaped by the environments in which they are raised or live?
- In one interview, Faulkner commented, “. . . I love my country enough to want to cure its faults and the only way I can cure its faults within my capacity, within my own vocation, is to shame it, to criticize, to try to show the difference between its evils, its good, its

moments of baseness, and its moments of honesty, integrity and pride, to remind the people who condone the baseness that there were moments when it was glorious, when they as a people, their fathers, grandfathers, did fine, splendid, glorious things” (*Lion in the Garden* 159-60). Talk with students about rhetoric that criticizes. Do you have to dislike something in order to criticize it? Can criticism effect positive change?

Reflective Prompts Using Faulkner Quotes (from various quotation compilations)

Faulkner had a lot to say about writers and the craft of writing. Consider using the following quotes as the impetus for students’ reflections on their own writing.

- “Always dream and shoot higher than you know you can do. Do not bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself.”
- “At one time I thought the most important thing was talent. I think now that — the young man or the young woman must possess or teach himself, train himself, in infinite patience, which is to try and to try and to try until it comes right. He must train himself in ruthless intolerance. That is, to throw away anything that is false no matter how much he might love that page or that paragraph. The most important thing is insight, that is . . . curiosity to wonder, to mull, and to muse why it is that man does what he does. And if you have that, then I don’t think the talent makes much difference, whether you’ve got that or not.”
- “You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore.”
- “Read, read, read. Read everything—trash, classics, good and bad, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. Read! You’ll absorb it. Then write. If it’s good, you’ll find out. If it’s not, throw it out of the window.”
- “Don’t do what you can do—try what you can’t do.”
- “Let the writer take up surgery or bricklaying if he is interested in technique. There is no mechanical way to get the writing done, no shortcut. The young writer would be a fool to follow a theory. Teach yourself by your own mistakes; people learn only by error.”
- “Don’t be ‘a writer.’ Be writing.”
- “I never know what I think about something until I read what I’ve written on it.”

- “Get it down. Take chances. It may be bad, but it’s the only way you can do anything good.”
- “Writing a first draft is like trying to build a house in a strong wind.”
- “You have to write badly in order to write well.”
- “I only write when I feel the inspiration. Fortunately, inspiration strikes at 9 o’clock every morning.”
- “It [writing] is the most satisfying occupation man has discovered yet, because you never can do it quite as well as you want to, so there’s always something to wake up tomorrow morning to do.”

Project Prompts

1. *Fake News and Logical Fallacies: “Dry September”*

(Standard) In “Dry September,” Butch fires back the phrase “Facts, hell!” (170) to another person in the barbershop. This is Butch’s response to not wanting to wait until the facts come out about what happened, if anything, between Minnie Cooper, a white woman, and Will Mayes, a black man. In the scene, Butch clearly lets himself get caught up in emotion without knowing the details of the situation. How does this scene compare with the current prevalence of misinformation and how some people react to such news? What are the dangers of looking at, listening to, or reading only information that aligns with our preconceived biases? Why does this matter? Research a real instance where people rushed to judgment before having all of the information, and then compose a thesis-driven essay in which you compare and contrast what happens in “Dry September” to a real situation. What do you think this means about how we as people consider or fail to consider information? Why is this meaningful in a bigger picture?

(*NYT*) “Dry September” is rife with logical fallacies. Read [“Keeping the Political Wool from Being Pulled Over Your Eyes”](#) (*NYT*, 19 October 2016), and download one of the free apps described there. Use the app to identify and analyze the logical fallacies throughout the story. Write a thesis-driven essay analyzing Faulkner’s intentional use of logical fallacy. Consider the following questions: Which fallacies are represented in the story? Which characters commit the fallacies? Why does Faulkner include so many fallacies in the story?

2. Using Research to Learn: “Uncle Willy”

(Standard) In the story "Uncle Willy," the titular character struggles with addiction to drugs and alcohol, and there are people in the town such as Reverend Schultz and Mrs. Merridew who attempt to get Willy clean by forcing him to quit using. In the U.S. today we have an addiction problem, and there is an ongoing debate about whether forced treatment is an effective policy. Do a little research on forced treatment and see what you think about the results as compared to voluntary addiction treatment. Think about why this is an issue that concerns the whole country. Then, compose a thesis-driven essay in which you cite both a modern source and the story in making an argument for a strategy to treat addiction.

(*NYT*) In the story "Uncle Willy," the titular character struggles with addiction to drugs and alcohol, and there are people in the town such as Reverend Schultz and Mrs. Merridew who attempt to get Willy clean by forcing him to quit using. In the U.S. today we have an addiction problem, and there is an ongoing debate about whether forced treatment is an effective policy. Read the *NYT* Room for Debate, [“Should Drug Addicts be Forced into Treatment”](#) (*NYT*, 11 November 2015). Think about why this is an issue that concerns the whole country. Then, compose a thesis-driven essay arguing for a strategy to treat addiction, citing both the *NYT* forum and “Uncle Willy.”

3. How Point of View Affects Message: “Barn Burning”

(Standard) At the beginning of “Barn Burning,” Sarty says he can smell “the old fierce pull of blood” (3). At the end of the story, however, the boy is able to break the bonds of blood to warn Major de Spain. In [“My Brother the Unabomber.”](#) from *Psychology Today*, David Kaczynski addresses his decision to turn in his brother, a domestic terrorist, to the FBI. Read both stories, and do a little research on family bonds and loyalties. Then compose a thesis-driven essay in which you analyze the factors that might have contributed to these individuals’ decisions to alert authorities. Provide evidence from both accounts, as well as your research, to support your analysis.

(*NYT*) At the beginning of “Barn Burning,” Sarty says he can smell “the old fierce pull of blood” (3). At the end of the story, however, the boy is able to break the bonds of blood to warn Major de Spain. In [“Prisoner of Rage: The Tortured Genius of Theodore Kaczynski”](#) (*NYT*, 26 May 1996), David Kaczynski addresses his decision to turn in his brother, a domestic terrorist, to the FBI. Read both stories, and do a little research on family bonds and loyalties. Then compose a thesis-driven essay in which you analyze the factors that might have contributed to these individuals’ decisions to alert authorities. Provide evidence from both accounts, as well as your research, to support your analysis.

4. *The Art of Rhetoric: “Two Soldiers” and “Shall Not Perish”*

(Standard) “Two Soldiers” and “Shall Not Perish” are imbued with rhetoric about patriotism and individuals’ duties to family and country. Do some research on patriotic rhetoric, nationalistic rhetoric, and propaganda. Then craft a thesis-driven argument addressing whether Faulkner’s rhetoric represents patriotism, nationalism, or propaganda, citing evidence from the stories and your research.

(*NYT*) “Two Soldiers” and “Shall Not Perish” are imbued with rhetoric about patriotism and individuals’ duties to family and country. Reread these stories looking specifically for that type of rhetoric. Then read [“Coming of Age Amid Patriotic Training”](#) (*NYT*, Lens Blog, 22 February 2018), and examine the photographs in Sarah Blesener’s photo essay. Consider Blesener’s comment:

Patriotism permeates our politics, our culture, our everyday life . . . As do accusations of unpatriotic behavior. Of course, the word patriot tends to just be code for someone who shares our beliefs. And Americans are incredibly patriotic people. But where a sense of pride, and love, of your country, your beliefs, your community — turns into a sense of superiority, to aggression — this is nationalism.

Which, if any, of the photographs in Blesener’s photo essay seem to correspond with Faulkner’s stories? How? What does the rhetoric in Faulkner’s stories convey? Compose a thesis-driven argument addressing whether Faulkner’s rhetoric represents patriotism or nationalism, citing evidence from the stories and the *NYT* article.

5. *The Language of Community: “A Rose for Emily”*

(Standard) The narrator in “A Rose for Emily” often uses the term “we” as if to make the thoughts of one person collective. Why does Faulkner make this rhetorical choice? What impact does it have on readers? Do you think the narrator is accurately representing the views of the townspeople? Why, or why not? Now, consider social media use, where one common goal is finding support or agreement for your thoughts and actions. What is our motivation in seeking out such a community? Why is seeing such agreement printed or typed so powerful? What are possible negative outcomes in collective thinking? Consider the ways in which Faulkner’s communal “we” and social media usage serve similar functions, and examine the rhetorical purposes. In what ways are they inclusive and exclusive? How do they impact readers? Then identify a social media community and analyze their rhetoric. What words, phrases, or symbols do they use to build community? How effective are those devices? Who is left out of these communities, and what is the effect of those omissions? Compose a thesis-driven essay in which you compare and contrast your chosen social media community and Faulkner’s narration choices in the story.

(*NYT*) In “A Rose for Emily” Faulkner uses the term “we” at times to mean the narrator is speaking for the townspeople. In the 21st century, hashtags have evolved to serve a similar function. Read [“#MeToo Floods Social Media with Stories of Harassment and Assault”](#) (*NYT*, 16 October 2017) and [“The #MeToo Stories We’re Not Hearing”](#) (*NYT*, 7 December 2017). Consider the ways Faulkner’s communal “we” and #metoo serve similar functions. What is the purpose of these rhetorical strategies? In what ways are they inclusive and exclusive? How do they impact readers? Then identify a social media community and analyze their rhetoric. What words, phrases, or symbols do they use to build community? How effective are those devices? Who is left out of these communities, and what is the effect of those omissions? Compose a thesis-driven essay in which you compare and contrast your social media community with Faulkner’s narration choices and what you learned from the *NYT* articles.

6. Location’s Effect on Writers and their Messages: Any Story

(Standard) Location plays a huge role in Faulkner’s writing. All of the stories selected for this year’s UM Common Reading Text take place in Mississippi, with the occasional brief trip into Memphis or another nearby surrounding area. Choose any of the stories and reread your selection focusing on location. How do the characters and/or narrator talk about the place where they are located? Is the setting rural or more urban? How do you distinguish between the two? How does Faulkner distinguish between the two? How does location or place shape the characters in important ways? How has location helped shape who you are? Then, compose a thesis-driven essay in which you argue for how location shapes your chosen story and what that might mean in a bigger picture sense.

(*NYT*) Location plays a huge role in Faulkner’s writing. All of the stories selected for this year’s UM Common Reading Text take place in Mississippi, with the occasional brief trip into Memphis or another nearby surrounding area. *The New York Times* has an interactive feature called [“The Best and Worst Places to Grow Up: How Your Area Compares”](#) (*NYT*, 4 May 2015). Use this feature to consider your hometown. Then choose any of Faulkner’s stories and reread your selection focusing on location. How do the characters and/or narrator talk about the place where they are located? Is the setting rural or more urban? How do you distinguish between the two? How does Faulkner distinguish between the two? How does location or place shape the characters in important ways? What did you learn about your hometown from the *NYT* feature? How has location helped shape who you are? Then, compose a thesis-driven essay in which you argue for how location shapes the Faulkner story and your own story.

7. *What Writers Omit: Any Story*

(Standard) Faulkner’s stories focus on the relationship between blacks and whites in the South in the early 20th century but ignore other ethnicities and races. Read “Mississippi Majhar: Lebanese Immigration to the Mississippi Delta,” by James G. Thomas, Jr., of the UM Center for the Study of Southern Culture, appearing in the journal *Southern Cultures*, Winter 2013, Vol. 19, Issue 4, p. 35-54, and visit thedeltachinese.com to read stories of Chinese immigration to the Delta. In what ways do stories like these complicate race relations as described by Faulkner? How does what a writer omits affect a reader’s understanding of an issue? Compose a thesis-driven argument about the ways in which a writer’s omissions contribute to a story’s message, using evidence from Faulkner’s short stories as well as evidence from the other sources.

(*NYT*) Faulkner’s stories focus on the relationship between blacks and whites in the South in the early 20th century but ignore other ethnicities and races. Read [“Neither Black nor White in the Mississippi Delta”](#) (*NYT*, 13 March 2018) and visit thedeltachinese.com. Read also, [“We Are the Original Southerners”](#) (*NYT*, 22 May 2018). In what ways do the stories here complicate race relations as described by Faulkner? How does what a writer omits affect a reader’s understanding of an issue? Compose a thesis-driven argument about the ways in which a writer’s omissions contribute to a story’s message, using evidence from Faulkner’s short stories as well as evidence from the other sources.

8. *Writers on Writing: Any Story*

(Standard) Read “Faulkner and Desegregation,” (March 1956 issue of *The Partisan Review*; PDF available in document library), novelist James Baldwin’s response to Faulkner’s declaration that if desegregation became a contest between Mississippi and the federal government, he would fight for Mississippi, even if it meant shooting African-Americans. In his essay, Baldwin calls Faulkner’s rhetoric about white Southerners “something very closely resembling a high and noble tragedy.” Then reread any of Faulkner’s stories. In what ways does Faulkner evoke “nobility” and “tragedy” through his stories of white Southerners? What phrases and characters suggest that Faulkner is arguing, as Baldwin says, that “it is very difficult to be at once a Southerner and an American”? Compose a thesis-driven argument agreeing or disagreeing with Baldwin’s views of Faulkner’s rhetoric, using evidence from the short stories and Baldwin’s essay to support your thesis.

(*NYT*) Read *The New York Times Magazine* article, [“Who Gets to Decide What Belongs in the Canon.”](#) by Wesley Morris, May 30, 2018. Consider carefully this passage:

But resisting these critiques [of works of art] — whether it’s of “The House of Mirth” or the House of Marvel — with an automatic claim of canon feels like an act of dominion,

the establishment of an exclusive kingdom complete with moat and drawbridge, which, of course, would make the so-called resisters a mob of torch-wielding marauders and any challenge to established “literary values” an act of savagery. Insisting that a canon is settled gives those concerns the “fake news” treatment, denying a legitimate grievance by saying there’s no grounds for one. It’s shutting down a conversation, when the longer we go without one, the harder it becomes to speak.

Then consider the short stories as evidence in a debate about whether Faulkner belongs in the “canon” of American literature. Craft a thesis-driven analysis showing how the short stories might be used to make an argument for or against Faulkner’s inclusion in the canon. What qualities make Faulkner’s writing timeless? What qualities make Faulkner’s writing ephemeral or transient? What are the qualities of great writing?

9. Rhetorical Analysis Over Time: Any Story

(Standard) The story “Mule in the Yard” showcases a strong female character in Mrs. Hait, yet Faulkner’s writing frequently features weak or powerless women. Select one or two of Faulkner’s female characters from any of the other stories and think carefully about how she is/they are portrayed and why. Was Faulkner fairly representing women or serving to create or further stereotypes? How so? Then, do a little research on a current movement such as #metoo or the push to eliminate the gender wage gap. Think about why such movements came about. Consider the larger social structures in place such as the legal system and the business world and their histories. Then, compose a thesis-driven essay in which you examine Faulkner’s portrayal of women and how the rhetoric has stayed the same or shifted in the decades since the stories were written.

(*NYT*) The story “Mule in the Yard” showcases a strong female character in Mrs. Hait, yet Faulkner’s writing frequently features weak or powerless women. Select one or two of Faulkner’s female characters from any of the other stories and think carefully about how she is/they are portrayed and why. Was Faulkner fairly representing women or serving to create or further stereotypes? How so? Then read [“Readers Speak Out on Goals and Challenges of Women Today”](#) (*NYT*, 10 October 2017). In what ways do the women’s narratives in this article suggest progress since Faulkner’s time? In what ways do they suggest little progress has been made? Compose a thesis-driven essay in which you examine Faulkner’s portrayal of women and how the rhetoric has stayed the same or shifted in the decades since the stories were written, citing evidence from the short stories and the *NYT* article.

Appendix

Sample Rubrics

Sample Group Presentation Rubric

1. Was the content of the presentation well organized and presented with compelling evidence?

1 2 3 4 5
Comments: _____

2. Did the visual component enhance the presentation?

1 2 3 4 5
Comments: _____

3. Was the verbal presentation clear and engaging?

1 2 3 4 5
Comments: _____

4. Did the group engage the class in a discussion?

1 2 3 4 5
Comments: _____

5. Did the group follow the time limits?

1 2 3 4 5
Comments: _____

Sample Group Presentation Peer Evaluation

Your name: _____

1) Team member name: _____

This team member contributed fairly to the creation of the outline. Yes No

If no, please explain:

This team member contributed fairly to the creation of the presentation. Yes No

If no, please explain:

2) Team member name: _____

This team member contributed fairly to the creation of the outline. Yes No

If no, please explain:

This team member contributed fairly to the creation of the presentation. Yes No

If no, please explain:

3) Team member name: _____

This team member contributed fairly to the creation of the outline. Yes No

If no, please explain:

This team member contributed fairly to the creation of the presentation. Yes No

If no, please explain:

4) Team member name: _____

This team member contributed fairly to the creation of the outline. Yes No

If no, please explain:

This team member contributed fairly to the creation of the presentation. Yes No

If no, please explain:

Other comments or concerns about your group and how you worked together? (use back)

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR RESPONSE PAPERS

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

ASSIGNMENT TITLE: _____

SCORE:

CONVENTIONS/MECHANICS		
Ineffective	Partially-effective	Effective
Multiple errors in writing hamper communication, and text does not demonstrate standard English grammar, punctuation, and/or usage, and/or does not meet the requirements for length and format.	Minimal errors in standard English, grammar, punctuation, and/or usage are present in some of the writing, and/or the text does not meet requirements for assignment length and/or format.	The writing meets guidelines for standard English grammar, punctuation, and usage, with very few minor errors present. Meets requirements for assignment length and format.
D / F	C	B

INFORMATION PRESENTED			
Ineffective	Partially-effective	Effective	Exceptional
Does not introduce or integrate information relevant to the topic/event, or includes inappropriate use of sources. In the case of an event paper, it is unclear that the event was attended.	Demonstrates only minimal or ineffective use of integrating information relevant to the topic/event. Writing only barely addresses details of event or class materials.	Introduces and integrates information relevant to the topic/event. Writing addresses details of event or class materials and places information within a larger context.	Demonstrates exceptionally strong, integrated information that enhances credibility of writing. Writing includes skillfully represented details about event or class materials.
D / F	C	B	A

REFLECTION/RESPONSE			
Ineffective	Partially-effective	Effective	Exceptional
Fails to explore new ideas and/or works without making any connection between event or class materials and a personal context.	Begins exploration of new ideas but could push further. Experience of event or class materials is put in a personal context but lacks development of ideas.	Explores ideas unfamiliar to the reader, and questions different thinking. Puts experience of event or class materials in a personal context, is well-developed, and includes self-evaluation.	Exhibits a significant investigation of new ideas by way of exploring an event or class materials. Shows signs of personal growth and/or considerable self-evaluation.
D / F	C	B	A

Write additional comments on the back of the rubric.