## CHILDHOOD IN CARIBBEAN AND AFRICAN LITERATURE

### SELF-EVALUATION 2020

A major goal of this course is to help you become confident, independent readers of Caribbean and African Literature, capable of creating a context for understanding the work of a specific author, and of articulating, in writing and in conversation with others, what interests you about that author’s work. Please use the criteria below to help you monitor your progress towards this goal over the course of the semester, and to evaluate your performance at the end of the semester. Fifty percent of your final grade will be based on your self-evaluation.

#### **PART ONE** of the evaluation asks you to rate the consistency of your performance over the course of the semester. [Note: Part 1 was removed to reduce the length of the document.]

#### **PART TWO** gives you an opportunity to comment on specific readings and ideas; to evaluate your contributions to the course; and to describe how the course contributed to your intellectual development beyond the classroom, more broadly. **Answers in this section can help boost your grade as well as someone else’s.** This section should take about an hour to complete.

NAME: Trey Crowder

YEAR: 2020

MAJOR: English & Psychology

CLASS PRESENTATION: (Please list the names of the members of your group here and append a copy of your presentation to the end of this evaluation) V. [Names redacted for anonymity.]

TITLE OF FINAL ASSIGNMENT: Suns and Sons

### PART TWO

**Please answer all questions with examples and discussion. Remember that your answers may help your grade as well as that of one of your classmates, so take your time with this section.**

#### Write a short paragraph about what you found most provocative or enlightening in one assigned reading.

* When we got to *The African Child* and read the accompanying paper about the origins and authors of the text, that really got me interested in the authenticity of the books we were reading and added a new lens to how I read any book thereafter. We put so much trust in the author, but understanding his/her motives behind the work adds so much meaning that the reader inherently grants the work without knowing anything about the climate in which it was made.

#### Identify one author, country, theme, or literary device and describe how you engaged with the ideas to which your exploration exposed you in your weekly papers.

* The disconnected storytelling in *Love-Across-a-Hundred-Lives*, as well as the abrupt introduction of Cameroonian culture and politics, was a shock that close reading and the class eventually warmed me. This book seemed to predict another important event and in my weekly paper I relayed it to that, and it helped me make sense of my real life surroundings. Liking told her story as it would appear in the mind of a storyteller: a little abstractly and skippy. This was the first book that challenged its reader and the content of the book reflected that even more, and it helped me begin to understand a purpose of this class.

#### Describe how you (or you and your group) prepared for your presentation and what you think the class learned from your presentation.

* We read the book and researched the real events that the book discusses. We also tried to connect the family tree and see who was the reincarnation of who, who was whose aunt, etc. The class didn’t really read the book all the way through but I think they liked trying to follow who was who when I wrote the characters names on the board and tried to see how they connected. Our in-class discussion kind of unraveled into politics and ethics, and how we would react if we were Lem. I think the class benefited from stepping in the character’s world and seeing what they would’ve done differently.

#### Identify at least two group presentations you consider most memorable and describe what you learned from them.

* I liked *The African Child* because of how much I learned about the book that I didn’t really consider when I read it. I remember learning about some monuments… and other references I hadn’t picked up. It’s difficult to remember when we were in class… but I think C. did that presentation and we did the drawing of the village. I liked that interactive activity because it got me excited for the presentation and let me get a little energy out.

#### Identify one comment you made during class that you think your classmates found useful and describe the discussion it generated within or outside of the classroom.

* Uhh I don’t really remember the things I said in class but I usually asked questions about the text or discussions versus asserting my own ideas, but I did that a little, too. I think when V. and I presented Liking’s book people enjoyed the family connection activity and then our discussion after, but I don’t really remember anything specific I said.

#### Describe at least two comments your classmates made that helped you to understand the material or to take a concept further.

* J.’s commentary was always helpful because his cultural ties kind of added another primary source of a part of the culture we were reading about, and he always read the books and had insightful things to say that made me think. E. also always had things to say that I had never thought of; she would connect points that I didn’t see and relate books to one another and it was impressive how she was always thinking about so much at the same time.

#### Describe one memorable conversation you had with someone who was not a member of this class about the ideas to which this course exposed you.

* I talked to my dad about *Miguel Street* and how it wrote some dialogue in the vernacular, and the ways it told stories about each character in the book. We just talked about the point of view and how a child’s point of view is different from an adults, and how Naipual accomplished that distinction in his writing.

#### Describe two insights about Caribbean and/or African literature that you will take away from this course.

* The diversity within both. How there are no two authors that write about their home country in the same way. It was something you, Professor, said at our last class: everyone has a childhood, but no childhood is the same. Writing about where and how you grow up is intimate and peculiar to everyone and that came through in every book we read. How close they tie their childhood to their land as well as world culture is interesting, too. We saw it first in *One Day I Will Write About This Place*, but in the book of poems I chose, *Sun Poem*, Kamau Brathwaite writes about Aretha Franklin, which just shows they live in the same world as everyone else, which makes their lives connected to ours in a way.

#### How did the COVID-19 crisis affect what you will take away from this course?

* I wish we had more in class time to write and discuss the *how* of these authors works. Having more in class discussions would have allowed us to discuss secondary sources more and have more commentary from the professor how they interconnect with each other and their country.