

Dr. Robert Gunn
Spring 2021

*****Extra Credit Assignment: “An Evening with Ta-Nehisi Coates”*****

This spring, I am offering an extra credit opportunity related to a special event sponsored by the History Department’s Racial Justice Speaker Series, “An Evening with Ta-Nehisi Coates.” Ta-Nehisi Coates is a journalist, screenwriter, and professor; he is one of America’s foremost public intellectuals. He is the author of *The Beautiful Struggle*, *We Were Eight Years in Power*, *The Water Dancer*, and *Between the World and Me*, which won the National Book Award in 2015. The event will take place on Wednesday, April 7, 2021, at 5:30 p.m., via Zoom. The event does require advance pre-registration. Follow the link below to do so:

https://utep-edu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1QA0M7aOSwiAQqVOHewD6Q

To do the extra credit assignment, you will need to attend Ta-Nehisi Coates’s lecture and take careful notes. Your job will then consist of two parts: one, to write a detailed and specific summary of the lecture or presentation, and of **the argument** advanced by the speaker within it (1-2 pages); and, two, to write a thoughtful reflection on the implications of those remarks, written from your perspective (2-3 pages)—but informed also by your developing understanding of American literary and cultural history. How do you assess the merits of the speaker’s claims? What are its larger implications? What might be some points with which you disagree? Why? Attempt to substantiate your position via reference to concrete examples taken from American culture and history (from any period), with a special premium on topics and texts taken from our syllabus.

The breakdown of points offered is as follows: **five points** will be awarded for assignments graded at an A-minus or above; **three points** will be awarded for assignments graded in the B-minus to B-plus range; and **one point** will be awarded for assignments graded in the C-minus to C-plus range. **No points** will be awarded for efforts that fail to meet the standard of a C-minus.

This assignment, should you wish to pursue it, will be due on Blackboard on Monday, May 10, 2021, by 11:59 p.m.