

INSTRUCTOR: TAIWO ADETUNJI OSINUBI

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10.30-12.30 Thursday 12.30-2.30 Office Time: Monday 3.30-6.30 Venue: Lawson Hall 2210

PROVISIONAL SYLLABUS: SUBJECT TO REVISION

ENGL 9131B THEMES IN CONTEMPORARY LIFE WRITING:  
VULNERABILITY & DISPOSSESSION

This seminar brings the relational turn in Caribbean, African-American and Black British life writing into dialogue with emerging discourses about vulnerability, dispossession, and justice. What, we will ask, is the critical yield of terms such as dispossession, vulnerability or abandonment when set alongside contemporary life writing? To pursue this inquiry, we will analyze selected narratives, read essays on the relational turn in autobiography studies, and develop working genealogies of our key terms. Topics to be examined include: the 2010 Haitian earthquake, the historical legacies of slavery in the Atlantic world, the legal dispossessions and cultural dislocations of migrants, and the transnational afterlives of political struggle. We want to study why authors construct relational selves or adopt autobiographical subjects located within historically determined positions of vulnerability in order to rethink political futures.

Reading List:

Adewale Maja-Pearce, "Legacies."

Dany Laferriere, *The World Is Moving Around Me*

Edwige Danticat, *Brother, I'm Dying*

Edwige Danticat, *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

Caryl Phillips, *Foreigners: Three English Lives*

Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*

Assessment: Presentation: 20%; Research Paper: 60%; Participation: 20%

Schedule

Week 1 January 4

Introduction

Please watch *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*

