

**English 330:
Law and Literature
Winter 2023**

Instructor: Nancy Wright

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Course Description:

The concept of the law calls to mind ideals informing the justice system. The law, however, was used to obscure the injustice of slavery. Mark Twain described the concept of racial difference as “a fiction of law and custom” used to justify slavery. His perception directs our attention to a point where law and literature intersect and invite interpretation. We will read nineteenth-century slave narratives side-by-side with legal texts that they challenged. We will examine how novels, plays and films revise the genre of the slave narrative to represent the intergenerational and social consequences of slavery.



Proposed Assignments:

- Two 500 word discussion papers (30%)
 - One 1500 word Research Portfolio (40%)
 - Research Roundtable (20%)
 - Class Participation (10%)
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- **Proposed Texts:**
 - Dash, Julie. *Daughters of the Dust*.
 - Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.
 - Foster, Sharon Ewell. *Abraham's Well*.
 - Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.
 - Philip, M. NourbeSe. *Zong*.
 - Phillips, Caryl. *Cambridge*.
 - Ward, Theodore. *Big White Fog*.
 - Wilson, August. *The Piano Lesson*.