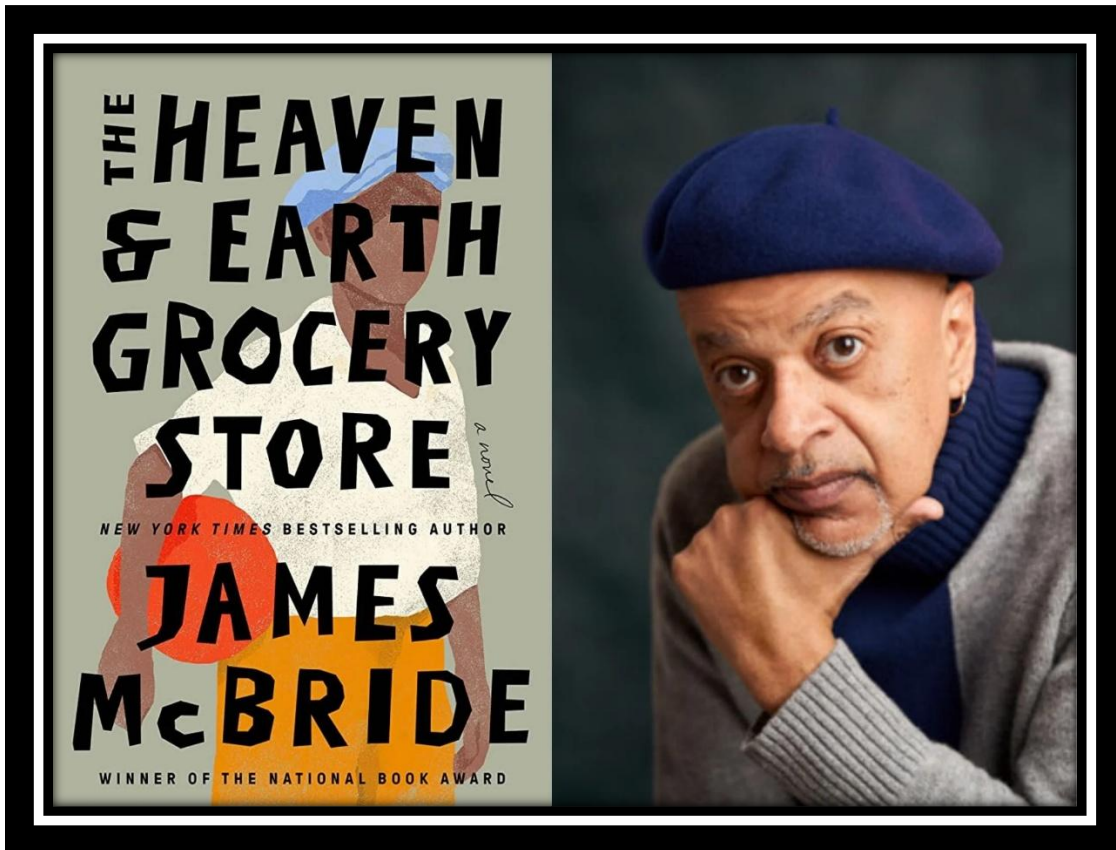


IDH2930: Community, Justice, and Marginality in James McBride's *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store* (Honors)

1 credit



I. General Information

Meeting days and times: M 6 (12:50-1:40 pm)

Class location: MAT 2

Instructor(s):

Name: Jessi Elana Aaron

Office Building/Number: Dauer 153

Phone: 352-392-2016

Email: jeaaron@ufl.edu

Office Hours: M 7-8, T 8

Course Description

This course delves into James McBride's *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*, exploring its complex themes of race, religion, disability, and community. Set in mid-20th century Pennsylvania, the novel brings together Black, Jewish, and Disabled characters navigating societal marginalization. Through close readings, class discussions, reflective writing, and

creative expression, students will examine McBride's portrayal of solidarity, survival, and justice in the face of oppression. The course will emphasize critical thinking about intersectionality and historical context while connecting the novel's themes to contemporary social issues.

Prerequisites: None

General Education Designation:

All General Education area objectives can be found [here](#).

Course Materials

- James McBride, *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store* (local bookstores)
- Reading course pack (Canvas)

Materials will be available through the following means:

The main textbook for the course, *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*, is available for purchase in local bookstores and online in hardback, paperback, and kindle formats. Supplemental readings will be uploaded to Canvas and can be accessed free of charge there.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

Materials Fee: N/A

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Analyze how themes of race, religion, and disability intersect in *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store* and apply these insights to broader social and historical contexts.
- Critically engage with the novel's portrayal of community resilience, exploring how marginalized groups form networks of support in response to societal oppression.
- Develop reflective and analytical skills through close reading and discussions, with a focus on the novel's literary and linguistic techniques and their role in conveying complex social issues.

III. Graded Work

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the [Catalog](#).

Graded Components

1. **Weekly Discussion Posts** (20%): Short reflections on weekly readings.
2. **Participation** (30%): Active participation in discussions and activities.

3. **Mid-Semester Reflection Paper** (20%): Two- to three-page analysis of a key theme from the first half of the course.

4. **Final Project and Presentation** (30%): A final reflective essay or creative project (visual presentation, short story) that connects the themes of the novel to broader social issues.

TOTAL: 100%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	100-93
A-	92-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-67
D	66-63
D-	62-60
E	59-0

See the UF Catalog's "[Grades and Grading Policies](#)" for information on how UF assigns grade points.

Note: A minimum grade of C is required to earn General Education credit.

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards your Honors Completion Requirements. (Exception: Honors Quest I and II sections require a C). Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Completion module to earn Honors Milestone / Completion credit.

IV. Calendar

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
January 13, 2025	Introduction to James McBride and Course Overview	None	None
January 20, 2025	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, no classes		
January 27, 2025	Setting the Stage—Chicken Hill and	HEGS, Chapters 1-3	Weekly Discussion

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
	Pottstown's Social Landscape	Online Exhibit of Chicken Hill: A Community Lost to Time	
February 3, 2025	Moshe and Chona: The Jewish Experience in Chicken Hill	HEGS, Chapters 4-6 Immigrating to America: The Jewish Experience	Weekly Discussion
February 10, 2025	Black-Jewish Solidarity and Division	HEGS, Chapters 7-9 The early history of Black and Jewish relations in the U.S.	Weekly Discussion
February 17, 2025	The Power of Place: The Significance of the Heaven & Earth Grocery Store	HEGS, Chapters 10-12 Place is Space Plus Meaning – Community Economic Development	Weekly Discussion
February 24, 2025	Disability in Society: The Case of Dodo	HEGS, Chapters 13-15 Videos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Black Deaf History - Bobbi-Angelica Morris • The Path Forward: Remembering Willowbrook 	Weekly Discussion
March 3, 2025	Gender Dynamics in the Novel	HEGS, Chapters 16-18 The Racial Divide in the Women's Suffrage Movement The Vote	Weekly Discussion
March 10, 2025	Nate Timblin: Race, Power, and Masculinity	HEGS, Chapters 19-21 'Be A Man': Modernists and Traditionalists Debate Masculinity	Weekly Discussion; Mid-Semester Reflection Paper
March 17, 2025	Spring Break, no classes		
March 24, 2025	Confronting Institutional Violence	HEGS, Chapters 22-24 Video (watch excerpt): Inside Pennhurst Asylum: Understanding Disabilities Through The Decades Only Human	Weekly Discussion
March 31, 2025	The Importance of Community Networks	HEGS, Chapters 25-27 Community Networks Success Stories	Weekly Discussion
April 7, 2025	Escaping Injustice: Dodo's Rescue and Rebirth	HEGS, Chapters 28-30 Video: Our fight for disability rights and why we're not done yet Judith Heumann TEDxMidAtlantic	Weekly Discussion
April 14, 2025	Justice, Morality, and the Skeleton in the Well	HEGS, Chapters 31-33 Justice and Fairness	Weekly Discussion

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
April 21, 2025	Reflecting on Intersectionality in <i>The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store</i>	HEGS, finish	Final Project (to be presented in class and turned in via Canvas)

V. University Policies and Resources

Attendance policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Students requiring accommodation

Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF course evaluation process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

University of Florida students are bound by the Honor Pledge. On all work submitted for credit by a student, the following pledge is required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Student Honor Code and Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code, as well as the process for reported allegations and sanctions that may be implemented. All potential violations of the code will be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If a student is found responsible for an Honor Code violation in this course, the instructor will enter a Grade Adjustment sanction which may be up to or including failure of the course. For additional information, see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

In-class recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited.

Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party-note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Procedure for conflict resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Honors advisor (advisor@honors.ufl.edu, 352-392-1519). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1261).

Resources available to students

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: umatter@ufl.edu; 352-392-1575.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1575.
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center; 352-392-1161.
- University Police Department: <http://www.police.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1111 (911 for emergencies).

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: learning-support@ufl.edu; <https://elearning.ufl.edu>; 352-392-4357.
- Career Connections Center: Reitz Union; <http://www.career.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1601.
- Library Support: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>.

- Academic Resources: 1317 Turlington Hall; [352-392-2010](tel:352-392-2010);
<https://academicresources.clas.ufl.edu>.
- Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall; <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.
- Honors Program: 201 Walker Hall, 352-392-1519
 - Quick questions for an Honors advisor? Email advisor@honors.ufl.edu
 - Need an Honors advising appointment? Schedule via Microsoft Bookings: <https://bit.ly/ufhonorsadvising>