

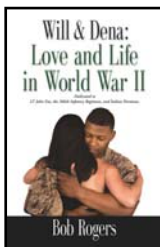
# "Real Historians are Novelists"

January 2011

Carlos Fuentes asserted that the real historians in Latin America are its novelists. Novelists born within the borders of the United States have no less tirelessly and successfully recorded her past. Each semester, scholars and students examine this premise by reading classics and new works by contemporary novelists. The debate that follows ranges from literary analysis of novels to discussion of the historical events and personages depicted therein. Your students' interest is in how novelists dramatize the history of their regions, and how their fiction illuminates our understanding of the "real" history.



Programs of study designed to provide a thorough grounding in literature and history require of students critical analysis and research about the complex and historically specific experiences of particular ethnic groups. The novel, ***Will and Dena***, is history told as a love story. The story assists in developing understanding in students expected to express how experiences of a people have contributed to, and been shaped by, political, cultural, and economic forces – nationally and internationally. Specifically, through characters in ***Will and Dena***, readers vicariously experience these and other life issues in the middle of the twentieth century:



1. social class and arranged marriages
2. prominent social role of baseball
3. soldiers fighting to fight as soldiers
4. impact of race in every aspect of living
5. mores and jim crow law

"In the Time of Will and Dena..." is a ninety minute multi-media seminar that includes period photographs, audio (jazz), video (hit tunes, fashion, and military), and a live performance by student-actors. The seminar is based on the novel, ***Will and Dena***, which is set during World War II in the southern United States and the Tuscany region of Italy.

The seminar is designed for students in literature, history, African-American Studies, American Studies, or War Studies. Students will identify with and follow the lives of ordinary Americans in the novel. The seminar also addresses the creation of characters and plot. Author participation adds another dimension; giving students the opportunity to engage in discussion (during and after the seminar) of the broader context of events based on research regarding real actions, and explore the boundary of where fact meets fiction.



Including ***Will and Dena*** in your syllabus will assist in achieving learning outcomes like these:

1. For students of history, African American Studies, or American Studies:
  - a. Acquire a perspective on history and an understanding of the factors that shape human activity.
  - b. Think, speak, and write critically about primary and secondary historical sources by examining diverse interpretations of past events and ideas in their historical contexts.
2. For students of English, creative writing, or literature:
  - a. Grasp from a literary text its content—for example, details of plot and character, major structural divisions, key images and ideas.
  - b. Explain ways in which a particular literary work reflects and shapes the historical, social and cultural circumstances in which it was produced.

Please use the link below to contact me or my agent. We are ready to engage with you on behalf of your students.

***Bob Rogers***

<http://www.bobrogers.biz/id4.html>