

African-American Literature I

008:116:001 & 129:116:001

10:30-11:20 MWF 218 EPB

Professor Hill (lena-hill@uiowa.edu)
Office Hours: MW (9:30-10:15) & by appt

Office: 470 EPB
Office Telephone: 335-1384

Required Text

The Norton Anthology of African American Literature, Second Ed. available at Prairie Lights Bookstore

Course Overview

We will study literature written by black Americans from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. In reading and discussing these texts, we will ponder salient issues related to the creation of a literary tradition. How does historical context account for literary themes and subjects? How do African-American authors interact with mainstream American writers? What do we make of the artistic choices, innovations, and revisions our readings exhibit? How do aesthetic concerns relate to political circumstances? How does analyzing relationships between literature of different periods provide deeper analysis of individual texts? By the end of the semester, we should feel comfortable answering these and other questions related to African-American literature written during the two hundred year period we cover in this course.

Course Requirements

Class Participation

This course asks that you engage critically and actively with demanding readings. I will expect you to come prepared for our work together, to meet deadlines, and to respond thoughtfully to class discussion. *Please be aware that merely attending class does not constitute effective participation.*

Written Work

You will be graded on 3 types of written assignments:

1. Reading Quizzes: Regular reading quizzes will be administered throughout the semester. Some are scheduled on the syllabus, but others will be unannounced. These short quizzes are designed to assess whether you are keeping up with the reading and reading closely.
2. Essay: You will write one essay that is 4-6 pages in length.
3. Final Exam: The final will test your familiarity with our texts and the major periods we discuss. It will also require you to consider the relationships between individual texts, writers, and genres.

Practical Matters

Grading

This course will employ a +/- scale. Your final grade will be determined by the following breakdown:

Class Participation: 15%

Reading Quizzes: 25%

Essay: 25%

Final: 35%

Attendance and Punctuality

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. *There will be no make-ups for reading quizzes, and essays will not be accepted late.* Please contact me ahead of time if you need an extension or need to complete an assignment before its scheduled date. If you are absent more than four times—regardless of the reasons—your class participation grade may be lowered one whole letter grade (e.g. from B+ to C+). After the fourth absence, each subsequent missed class will result in a +/- reduction (e.g. from C to C-) in your participation average. Chronic tardiness will negatively impact your class participation grade.

Format for Written Work

Please format your text in a common 12pt font (like this one) with 1-inch margins and headings. Double-space text for essays and be sure to staple your pages and include page numbers. This is not a course in the mechanics of writing, but I am happy to help you with any concerns you may have about points of style, usage, or grammar. I also encourage you to take advantage of the services offered by the Writing Center. For information, visit their website at www.uiowa.edu/~writingc or contact them at 335-0188.

Student Rights and Other Responsibilities

This course is given by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and its home department is English. Students wishing to add or drop this course after the official deadline must receive approval of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Details of the University policy of cross enrollments may be found at http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/policy_undergrads_outside.shtml.

Departmental/Collegiate Complaint Procedures

All students in the College have the right to adjudication of any complaints you have about classroom activities or instructor actions. Information is available at www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml/. You should first attempt to resolve the issue with the faculty member involved. Lacking a satisfactory outcome, you can turn to the Associate Chair of Undergraduate Programs, Rob Latham (rob-latham@uiowa.edu). If a satisfactory resolution remains unmet, you may contact the English Department Chair, Jonathan Wilcox (jonathan-wilcox@uiowa.edu). After exhausting these options, you may turn to the CLAS and submit a written complaint to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, 120 Schaeffer Hall (335-2633). Please note: in complaints involving the assignment of grades, it is college policy that grades cannot be changed without the permission of the department concerned. All complaints must be made within six months of the incident.

Students with Disabilities

You have the right to expect a classroom environment that enables you to learn, including modifications if you have a disability. Students with disabilities that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements should discuss them with me so that appropriate arrangements may be made. It is the student's responsibility to contact Student Disability Services, 3100 Burge Hall (335-1462), and obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request form (SAAR). See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/.

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Visit www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu/ for definitions, assistance, and the full policy.

Plagiarism and Cheating

All of our work will be conducted according to a spirit of integrity. Plagiarism and any other activities that result in a student presenting work that is not his or her own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is reported to the departmental DEO and then to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Services in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. For more information, visit www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml.

Working Schedule

Wk			Seminar	Assignments
1	M	8/27	I. Writing a Tradition: The Library of the Slave A. Verse of Sympathy, Will, and Spirit Introduction	
	W	8/29	Lucy Terry, "Bars Fight" (186-187) Phillis Wheatley (213-218)	
	F	8/31	Phillis Wheatley (219-224)	
2	M	9/3	-----Labor Day-----	
	W	9/5	Jupiter Hammon (162-168) B. Narrating Paths to Freedom	
	F	9/7	Frederick Douglass (385-401)	
3	M	9/10	Frederick Douglass (401-421)	Reading Quiz
	W	9/12	Frederick Douglass (421-440)	
	F	9/14	Frederick Douglass (440-452)	
4	M	9/17	Harriet Jacobs (279-293)	Reading Quiz
	W	9/19	Harriet Jacobs (293-305)	
	F	9/21	Harriet Jacobs (306-315)	
5	M	9/24	C. Pens of Abolition David Walker (227-238)	
	W	9/26	Henry Highland Garnet (345-352) Sojourner Truth (245-249)	
	F	9/28	Frances E. W. Harper (491-505, 518-521)	

6	M	10/1	D. Novel Stories William Wells Brown (315-317; 325-334)	
	W	10/3	William Wells Brown (334-345) Discuss Essay Handout	
	F	10/5	Harriet E. Wilson (521-540)	
7			II. Words of Reconstruction: Literature of Freedom & Progress A. Ruminations on Destiny	
	M	10/8	Cooper, Hopkins & Wells-Barnett (lecture) Booker T. Washington (570-586)	
	W	10/10	Booker T. Washington (586-602)	
	F	10/12	W. E. B. DuBois (692-708)	
8	M	10/15	W. E. B. DuBois (708-730)	Reading Quiz
	W	10/17	W. E. B. DuBois (730-748) <i>Semester Midterm</i>	
	F	10/19	W. E. B. DuBois (748-766)	
9			B. Art of Wit, Strength, & Beauty	
	M	10/22	Charles W. Chestnutt (602-624)	
	W	10/24	Paul Laurence Dunbar (905-917)	
	F	10/26	Paul Laurence Dunbar (918-927)	
10	M	10/29	James Weldon Johnson (791-802)	
	W	10/31	James Weldon Johnson (883-905)	
			III. Harlem Renaissance A. The State of Things	
	F	11/2	W.E.B. DuBois (777-784) Alain Locke (983-993)	

11	M	11/5	Marcus Garvey (995-1003)	
			B. Poetic Excellence	
	W	11/7	Claude McKay (1003-1010)	
	F	11/9	Countee Cullen (1339-1351)	
12	M	11/12	Sterling A. Brown (1248-1266)	
	W	11/14	Langston Hughes (1288-1297)	
	F	11/16	Langston Hughes (1297-1314)	<i>Select Essay Topic</i>
13	M	11/19	-----Thanksgiving Break-----	
	W	11/21		
	F	11/23		
14			C. Conscious Art by Black Women	
	M	11/26	Angelina Weld Grimké <i>Rachel</i> (ICON:133-157) print and bring to class	Reading Quiz
	W	11/28	Grimké (ICON:157-168)	
	F	11/30	Spencer, Johnson, Bennett (970-974, 993-995, 1266-1269)	<i>Complete Essay Outline</i>
15	M	12/3	Nella Larsen (1085-1108)	
	W	12/5	Nella Larsen (1108-1123)	
	F	12/7	Nella Larsen (1123-1143)	Reading Quiz
16	M	12/10	Nella Larsen (1143-1167)	
	W	12/12	Zora Neale Hurston (1019-1033)	
	F	12/14	Zora Neale Hurston (1033-1041)	Essay Due
	TH	12/20	FINAL EXAM (7:30AM in 218EPB)	