

Selected African American Authors: Zora Neale Hurston

008:069:001 & 129:069:001

12:00-1:15 MW 209 EPB

Prof. L. Hill (lena-hill@uiowa.edu)
Office Hours: MW (10:00-11:30) & by appt

Office: 470 EPB
Office Telephone: 335-1384

Required Texts

Zora Neale Hurston: Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings (Library of America)

Zora Neale Hurston: Novels & Stories (Library of America)

Zora Neale Hurston: Collected Plays (Rutgers University Press)

All texts are available at Prairie Lights Bookstore. Other readings will be listed on ICON and *must* be printed and brought to class meetings.

Course Overview

This course investigates the writing of Zora Neale Hurston. We will read her short and long fiction, drama, autobiography, folklore, and essays as well as some criticism devoted to her work. As we analyze her multifaceted corpus, we will consider how her writing represents, challenges, and complicates the literary landscape she inhabited. At the same time, we will ponder why her work holds a seminal position in both the American and African-American literary canons. Our broad yet intense examination of her oeuvre will arm us with the kind of comprehensive critical eye too few scholars bring to their analyses of Hurston's work. From our informed position, we will tackle the knotty questions Hurston's work—and her persona—raise: What does her work tell us about the creative and political cross-currents of the Harlem Renaissance? What does the trajectory of her writing reveal about her artistic evolution and the ways it has been evaluated by scholars? Why do particular literary works become canonized, and what does Hurston's position in the canon tell us about the current status of African-American writers? By the semester's end, we will be well positioned to answer these and a host of other questions related to Hurston and American literature more widely.

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 & Major Assignments

1. Reading Quizzes: I will administer regular reading quizzes 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.
2. Two Essays: You will write one short essay (3-4 pgs) and one longer essay (5-7 pgs).
3. Final Exam: The final will test your familiarity with our texts and require you to contemplate them within the analytical framework our class creates.

Practical Matters

Grading

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

Class Participation: 10%

Reading Quizzes: 25%

Essay #1: 15%

Essay #2: 25%

Final: 25%

Attendance and Punctuality

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. *There will be no make-ups for reading quizzes.* Please contact me ahead of time if you need an extension on your essay. If you do not request an extension and I do not receive your essay within a week of the due date, *I will not accept it.* If you are absent more than three times—regardless of the reasons—your class participation grade will be lowered one whole letter grade (e.g. from B+ to C+). After the third 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 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, Lori Branch (lori-branch@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 constitute academic fraud. Academic fraud is reported to the departmental DEO and then to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Services in CLAS. For more information, visit www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather

If severe weather is indicated by the UI outdoor [warning system](#), class members will seek shelter in the innermost part of the building, if possible at the lowest level, staying clear of windows and of free-standing expanses which might prove unstable. The class will resume after the severe weather has ended. See the Operations Manual section [16.14. i](#).

Working Schedule

Wk			Seminar	Assignments
1	M	8/25	I. Molding an Artistic Sensibility Introduction "How It Feels To Be Colored Me" (1928)	
	W	8/27	Selected Stories: 925-954	
2	M	9/1	-----Labor Day-----	
	W	9/3	Selected Stories: 955-1010	Reading Quiz
3	M	9/8	<i>Collected Plays</i> : 1-129	
	W	9/10	<i>Collected Plays</i> : 131-190	
4	M	9/15	<i>Collected Plays</i> : 191-268	
	W	9/17	<i>Collected Plays</i> : 269-362	
5	M	9/22	<i>Jonah's Gourd Vine</i> (1934): 3-68	Reading Quiz
	W	9/24	<i>Jonah's Gourd Vine</i> : 69-105	
6	M	9/29	<i>Jonah's Gourd Vine</i> : 106-168	
	W	10/1	<i>Mules and Men</i> (1935): 9-61	
7	M	10/6	<i>Mules and Men</i> : 62-175	
	W	10/8	<i>Mules and Men</i> : 176-231	
8	M	10/13	II. Revealing a Mature Voice <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> (1937): 175-200	<i>Optional Outline for Essay #1</i>
	W	10/15	<i>Their Eyes</i> : 201-245	
9	M	10/20	<i>Their Eyes</i> : 246-299	
	W	10/22	<i>Their Eyes</i> : 300-333	

10	M	10/27	Critical Essays on <i>Their Eyes</i> (see ICON)	Essay #1 (due by 2 p.m. in my office) Reading Quiz
	T	10/28		
	W	10/29	<i>Dust Tracks on a Road</i> (1942):561-598	
11	M	11/3	<i>Dust Tracks</i> : 599-665	
	W	11/5	<i>Dust Tracks</i> : 666-718	
12	M	11/10	<i>Dust Tracks</i> :719-769	
	W	11/12	<i>Dust Tracks</i> :773-808	
13			III. Presenting a Different Point of View	Reading Quiz
	M	11/17	<i>Seraph on the Suwanee</i> (1948): 599-674	
	W	11/19	<i>Seraph</i> : 675-739	
14	M	11/24	-----THANKSGIVING-----	
	W	11/26		
15	M	12/1	<i>Seraph</i> : 640-867	Reading Quiz <i>Optional Outline for Essay #2</i>
	W	12/3	<i>Seraph</i> : 868-920	
16	M	12/8	Articles (see ICON)	Essay #2 (due by 2 p.m. in my office)
	W	12/10	Articles (see ICON)	
	F	12/12		
	T	12/16	Final Exam at noon	