Survey of African American Literature
1900-2000

Spring 2014

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**Course Goals:** The goal of this course is to provide an overview of African American literature from 1900 to the present. Students will read and examine writings by major contributors to each decade in the genres of fiction (short story and novel) essay, poetry, and plays. Students will write four five-page critical essays based upon some aspect of their reading and comprehension of the eras covered. The goal of the assignment is to enhance the student’s skills of critical thinking and argument. Each essay will be first submitted as a draft and will not be graded. The submission of the second draft will be graded. The final project will consist of all four papers, revised and compiled as a coherent essay or collection of essays. **This course fulfills a writing requirement.**
Each student is responsible for an oral presentation of primary source material. Oral presentation counts as a quiz grade.

**Grading:** Critical Essays 50%  Quizzes 25%  Final Project 25%

**College Plagiarism Statement from the Emory College Honor Code**

**The Use of Sources in Writing Research Paper or Critical Essays in Emory College**

A writer's facts, ideas, and phraseology should be regarded as his property. **Any person who uses a writer's ideas or phraseology without giving due credit is guilty of plagiarism.**

**Information may be put into a paper without a footnote or some kind of documentation only if it meets all of the following conditions:**

- It may be found in several books on the subject.
- It is written entirely in the words of the student.
- It is not paraphrased from any particular source.
- It therefore belongs to common knowledge.

Generally, if a student writes while looking at a source or while looking a notes taken from a source, a footnote should be given.

Whenever any idea is taken from a specific work, even when the student writes the idea entirely in his own words, there must be a footnote giving credit to the author responsible for the idea. Of course methods of documentation vary, and it is possible to cite in the text itself rather than a footnote. The point is that the student should give credit when credit is due and that he should give the credit in a manner specified by the instructor or the department.

The student is entirely responsible for knowing and following the **principles of paraphrasing.** "In paraphrasing you are expressing the ideas of another writer in your own words. A good paraphrase preserves the sense of the original, but not the form. It does not retain the sentence patterns and merely substitute synonyms for the original words, nor does it retain the original words and merely alter the sentence patterns. It is a genuine restatement. Invariably it should be briefer than the source."*

Any **direct quotation** should be footnoted (or documented in any acceptable fashion). Even when a student uses only one unusual or key word from a passage, that word should be quoted.
If a brief phrase that is common is used as it occurs in a source, the words should be in quotation marks. The source of every quotation should be given in a footnote or in the prescribed manner.

**It is of course the prerogative of the instructor to prescribe that no secondary sources may be used for particular papers.**

A student who uses a secondary source must remember that the very act of looking up a book or an article should be considered as a pledge that the student will use the material according to the principles stated above.


**Weekly Assignments**

**January 15**

Decade 1900-1910
Introduction to the class. Discuss syllabus. **Read** for the next class: Dunbar 905-927.

![Paul Laurence Dunbar 1872-1906](image)

**January 17**

Discuss Dunbar. **Read** for the next class: 624-635 Charles Chesnutt’s “The Wife of His Youth.”

![Charles W. Chesnutt](image)

Define literature. State why it is important.

**January 20**

**MLK Holiday**

**January 22**
Discuss Chesnutt. Read for next class: 650-662 Pauline E. Hopkins’ “Talma Gordon”

January 24
Discuss Chesnutt and Hopkins. Read for next class: 675-685 Ida B. Wells, “From the Red Record”

January 27
Film: Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice. Read for next class: 686-766 The Souls of Black Folk
W.E.B. Du Bois

January 29
Discuss Ida B. Wells. Begin discussion of Du Bois. Read for next class: complete reading Souls
Film: “W.E.B. Du Bois of Great Barrington”

Thesis statement due in class today also submit topic for MARBL research.
January 31

Discuss Du Bois. Read for next class: 929-936 Sutton Griggs

Discuss Griggs. End of unit. Review for Quiz next class period

Decade 1910-1920

Quiz on Unit One 1900-1910. Read for next class: 786-791 James D. Corrothers

February 03


February 05

Discuss Johnson’s “Lift Every Voice” and poetry. Continue reading novel.
February 07
Discuss novel. Discuss next week’s assignment for library.

February 10
Revised paper due today. Read for February 18: 946-951 Fenton Johnson and Alice Dunbar Nelson 936-940

February 12
Discuss Johnson and Nelson. Review for quiz. End of Unit.

Decade 1920-1930
The Harlem Renaissance

February 14
Film: The Tulsa Race Riot (1921). QUIZ 2; Read for next class: 953-967 Introduction and Arthur Schomburg

February 17
Discuss Schomburg. Read for next class: 975-983 Jessie Redmon Fauset.
February 19
Discuss Fauset. **Read** for next class: 766-777 Du Bois on women. **Thesis statement due in class today.**

February 21
Film: From These Roots. **Read** for next class: 777-785 (Du Bois) and 1311-1314 (Hughes)

First draft of second paper due on February 28th

February 24
Discuss black art Hughes and Du Bois. **Read** for next class: 983-993 Locke. We will read 993-995 Georgia Douglas Johnson in class.

February 26
Discuss Locke. **Read**

February 28
First draft of second paper due today.

March 03
Film: The Harlem Renaissance. Read for next March 8: 1085-1168 Nella Larsen.

Claude McKay
March 05
Discuss Garvey and McKay 999-1003 and 1003-1006 in class. “Home to Harlem”

March 07
Discuss *Quicksand* Read for March 19th 1168-1223 Jean Toomer.

Nella Larsen. Read for next class: 1224-1243 Revised draft of paper 2 due today.

March 10
SPRING BREAK

March 17
Discuss Jean Toomer and *Cane*. Oral Reports 1 and 2 Read: Rudolph Fisher

March 19
Discuss The City of Refuge and Fisher. End of unit. Review for Quiz 3

Decade 1930-1940

March 21
Quiz Read for next class: 1282-1288 Arna Bontemps. Thesis statement due in class today. Oral Reports 3 and 4
March 24
Discuss Bontemps and Langston Hughes. Hughes will be read in class. Read for next class: 1355-1368; in class reading of Melvin B. Tolson. Oral Reports 5 and 6.

March 26

March 28

April 02
Discuss Wright. Discuss West and Richard Wright. Read for the next class: 1535-1570 Ralph Ellison. Oral Reports 9 and 10.
April 04
End of unit. Discuss Ellison and read Margaret Walker in class. **Review for Quiz 4.** Oral Reports 11 and 12.

Margaret Walker **Revised draft of 3rd paper due April 7**

**Decades 1950-2000**

April 07
**Quiz 4** Read for next class: 1696-1749 James Baldwin. **Oral Reports 13 and 14.**

April 09

April 11
Film: Lorraine Hansberry: The Black Experience in the Creation of Drama

April 14
Discuss *A Raisin in the Sun*. **Read** for the next class: 1831-1859 Draft of paper 4 due today. **Oral Reports 17 and 18**

**April 16**
Discuss era, Malcolm and Martin Letter and Speech. **Read** for next class: 1911-1920 Gayle and Lorde

**April 18**
Discuss Gayle’s Black Aesthetic and Lorde’s poetry, which will be read in class. **Read** for next class: 1937-1963 Amiri Baraka. **Oral reports 19 and 20.**

**April 21**
Film: Dutchman **Read** for next class: 1960-1967 Sonia Sanchez

**April 23**
Discuss Baraka and Sanchez. **Read** for next class: 2214-2285 Toni Morrison.
April 25
discuss Toni Morrison; Read for next class: 2322-2344 Ernest Gaines

April 28
Film: The Sky is Gray; discuss Gaines and his story. Review for final quiz

April 29
Final Quiz
Final Project: Due Tuesday May 06

The Final Project
The final project should compile your four revised essays with an introduction, a works cited page and must follow MLA guidelines. Number your pages consecutively in the final project. Use MLA Style for works cited. Use parenthetical documentation within the body of the paper. Give your paper a creative (original title). Underline your thesis. In your introduction clearly state your basic argument and how each essay supports it. For example, if you are arguing that African American literature is political, then each of your four essays would have been about the political aspects of what we have read or discussed. Remember that you must take a position. Are politics an appropriate part of literature? State your opinion and then support it. Ask yourself the “so what” question regarding your paper. Why is what you are arguing important? What is the counter argument?

If each of your four papers concerns a different argument, then your introduction should discuss each and show how all four topics are characteristic of African American literature. The minimum page requirement to fulfill a writing requirement is 20 pages. Your four essays should constitute twenty pages. The introduction should be no longer than three pages.

The final project must be submitted on 81/2 X 11 inch paper and placed into a binder. Failure to submit hard copies of the project will result in failure to pass the course.

Criterion for grading essays:

- Arguable thesis statement that is underlined
- Creative title (title written according to MLA Style guidelines)
- Clearly acknowledges a counter argument
- Supports opinions with examples and evidence from the texts
• Formats according to MLA style (Arabic numerals, upper right)
• Correctly cites sources (If outside sources are used)
• Makes logical argument
• Draws logical conclusion
• Proof reads paper before submitting
• Makes changes and revisions to each draft as suggested
• Mechanical errors, grammatical errors, awkward usage, faulty diction, spelling errors, all lower the grade
• Papers must be submitted electronically on the dates they are due by midnight

Primary Research topics

1. African American Cinema Collection 1907-2001
2. African American Miscellany Collection 1848-2009
3. African American Photography Collection
6. AKA-Nu Alpha Chapter (Emory)
7. John Wesley Work
8. Vincent Harding
11. Raymond Andrews
12. Michel Fabre’s archive
14. Lucille Clifton 1930-2010
15. Camille Billops and James V. Hatch
16. Owen Dodson 1914-1983
18. Louise Thompson Patterson 1909-1999
19. SCLC Records
20. Rudolph Fisher