

Survey of African American Literature

Course Schedule

Fall 2012

Topic	Description
Course Description	<p>This course provides an introduction to the rich and varied traditions of African American literature. We will look at literature in several genres, including novels, poetry, music, and autobiographical writing. In addition, we will examine the socio-historical context that influenced the writers whose texts we are reading.</p> <p>The goals of this course are to teach you some fundamental skills of close reading, interpretation and literary analysis, to better understand the African American literary tradition, and to develop your interest in continuing the study of African American literature. We will examine the historical and cultural conditions out of which the African American literary tradition has developed in order to develop culturally-specific and historically-informed methodologies for analyzing African American literature. We will also explore biographical information about the authors whose artistic works we are reading. Unlike a sociology or history course, however, our ultimate purpose in this literature course is to consider, understand, and analyze the literary texts themselves and the way these writers portray various issues. To this end, we will be reading literature in order to analyze how these literary texts are written and how themes are represented, not to analyze the lives of African Americans or the events of African American history.</p>
Course Organization	<p>The course is arranged historically around the theme of migration. We will be examining both literal and metaphorical movement as we make our own semester-long journey. We will begin with the Middle Passage and examine representations of forced migration; then, we will examine the movement out of enslavement, the Great Migration, and the movement to attain civil rights. Finally, as our survey moves into the present, we will examine the role of the past in the present and the problems and possibilities of social change for the future.</p>
Note	<p>See Course Information > Course Policies and Requirements for information about exams, papers, and other requirements.</p>

Course Schedule

Week	To Do
Topic	(Vintage refers to <i>The Vintage Book of African American Poetry</i>)
Start Here Familiarize Yourself with the Course	TO READ (in Course Information): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How Does This Online Course Work ❖ Course Policies and Requirements ❖ Syllabus Introductions (in Assignments): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Introduce yourself to the class and meet others (due by Tues, Sept 4) ❖ Respond to course information (due by Thursday, Sept 6) ❖ Take the online Quiz on Course Issues (not graded but required) (due by Friday, Sept 7)
Movement I Forced Migration	Key Concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • race as a social construction • the Middle Passage double consciousness
WEEK 1 Sept 3-7 Race vs. Ethnicity	TO READ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Maya Angelou, “Still I Rise” (in <i>Assignments</i>) ❖ Langston Hughes, “Theme for English B” in <i>Vintage</i>, 151 (or in <i>Assignments</i>) ❖ W. E. B. Du Bois, “Double Consciousness” (in <i>Assignments</i>) Note: ALL Reading Posts due by Friday, Sept 7 by 11:55 pm for all students (during the first week) . Your Reading Post should focus on ONE (or more) of this week’s assigned readings.

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WEEK 2 Sept 9-14 Early Writings	TO READ: Phillis Wheatley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Select poems by Phillis Wheatley (http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/WhePoem.html or in <i>Vintage</i>, 14) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “On Being Brought from Africa to America” • “A Farewell to America” • “An Hymn to the Morning” • “An Hymn to the Evening” ❖ “Front Matter” to Wheatley’s published volume of poetry (http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/WhePoem.html) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title page • “Preface” • “Copy of a Letter” • “To the Publick” Frederick Douglass <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Narrative of the Life of an American Slave</i> (entire text, 1-76) You can also find the full text of Douglass’s <i>Narrative</i> online at http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Literature/Douglass/Autobiography/ OR http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/DouNarr.html Reminder: A thru L Reading Post due by 11:55 pm on Tuesday M thru Z Reading Post due by 11:55 pm on Thursday Weekly Activity post due by Friday at 11:55 for all students.
Friday, Sept 14: Preferences for leading online discussion due to me via e-mail. See <i>Course Information</i> > “Sign up to Lead Online Discussion” and “How Do I Lead Discussion?”	
Movement II The Great Migration	Key Concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stereotypes • white privilege • deconstructing the color line • vernacular writing • dialect • African American Vernacular English (AAVE)
WEEK 3 Sept 16-21 The Right to Write	TO READ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Begin Charles Chesnutt, <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i>, Chapters 1-9, pages 1-92

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Friday, Sept 21	
One quotation analysis due by 11:55 PM	
WEEK 4 Sept 23-28 The Right to Write	TO READ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Continue Chesnutt, <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i>, Chapters 10-19, pages 93-174 ❖ Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (in <i>Assignments</i>)
WEEK 5 Sept 30-Oct 5 The Right to Write	TO READ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Finish Chesnutt, <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i>
Friday, Oct 5	
Essay Exam 1 available online at 11:55 PM	
Monday, Oct 8	
Timed Exam 1 available online at 11:55 PM	
WEEK 6 Oct 7-12 Post-Emancipation Poetry	TO READ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Paul Laurence Dunbar, <i>Vintage</i>, 73 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “When Malindy Sings” • “A Negro Love Song” • “We Wear the Mask” • “Sympathy” • “The Poet” (in <i>Assignments</i>) <p>Note: To hear these poems read aloud, go to http://www.dunbarsite.org/gallery.asp</p>
Friday, Oct 12	
Exam 1 Due by 11:55 PM	
Movement III Harlem Renaissance	Key Concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the New Negro • primitivism • exoticization • crisis of representation

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<p>WEEK 7 Oct 14-19 Harlem Renaissance Poets</p>	<p>Note: Switch Reading Post due dates beginning Sun, Oct 14 A thru L Reading Post due by Thursday M thru Z Reading Post due by Tuesday</p> <p>TO READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ James Weldon Johnson, in <i>Vintage</i>, 63 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “O Black and Unknown Bards” in <i>Vintage</i>, 64 • “The Creation” in <i>Vintage</i>, 68 • “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (in <i>Assignments</i>) ❖ Langston Hughes, in <i>Vintage</i>, 143 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Harlem Night Song” in <i>Vintage</i>, 145 • “Mother to Son” in <i>Vintage</i>, 148 • “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” in <i>Vintage</i>, 150 • “Harlem” (in <i>Assignments</i>) • “Good Morning” (in <i>Assignments</i>) • “I, too” (in <i>Assignments</i>) ❖ Georgia Douglas Johnson, in <i>Vintage Book of Poetry</i>, 96 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Heart of a Woman” in <i>Vintage Book of Poetry</i>, 96 • “I Want to Die While You Love Me” in <i>Vintage Book of Poetry</i>, 97 • “Old Black Men” in <i>Vintage Book of Poetry</i>, 98 ❖ Claude McKay, in <i>Vintage</i>, 99 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If We Must Die” in <i>Vintage</i>, 99 • “The White House” in <i>Vintage</i>, 100 • “The Harlem Dancer” in <i>Vintage</i>, 100 ❖ Countee Cullen, in <i>Vintage Book of Poetry</i>, 153 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A Brown Girl Dead” in <i>Vintage Book of Poetry</i>, 154 • “Yet Do I Marvel” in <i>Vintage Book of Poetry</i>, 154 • “Saturday’s Child” in <i>Vintage Book of Poetry</i>, 163 ❖ Listen to Billie Holliday, “Strange Fruit” (in <i>Assignments</i>)
<p>WEEK 8 Oct 21-26 On Women</p>	<p>TO READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Begin Nella Larsen, <i>Quicksand</i>, Chapters 1-16, pages 1-93 ❖ Langston Hughes, “Cross” in <i>Vintage Book of Poetry</i>, 143 ❖ Sojourner Truth, speech: “Ain’t I a Woman” (1851) (in <i>Assignments</i>) ❖ Alice Walker, “Womanism” (1967) (in <i>Assignments</i>)
<p>Friday, Oct 26 Last Day to drop classes</p>	

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WEEK 9 Oct 28-Nov 2 Women Novelists of the Harlem Renaissance	TO READ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Finish <i>Quicksand</i> (to page 135) ❖ Begin Zora Neale Hurston, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>, Chapters 1–10, pages 1-99
WEEK 10 Nov 4-9 The Folk	TO READ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Finish Hurston, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>
Friday, Nov 9 Quotation Anthology (with Response Paper) due by 11:55 pm	
WEEK 11 Nov 11-16 On Men	TO READ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Richard Wright, “The Ethics of Living Jim Crow” http://newdeal.feri.org/fwp/fwp03.htm (also in <i>Assignments</i>) ❖ Ralph Ellison, Prologue to <i>Invisible Man</i> (1952) (in <i>Assignments</i>) ❖ Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik al-Shabazz), “The Ballot or the Bullet” (April 12, 1964) listen: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRNciryImgg (text available in <i>Assignments</i>) ❖ Landmark speeches by Martin Luther King, Jr.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (August 28, 1963) listen: http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihavedream.htm (text available in <i>Assignments</i>) • “I’ve Been To The Mountaintop” (April 3, 1968) listen: http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/sayitplain/mlking.htm (text available in <i>Assignments</i>)
Movement IV Toward Civil Rights & the Present	Key Concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • socialization • systemic change • critical consciousness • empathy
WEEK 12 Nov 18-20 Black Arts Movement	ALL posts due Tuesday, Nov 20 by 11:55 pm (regardless of last name) TO READ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Amiri Baraka, “Black Art” in <i>Vintage</i>, 234 ❖ Etheridge Knight, “Hard Rock Returns to Prison from the Hospital for the Criminal Insane” (in <i>Assignments</i>) ❖ Gwendolyn Brooks, in <i>Vintage</i>, 184 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We Real Cool” 187 • “The Mother” 187-88 • “To an Old Black Woman, Homeless and Indistinct” 191-92

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Thanksgiving Break Wednesday, Nov 21 – Sunday, Nov 25	
WEEK 13 Nov 25-30 The Past Meets the Present	TO READ: ❖ Begin Octavia Butler, <i>Kindred</i> to page 143 (be sure to read the “Prologue”)
WEEK 14 Dec 2-7 The Past Meets the Present	TO READ: ❖ Finish Butler, <i>Kindred</i> ❖ Tupac Shakur (available in <i>Assignments</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Rose That Grew from Concrete” • “When Ure Heart Turns Cold” • “Sometimes I Cry” • “The Fear in the Heart of a Man” • “In the Event of My Demise”
WEEK 15 Dec 9-10 Conclusion	TO READ: ❖ Margaret Walker, “For My People” in <i>Vintage</i> , 176 Classes End: Monday, Dec 10 ALL posts due Dec 10 by 11:55 pm
Exam 2 Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday, Dec 7: Essay Exam 2 available online at 11:55 PM • Monday, Dec 10: Timed Exam 2 available online at 11:55 PM • Friday, Dec 14: Exam 2 Due by 11:55 PM 	