

Fayetteville State University
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of English and Foreign Languages
ENGL 223 - 02: African American Literature
Fall 2009

I. Locator Information:

Professor: Brooksie Harrington
Course Title: ENGL 223-02 (African American Literature II)
Office Location: Butler 135
Semester Credit Hours: 4
Office hours: M – T—W—Th 10 - 2; Tu Th 12-2, F 2-5
Office Phone: 672-1931
Total Contact Hours for Class: 45
Email address: bharrington@uncfsu.edu

The following statement should appear on the first page of each course syllabus:

FSU Policy on Electronic Mail: Fayetteville State University provides to each student, free of charge, an electronic mail account (username@uncfsu.edu) that is easily accessible via the Internet. The university has established FSU email as the primary mode of correspondence between university officials and enrolled students. Inquiries and requests from students pertaining to academic records, grades, bills, financial aid, and other matters of a confidential nature must be submitted via FSU email. Inquiries or requests from personal email accounts are not assured a response. The university maintains open-use computer laboratories throughout the campus that can be used to access electronic mail.

Rules and regulations governing the use of FSU email may be found at
<http://www.uncfsu.edu/PDFs/EmailPolicyFinal.pdf>

II. Course Description

African -American Literature is an exploration of the prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction of the African Diaspora. While examining multiple genres: oral, written and cinematic, it also investigates the spiritual, historical, philosophical, political, and genderracial forces that influenced the form and matter of this literature. It offers a revision not only of African-American texts of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it also provides the students with another way of viewing the traditional canon of American Literature. English 223 is a three credit course.

Page 2

This course will not be developed along historical lines; rather the students will study the material from a perspective of genre and thematics. This is a syllabus that is designed to require a full semester's length of reading and writing.

III. Disabled Student Services: In accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) of 1990, if you have a disability or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1st Floor); 910-672-1203.

TEXTBOOK: Gates, Henry Louis and Nellie McKay. **The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature.** New York: W.W. Norton, 2002. In accordance with the various modes of expression, recordings, guest lecturers, documentaries and commercial and independent films will be used—Amistad, Ragtime, and Jim Crow Museum (YouTube).

V. FSU Student Learning Outcomes –

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Arrange African American literature between 1900 and the present in a chronology.
- 2) Understand characteristics of the genres used in African American literature, such as political speeches, essays, autobiographies, sermons, testimonies, riddles, proverbs and cinema.
- 3) Defend the view that some modern and postmodern African American literature has at its center political empowerment.
- 4) Question the promise of the documents on which this country is founded, particularly as these documents relate to African Americans.
- 5) Write a researched analytical paper on a topic related to African American literature after 1900.

Page 3

VI. Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria -

- a. Grading Scale – The class grading scale must be consistent with the university catalog.

Final Grades – This policy becomes effective on August 16, 2007

Final grades are calculated on a four-point system and affect a student's grade point average as indicated below. Faculty members will delineate in each class syllabus the methods and evaluative criteria for determining final grades in the class.

Grade	Credit Hours	Quality Points	Meaning
A	Hours attempted and earned	4 per credit hour;	Exceptionally high
B	Hours attempted and earned	3 per credit hour	Good
C	Hours attempted and earned	2 per credit hour	Satisfactory
D	Hours attempted and earned	1 per credit hour	Marginally passing
F	Hours attempted – Not earned	0 per credit hour	Failing
FN	Hours attempted – Not earned	0 per credit hour	Failing due to non-attendance. (Student registered, but <u>never</u> attended.)
W	Hours attempted – Not earned	No impact on GPA	Class withdrawal prior to deadline (see Academic Calendar)
P	Hours attempted and earned	No impact on GPA	Satisfactory - Assigned only in classes specified as Pass/Fail
WU	Hours attempted – Not earned	No impact on GPA	Withdrawal from all classes for semester or term
AU	Hours attempted – Not earned	No impact on GPA	Auditing

- b. Attendance Requirements: Fayetteville State University no longer has a WN grade. So, for this course, **if you miss more than five (5) classes you will receive an F for the course.** If you miss a class when an assignment is due, not only will that count as an absence, but also there will be a lateness penalty attached to the assignment. If something important occurs, ***negotiate with the instructor as soon as possible***, preferably in advance: maybe something can be worked out. Missing your conference appointment will count as **THREE** absences.

Page 4

Graded Assignments:

Two major essays and Two Oral Presentations	@ 12%	=72%
Peer comment checklists @ 2%	=12%	
Midterm Examination the week of October 12 @ 5%	= 5%	
Miscellaneous In-class and Homework Exercises @5%	=5%	
Final Examination@6%	=6%	

V. Course Outline and Assignment Schedule:

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS
(subject to adjustment)

The schedule is arranged by **week**, not by individual class days, and is deliberately designed to be flexible. More precise specifications will be furnished as we go along. Due dates for Essays refer to when to start working on them; the final turn-in dates will be set later. **ALL AT-HOME ESSAYS WILL REQUIRE SEVERAL DRAFTS.** Department requirements, in-class exercises, and other readings might be assigned as the professor sees necessary.

—? DO ALL THE READINGS **BEFORE** CLASS BEGINS. That is so you can be prepared to discuss—and often write about—the works in class. Operate on the assumption there might be a quiz: even if there is not a quiz, when people are prepared and aware, less time is wasted doing the basics and—most important of all—class is less boring. (HINT: ⇨ Think about the questions at the end of each selection. They will help you understand the selection better—and they just might be the question on the quiz or in-class writing.) Much of the in-class assignments (summaries, comparison-and-contrast) will be based on the reading selections assigned.

If you don't know what a word means, LOOK IT UP. Don't be embarrassed: nobody—NOBODY, not even an English teacher—knows every word there is; and learning new concepts and the words that go with them is one good reason to go to college in the first place.

Page 5

—? ALL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS. That is so you can share (and sometimes work on) your writings with your classmates. Papers turned in after the beginning of class count as LATE and will be PENALIZED. All versions must be typed or (preferably) done on a computer. Double space. Use standard, default margins, fonts, and point size (11 or 12).

➤➤ Do not wait until the night before the paper is due to begin writing. The night before is for proofreading and, even more important, to insert ideas that occurred to you after you started writing.

Further specifications for each paper will be provided by the professor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the semester, students will have met specific objectives.

Student will be able to do the following:

A. Decode language used in the traditional sense to discuss African-American Literature.

The following terms will acquire new connotations: minority, majority, canon, American, African-American Literature, white, black, race, culture, and myth.

B. Decode figurative speech used to characterize American Literature and apply the traditional figurative language to African-American Literature;

C. Construct a literary canon that is counter to that of the traditional American canon in that the old canon is based on a different cultural base; outdated references as opposed to postmodernist ones of the Africanist culture.

D. Compose definitions, informal and formal, for African-American Literature, in particular, and African-American aestheticism in general.

Page 6

COMPETENCIES

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the following, as recommended by the Department of Public Instruction and stated in “Guidelines and Competencies for Undergraduates in the English/Communication Skills Preparation Program”:

2.2 Basic information concerning the English language: its structure, standards, and variations;

2.6 Various modes of discourse (narration, exposition, description, and persuasion) and their appropriate use in all areas of experience: personal, social, educational, business, and vocational;

2.7 Elements of literature and how these elements affect interpretation;

2.8 The genres common to oral, written, and visual expression.

This course will also develop knowledge and competencies consistent with the standards recommended by the National Council of Teachers of English. Specifically, students will be able to do the following:

1.1 Complete a specific language arts course of study;

2.6 Recognize the impact that culture, societal events and issues have on teachers, students, the English language arts curriculum, and education in general;

3.1.2 Demonstrate how reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and things are interrelated;

3.1.3 Recognize the impact of cultural, economic, political, and social environments upon language;

3.1.4 Show a respect for and an understanding of diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles;

3.1.5 Show an understanding of the evolution of English language and the historical influences on its various forms;

3.1.8 Show various purposes for which language is used;

3.2.2 Use writing, speaking and observing as major forms of inquiry, reflection, and expression;

Page 7

3.2.5 Apply knowledge of language structure and conventions of creating and critiquing print and non-print texts;

3.3.1 Demonstrate how to respond to and interpret what is read in different ways;

3.3.2 Demonstrate how to discover and create meaning from texts;

3.3.3 Use a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts;

3.4.3 Demonstrate how written discourse can influence thought and action;

3.5.3 Show knowledge of a broad historical and contemporary spectrum of United States, British, and world literature, including:

3.5.1.1 works from a range of cultures;

3.5.1.2 works from a range of genres.

CONTENT

Weeks One and Two

Introduction of text and syllabus

Focus: Mini Lecture: “What African-American Literature Isn’t.”

Assignment: Diagnostic Essay: Students compose essay based on definition of African-American Literature(optional).

Breaking the Code: Dictionary and literary handbook assignment (Holman’s Handbook or Harper and Frye’s Handbook) involving the re-definition of terms traditionally used to define African-Americans and their culture.

Students use unabridged texts to search for definitions and re-create their own definitions in the light of a re-visioned text. Students exchange information in class and compose their new definitions outside of class. All readings from chapter One

Weeks Three and Four**

Students view Spielberg’s AMISTAD, a film about slave insurrection that provides demythification of slave history and images counter to those presented in Twain, Harris, and other American authors.

Page 8

Assignment: Students explore traditional figurative language used to discuss literary and, to an extent, cinematic texts. In-class, exercises will provide opportunity to apply terms such as METAPHOR, SIMILE, IMAGERY, SYMBOL, TROPE, ALLUSION, IRONY, PARADOX, GENRE, and OXYMORON to the film.

Students review the first two chapters of the text; emphasis is placed upon the definition of vernacular and multiple contexts for the slave narrative: **The Vernacular Tradition**(Ch. I) and “**The Literature of Slavery and Freedom**”(Ch. II).

Dr. Harrington introduces the concept of Ragtime (Rag Music) and the use of this genre as a trope for discussing the complementary text—**Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man. (Reservations for Performance Space TBA. {Piano Needed} Two Assignments: Group Project:** Students present analyses of selected scenes of **Ragtime**, both in written and oral forms. **Extra Credit:** Students submit personal slave narratives due at midseason.

B. Harrington provides mini-lectures on the masculine tradition of the African American Literary Forum: In-roads, visually and orally, into the aesthetics of Booker T Washington’s **Up From Slavery**, Chapter One. Research will provide explanatory information on DuBois’ **The Souls of Black Folk**: Chapter Three: ”Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others” and combined lectures on Charles Chesnutt’s short stories: “The Wife of His Youth” and representative essays(if there is time).

Week Five and Six

Students explore one representative work from the literature of the Harlem Renaissance and the Modernist Period. Students will read Hughes’ “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”; Countee Cullen’s “Incident”; and one representative work from each of the following feminist authors—Z. Hurston’s “Characteristics of Negro Expression”; Anne Spencer’s “ At the Carnival” and “Wife-Woman.”

Page 9

ASSIGNMENT: Students will write two major researched position papers of ten pages with secondary MLA reference. The major project for the class is the creation of a family project which combines elements of the “slave narrative,” genealogy and family history. It will contain written, visual, and be substantiated by an oral text. (Said assignment combines research, reading, and critical thinking skills.)

Week Seven and Eight

Oral Presentations to be Video-taped

Practices and pre-evaluations TBA

Week Nine and Ten

Readings from the Text: Sonny’s Blues and James Baldwin Series

***Week Eleven and Twelve: Personally Individualized Research Projects—
Consultations will take place during class.
Students are invited to me Dr. Harrington during
research hours in the library after 8:00pm***

Week Thirteen and Fourteen

Students explore one representative work from their personally individualized Research. (Dissertation Abstracts, Psychological Abstracts, Primary and Secondary, Original Videography. All research evolves from the aesthetic of literature from the Harlem Renaissance and the Modernist Period. Students will read re-read excerpts from Hughes’ “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”; Countee Cullen’s “Incident”; and one representative work from each of the following feminist authors—Z. Hurston’s “Characteristics of Negro Expression”; Anne Spencer’s “At the Carnival” and “Wife-Woman.” Make sure your research justifies your futuristic assertion. Please note that class discussions are urgent during this era of the semester

Page 10

Week thirteen: Class Presentations
Week Fourteen Class Presentations

EVALUATION

Class participation counts for ten percent of the student's grade. The written assignments done outside of class are twenty percent; the final project and research position paper constitute thirty-five percent each. All work will be graded in accordance with standards established and published by the Department of English and Foreign Languages at Fayetteville State University. All work should be on a computer or word processor, free of grammatical errors, and submitted on time. Late assignments will have points deducted from them.

(MLA Style is to be used for all work.)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The policy for this class is in accordance with that of the University Handbook.

Students should refer to this handbook and follow accordingly.