

Dr. Helena Woodard, Associate Professor
E376R, 35025; Afr 374 1, 35540; African American Literature
Through the Harlem Renaissance-W; 10:00-11:00 a.m. Par 304
Office: 331 Parlin; Office Hours: 11:00-12:00 & By Appointment
Ph: (512) 471-8703; Email: hwood@mail.utexas.edu

Contains Substantial Writing Component
Cross-listed with AFR 374

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This course is an introduction to select African-American literature--slave narratives, poetry, novels, essays—in a tripartite format that extends from slavery to Reconstruction through the Harlem Renaissance. The course proposes two primary objectives rooted in past and present literary representations of slavery. Thematizing “the trope of the talking book,” (Henry Louis Gates, Jr.’s *The Signifying Monkey*), the course first examines seminal slave narratives, e.g. the literature of the enslaved as discursive strategies, from self-actualization and resistance to early formations of a black literary discourse. The course historicizes issues pertinent to the development of an African-American literary tradition, such as critical race theory, double consciousness or the struggle for self-identity, as complicated by issues pertaining to class, race, and gender. These issues are thematized through stylistic forms that include the oral vernacular tradition, blues ideology, and folk culture. In the third and final unit, the course examines an unprecedented flourishing of seminal literature, art, music, and culture produced throughout the Harlem Renaissance.

REQUIRED READINGS:

***Classic Slave Narratives*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
The Poems of Phillis Wheatley, Phillis Wheatley.
The Marrow of Tradition, Charles Chesnutt.
Passing, Nella Larsen.
The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance, Alain Locke, ed.
Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance, Houston Baker.
Course pack, Speedway on Dobie.**

***COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

.75 Three critical essays (25% each; 4-5 pages per essay, typed, double spaced)

- One major critical essay revision; see separate handout.
- .15 Response papers, (in-class and out-of-class, based on course readings, 1-2 pages); reading quizzes; class participation
 - .10 Oral group presentations, accompanied by one-page written report

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing 306 and English 316K or their equivalents (e.g. T C 603A and 603B), and three additional semester hours of lower-division coursework in either English or rhetoric and writing. No exceptions.

English Major Area: II. Literary Period or Survey

***The course contains select readings from African American literature from slavery through the Harlem Renaissance. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. The subject of each class meeting may be determined from the assigned reading for the day (see course schedule). The instructor retains the right to vary this syllabus.**

ATTENDANCE:

Regular attendance is required. More than four absences will be sufficient grounds for failure in the course. The four allowed absences will include illness, deaths of relatives, and other emergencies. If you are more than five minutes late or leave before class ends (without permission), you will be counted absent for that class. You are responsible for all work covered in your absence.

CLASS POLICIES:

Absolutely no make-up for reading quizzes. In exchange, the lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Except under extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, late assignments will not be accepted. I reserve the right to make these decisions on a case by case basis. You must bring your books to class and complete all reading assignments by the first day of class discussion for that text. Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date at the beginning of class. Papers turned in during or after class on the due day will be considered late. Use the MLA (Modern Language Association) Handout for all papers. Type papers on white, 8.5" x 11" paper, using one side only. Bind pages with a paper clip.

Special Accommodations for Students with a Disability:

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259. Please notify the professor of any special accommodations that you may need prior to the end of the second week of class.

Policy on Religious Observance:

A student who is absent from a class or examination due to the observance of a religious holy day may complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence if proper notice has been given. Notice must be given at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates the student will be absent. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, notice should be given on the first day of the semester.

GRADING SCALE:

Final grades will be determined on the basis of the following rubric. Please note that to ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. Thus, a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999. The University does not recognize the grade of A+.

A (94-100); A- (90-93); B+ (87-89); B (84-86); B- (80-83); C+ (77-79); C (74-76); C- (70-73); D+ (67-69); D (64-66); D- (60-63); F (0-59).

Plus/minus grades will be assigned for the final grade. This is a writing-intensive course. No final exam is given.

READING SCHEDULE

- Wed 1/20** Classes begin. Introduction to course; policies, etc.
- Fri 1/22** *Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano*. Ch 1-3.
- Mon 1/25** *Equiano*. Ch 4-6.
- Wed 1/27** *Equiano*. Ch 7-9.
- Fri 1/29** *Equiano*. Ch 10-12. Out of class response essay due (TBA).
- Mon 2/1** *Poems of Phillis Wheatley*, Introduction.
 “To the University of Cambridge”
 “On Being Brought From Africa To America”
- Wed 2/3** *Poems of Phillis Wheatley*,
 “On the Death of the Rev. George Whitefield”
 “To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth”
 “A Farewell To America”
 “To a Gentleman of the Navy”
- Fri 2/5** *Poems of Phillis Wheatley*,
 “To His Excellency General Washington”
 “[Letter and Reply] To George Washington”
 “On the Death of General Wooster”
 “[Letters] To the Countess of Huntingdon”
 “[Letter] To Samson Occom”
- Mon 2/8** *Narrative of Frederick Douglass*.
 CRITICAL ESSAY I DUE (TBA).
- Wed 2/10** *Narrative of Frederick Douglass*.
- Fri 2/12** *Narrative of Frederick Douglass*.
- Mon 2/15** *Narrative of Frederick Douglass*.
- Wed 2/17** Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 341-383.

Fri 2/19 Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 384-440.

Mon 2/22 Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 441-477.

Wed 2/24 Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 478-515.

Fri 2/26 In-class response essay (TBA).

Mon 3/1 Group presentation I, (Recovering Slavery: The New York Burial Ground at 290 Broadway.)

Unit II: Reconstruction

Wed 3/3 Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*. (Chaps 1-9).

Fri 3/5 Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*. (Chaps 10-19).

Mon 3/8 Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*. (Chaps 20-29).

Wed 3/10 Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*. (Chaps 30-37).

Fri 3/12 **CRITICAL ESSAY II DUE (TBA).**
Group presentation II (Booker T. Washington and WE.B. DuBois: 'Racial accommodation' vs. the 'talented tenth.')

MARCH 15-20 (MON – SAT) SPRING BREAK

Unit III: The Harlem Renaissance

Mon 3/22 Houston Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*. Lecture and discussion.

Wed 3/24 Houston Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*. Lecture and discussion.

Fri 3/26 Nella Larsen, *Passing*. (part I, "Encounter").

Mon 3/29 Nella Larsen, *Passing*. (part II, "Re-encounter").

Wed 3/31 Nella Larsen, *Passing*. (part III, "Finale").

- Fri 4/2** Harlem Renaissance, Group III, Introduction to poetry.
- Mon 4/5** Alain Locke, *New Negro Anthology*, select prose & poems.
- Wed 4/7** *New Negro Anthology*, select prose & poems.
- Fri 4/9** *New Negro Anthology*, select prose & poems.
- Mon 4/12** *New Negro Anthology*, select prose & poems.
- Wed 4/14** *New Negro Anthology*, select prose & poems.
- Fri 4/16** The Harlem Renaissance, Group IV, introducing visual arts.
- Mon 4/19** Photographer James Van der zee and ‘the book of the Dead.’
- Wed 4/21** Visual artists: Aaron Douglass & Romare Bearden.
- Fri 4/23** Visual artists: Augusta Savage & Jacob Lawrence.
- Mon 4/26** The Harlem Renaissance, Group V, performance aesthetics.
CRITICAL ESSAY III DUE (TBA).
- Wed 4/28** Houston Baker, *Blues Ideology* and the Harlem Renaissance.
- Fri 4/30** Angela Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminisms*.
- Mon 5/3** The Imprint of Jazz and the Harlem Renaissance.
- Wed 5/5** In-class response essay (TBA).
- Fri 5/7** Round table discussion (TBA).
MAJOR REVISIONS FOR CRITICAL ESSAY I OR II DUE.
LAST CLASS DAY.