

## SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE IN ILLINOIS

Fall 2005, New Horizons, Session F  
ENG232-70  
Room D221  
Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

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### ENG232-70 Introduction to African American Authors

**Course Description.** Introduction to African American Authors. (3 credits). Select fiction of significant African American authors. The course examines common literary characteristics and historical, cultural, and societal issues that have affected the lives of African Americans. Prerequisite: ENG 111 with a grade of C or better. IAI H3 910D; IAI EGL 918.

#### Textbooks and Materials

Gates Jr., Henry Louis and Nellie Y. McKay, eds. *The Norton Anthology: African American Literature*.  
A college level dictionary  
3.5" formatted disk  
Blue or black ink pens and a red ink pen

#### Mission Statement

The mission of Springfield College in Illinois is to provide students with the best liberal arts education in the Ursuline tradition of a nurturing faith-based environment. We prepare students for a life of learning, leadership, and service in a diverse world.

Common student learning objectives (CSLOs) derived from the mission and applicable to this course are:

- Content Knowledge (Lifelong Learning)
  - Know and apply the central concepts of the subject matter. (CK-1)
- Communication Skills (Lifelong Learning & Leadership)
  - Communicate effectively in oral and written forms. (CS-1)
- Problem-Solving Skills (Lifelong Learning & Leadership)
  - Use self-reflection to enhance personal growth and understanding of content. (PS-3)
- Social Responsibility (Service & Leadership)
  - Evaluate how choices and actions affect others. (SR-1)
  - Make ethical and informed decisions. (SR-2)
- Global Perspective (Diversity)
  - Recognize the importance of diversity of opinion, abilities, and cultures. (GP-1)

#### Common Student Learning Objectives and Course-Based Learning Objectives

Goal: ENG232 is a course designed to help students recognize the contributions, insights, and artistic values that African American authors have brought to the field of literature.

### Common Student Learning Objectives:

- To become familiar with literary techniques used by authors to create meaning (CK-1)
- To develop the power of reflection and the ability to formulate questions in response to literature (PS-3)
- To use prior knowledge and experience to develop a greater understanding of self and the literature (PS-3, SP-1)
- To develop an understanding of and ability to evaluate causes that influence social behaviors that are depicted in the literature (SR-1)
- To develop the ability to make and informed decisions in analyzing social values and social conflicts (SR-2)
- To develop the ability to communicate one's opinion and analysis through discussion and written response to the literature using standard English (CS-1)
- To develop an insight into the African-American experience,--historical, social, and cultural – through the study of literature (GP-1, CK-1)

### Course-Based Student Learning Objectives (CBSLOs)

Students who have successfully completed ENG232 will be able to:

- CBSLO-1. Identify terms and techniques specific to the study of literature (CK-1)
- CBSLO-2 Analyze events in the literature by drawing on prior knowledge and experience to examine similarities and differences between their own and others' culture (CK-1, CS-1, PS-3, SR-1, GP-1)
- CBSLO-3 Demonstrate a knowledge of causes that have contributed to African-American conflict and knowledge of contributions made to communal pride
  - (CK-1, CS-1, SR-1, SR-2, GP-1)

### Teaching Methodology

In all that we do, students are encouraged to develop a sense of intellectual curiosity. The classroom is a community in which students and the instructor collaborate in the learning process through reflection, inquiry, evaluation, and sharing. Emphasis is placed on oral rendition, reflection, class discussion, and written analysis of assigned readings. There will be inclass writing and classroom assessments. Students may be asked permission to use their work for teaching purposes, for publication consideration, and/or for use at English Conferences. No student work will be used without permission.

### Course Requirements

*Academic Integrity:* acknowledging and crediting sources that you use in academic discourse is important because doing so

“helps establish your ethos as a writer”: it says “thank you” to authors who have been of help; it demonstrates that you have done research; and it reminds you to critically consider how you have used your sources. Demonstrating this to your readership helps to build credibility between you and your audience (Lunsford, Ruskiewicz, & Walters, 2004, *Everything's and argument*, p. 404).

In its “Statement on Plagiarism,” the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) explained: “. . . taking over the ideas, methods, or written words of another, without acknowledgment and with the intention that they be taken as the work of a deceiver, is plagiarism. It is theft of a special kind, for the true author still retains the original ideas and words, yet they are diminished as that author's property and a fraud is committed upon that audience that believes those ideas and words originated with the deceiver.

. . .

[Plagiarism] is the antithesis of the honest labor that characterizes true scholarship and without which mutual trust and respect among scholars is impossible” (*Redbook*, 1995, pp. 109-110).

Plagiarism -- *presenting the ideas or words of another as if they were one’s own* -- is literary dishonesty and will not be tolerated. Nor will other forms of academic dishonesty be tolerated. A minor offense will result in a zero for the assignment; a major offense is cause for failing the course.

*Attendance* is required and will be strictly recorded. Because of the accelerated nature of this course, absences simply cannot be tolerated. If for any reason you should be absent from class, please contact me as soon as time allows. If you know ahead of time that you will be absent from class, please let me know. Because class discussion will weigh so heavily in our approach to understanding the literature, absences will not only negatively affect your overall grade but may limit your understanding of the subject matter examined. When absent from class, you are deprived of hearing and participating in class discussions, and you deprive us of hearing your questions and reflections on, and interpretation of the literature. Furthermore, missed inclass work cannot be made up. Finally, absences may make it more difficult for you to successfully complete the Course-Based Student Learning Objectives.

Of course, emergencies may happen. A maximum of two absences are allowed for such circumstances. Students’ final grade will be lowered one letter grade for each class missed beyond two absences.

To avoid class disruptions, students should be seated on time for class. Instructions for assignments and inclass writings are generally given at the beginning of the class period. If you are late for the inclass writing assignment, no credit is awarded.

Students must turn off cell phones before class starts. This is a common courtesy to your classmates and instructor. If a student’s cell phone rings during class, the student will be asked to leave class.

Text Messaging is not allowed during class time.

If a student misses a class, it is the student’s responsibility to get class notes and/or assignments from a classmate or contact me by voice mail during office hours or by e-mail.

*Reading Assignments.* Please see calendar below. It is important to understand that you must have read all literature assigned for the date of discussion. The majority of reading assignments will be selections from the text *The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature*. As a humanities course, we want to examine the human condition in all its complexities, and specifically in this course, to examine the African American experience. We want to explore together and individually the visions and values, the norms and human experiences embodied in works of quality African American authors. To this end, as we critically read the literature, consider the following topics:

- Formal and aesthetic aspects of literature, including point of view, setting, characterization, tone, style, structure, theme, and figurative language.
- Thematic considerations including:
  - a. Aspects of the African-American culture and its contributions to the American culture;
  - b. Search for identity (discovering and defining one’s self, developing a sense of belonging and a sense of autonomy)
  - c. Diversity of American culture (the complex nature of a diverse culture and problems that arise from race and class differences including conformity and rebellion); and

d. Oppression and exploitation (conflicts of social values and social norms).

#### *Written Assignments*

- Students will write one reader response analysis essay, minimum 750 words, which will be presented to the class. (CBSLO-2)
- Students will write one formal analysis essay that will include basic research, minimum 1000 words, which will be presented to class (CBSLO 1,2, 3)
- Students will write inclass reflective essays, minimum five, during the course of the session. (CBSLO1, 2, and/or 3)

All out-of-class written assignments are to be typed and double-spaced. These assignments will be graded according to the “Evaluation of Written Composition” guide (see below) and a specific rubric for each assignment.

In order to eliminate standard errors of correctness in writing, students will be given the opportunity to earn back points by making appropriate corrections of errors: 100% on essay one, and 50% on essay two. To earn credit, corrections must be made **in red ink on the graded essay and resubmitted the following week**, unless otherwise directed.

Late assignments will be deducted 10%, and they must be submitted no later than a week from the due date. *No assignment will be accepted for credit after a week from the due date.*

**Means of evaluation of outcomes.** Final grades will be based on assignments weighted as follows:

15% of final grade:	Reader Response analysis, minimum 750 words.
25% of final grade:	Formal analysis with research, minimum 1000 words.
50% of final grade:	Inclass discussion, essays, exercises, and quizzes.
10% of final grade:	Final exam based on an essay question

*The Grading Scale is as follows:*

A = 100 – 90    B = 89 – 80    C = 79 – 70    D = 69 – 60    E = 59 - 0

***Keep all graded essays until you have received your final grades. Save your best essays for a portfolio of evaluated written work. Senior institutions may ask for evidence of your writing and reasoning skills.***

#### *Topical Course Outline*

**REMINDER:** The readings listed for each week are those readings which we will be discussing that class period. For example, students must have read all readings assigned for week one before our first class meeting date. If there is an asterisk by a title, that means the song is on the compact disc accompanying your text book. Study the selections along with the disc.

**We benefit most from the study of literature if we agree to approach it with curiosity and with an open mind. We must have a willingness to listen to and appreciate voices other than ours. We must**

be open to learning about differences as well as commonalities, and we must look for connections between experiences and connections among various avenues of study linked with the study of literature – the historical, social, cultural, and political contexts of literature. In short, we must be willing to immerse ourselves in a liberal arts education.

**Week One (Oct. 18): The Vernacular Tradition and the Literature of Slavery and Freedom**  
Studying African-American oral traditions -- the spirituals, folktales, music, and sermons – along with early slave narratives, helps us understand African-American connections to the African culture and its influence on modern African-American culture. Don't be overwhelmed by the reading assignment; most of the readings are very short. Read aloud; listen to the sounds and the message.

- The Vernacular Tradition and Spirituals (3-10)
- "I Know Moon Rise," "Ezekiel Saw de Wheel,"\* "Go Down Moses"\* (11-13) \*
- "Soon I Will Be Done" (17-18)\*
- "Steal Away to Jesus" (14-15)\*
- Gospel (19-20)
- "This Little Light of Mine,"\* "Down by the Riverside," "Stand By Me" (21-24)
- Secular Rhymes and Songs, Ballads, and Work Songs (25-26)
- "Me and My Captain" (27)
- Songs of Social Change: "Strange Fruit,"\* "We Shall Overcome," "The Blacklash Blues" (45-47)
- "John Henry" (31-34)\*
- "Stackolee" (38-39)
- "Go Down, Old Hannah" (42)
- Sermons and Prayers (94-96)
- "God" (96-97)
- "Listen Lord, a Prayer" (97-98)
- The Literature of Slavery and Freedom (151-62)
- Olaudah Equiano (187-89)
- From *the Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* (189-213)
- Sojourner Truth (245-46)
- "Ar'n't I a Woman? Speech to the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, 1851 (246-49)

**Week Two (Oct. 25): Literature of Slavery and Freedom and Literature of the Reconstruction of the New Negro Renaissance: 1865-1919.** We will continue to hear the voices of African Americans as they reflect on the institution of slavery and continue their journey toward freedom. We will listen to voices heard during the Civil War and later, voices that cried out that the institution of slavery, more than anything else, challenged and tested whether this nation "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" could become a reality. Is there a difference between the female and male voice? What do they have in common? What are the differences?

- Henry Highland Garnet (345-46)
- "An Address to the Slaves of the United States of America" (346-52)
- Victor Sejour (352-53)
- "The Mulatto" (353-65)
- Frederick Douglass (385-87)
- Preface to *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (387-95)
- from *My Bondage and My Freedom* (452-61)

- “The Internal Slave Trade” (471-72)
- Literature of the Reconstruction to the Negro Renaissance (541-54)
- Charlotte Forten Grimke (544-55)
- Journals (556-69)
- Anna Julia Cooper (635-36)
- “Womanhood...” (636-50)
- W.E.D. Du Bois (686-89)
- “A Litany of Atlanta” and “The Song O Smoke” (689-92)

**Week Three (Nov. 1): Literature of the Reconstruction to the Negro Renaissance and Harlem Renaissance: 1919-1940.** Gates and McKay tell us that “[t]he 1920s was a decade of extraordinary creativity in the arts for black Americans, and much of that creativity found its focus in the activities of African Americans living in New York City, particularly in the district of Harlem” (953). As we read the literature of this period, consider how writers define themselves and their position in society, and how they begin to examine their own literature and the responsibility black writers have to their own people. Consider how the literature has changed, perhaps in style, perhaps the canon itself, while still responding to the social conditions of the African American.

- James Weldon Johnson (791-93)
- “Fifty Years” and “Brothers” (796-800)
- Paul Laurence Dunbar (905-07)
- “Ode to Ethiopia,” “The Colored Soldiers,” and “An Ante-Bellum Sermon” (907-14)
- “We Wear the Mask” (918)
- “Sympathy” and “The Haunted Oak” (922-24)
- Harlem Renaissance: 1919 – 1940 (953-58)
- Claude McKay (1003-06)
- “Harlem Shadows,” “If We Must Die,”\* (1006-07)
- “America,” “My Mother” and “Enslaved” (1008-09)
- from *Home to Harlem* and “Harlem Runs Wild” (1010-19)
- Zora Neale Hurston (1019-22)
- from Characteristics of Negro Expression, “Asymmetry” and “Dancing” (1044-45)
- “Negro Folklore” and “Culture Heroes” (1045-46)
- “Imitation” and “Absence of the Concept of Privacy” (1047-49)
- “Dialect” 1052-53)

**Week Four (Nov. 8): A celebration of Zora Neale Hurston and her contributions to African American literature during the Harlem Renaissance period.**

- “How it Feels to be Colored Me” (1030-33)
- Marita Bonner (1243-44)
- “On Being Young – a Woman – and Colored” (1244-47)
- from *Mules and Men* (1053-62)
- “The Gilded Sixbits” (1033-41)
- “Sweat” (1022-30)

**Week Five (Nov. 15): Harlem Renaissance: 1914 – 1940.** We will continue with our study of the writers of the Harlem Renaissance, listening to the new writers of the period. We will examine specific literary techniques these writers brought to the literature and new subject matter. We will examine what it

means to be “Colored”, and we will examine tensions that emerged among African American authors themselves.

- Harlem Renaissance: 1919 – 1940, (959-62)
- Jean Toomer (1168-69)
- from *Cane*, “Blood Burning Moon” (1186-91)
- from *Cane*, “Karintha” through “Evening Song” (1170-81)
- Langston Hughes (1288-91)
  - “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” (1291)
  - “Mother to Son” (1292); “Harlem” (1308-09)
  - “I, Too” (1295); “Merry-Go-Round” – “Trumpet Player” (1303-06)
  - from “Red Silk Stockings” through “Christ in Alabama” (1298-1302)
  - “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (1311-14)
  - “The Blues I’m Playing” 1315-25)
  - from *The Big Sea* (1325-39)

**Week Six (Nov. 22): Realism, Naturalism, Modernism: 1940 – 1960:** We begin to read literature from the second wave of the Great Migration of African Americans from South to North, literature that reflected and influenced social, political, and cultural currents. Editors Gates and McKay tell us, “No consideration of the Great Migration . . . is complete without a discussion of the labor conflicts, class antagonisms, and housing discrimination it created, or for that matter, without a discussion of the explosion of a black urban street culture that transformed mainstream white culture” (1320).

- Realism, Naturalism, Modernism: 1940 – 1960 (1355-60)
- Richard Wright (1399-1402)
- “Blueprint for Negro Writing” (1403-10)
- “The Ethics of Living Jim Crow” (1411-19)
- “The Man Who Lived Underground” 1436-70)
- “Long Black Song” (1419-36)
- Ellison and Black Modernist Fiction (1323 – 1324)
- Ralph Ellison (1535-38)
- from *Invisible Man* (1548-70)
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**Week Seven (Nov. 29): Realism, Naturalism, Modernism continued.**

- James Baldwin (1696-99)
- “Sonny’s Blues” (1728-50 )
- “Notes of a Native Son” (1713-27)
- Maya Angelou (2155-56)
- “Still I Rise,” “My Arkansas” (2156-58)
- from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (2158-67) with video
- Gwendolyn Brooks (1623-25)
- Brooks’ poetry: “kitchenette building,” “the mother,” “a song in the front yard,” “Sadie and Maud,” “the vacant lot,” “the preacher: ruminates behind the sermon,” (1625-28)
- from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1062-70)

**Week Eight (Dec. 6):** We will conclude our study of African American literature by examining Zora Neale Hurston’s influence on contemporary author Toni Morrison, winner of the Nobel Prize in

## Literature.

- Toni Morrison (2210-14)
- Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation (2286-90)
- from *Song of Solomon* (2214-85)

**Written Assignments:** Instruction for formal essay assignments will be presented during class. The first essay is due October 8; the second essay is due November 29.

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Springfield College in Illinois provides individuals with disabilities reasonable accommodations to participate in educational programs, activities, and services. Students with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in college-sponsored programs, activities, and services or to meet course requirements should contact the Dean of Student Affairs as early as possible.

### Assessment

Student learning outcomes for formal essays will be assessed by means of evaluation rubrics specific to each assignment and by guidelines for evaluation of written composition (CBSLO-1 and 2). CBSLO-3 will be assessed by inclass exercises and by classroom assessment techniques.

## SELECTION OF LITERATURE FOR REPORT/ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT

Directions: Locate and photocopy two professional literary criticism articles on *one* of the following topics or literary selections. Each article must be a minimum 3 pages in length.

Poetry of: Claude McKay  
Paul Laurence Dunbar  
Maya Angelou  
Gwendolyn Brooks  
Langston Hughes  
James Weldon Johnson  
W.E.D. Du Bois

Short Stories, Narratives, and Novels:

*The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano*  
*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas*  
“Sweat” by Zora Neal Hurston  
“The Gilded Six-Bits” by ZN Hurston  
*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by ZN Hurston  
“The Blues I’m Playing” by Langston Hughes  
*Cane* by Jean Toomer  
“The Man Who Lived Underground” by Richard Wright  
“Battle Royal” by Ralph Ellison  
“Sonny”’s Blues” by James Baldwin  
*Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou  
*Maud Martha* by Gwendolyn Brooks

A Selection of Sources

*African American Writers*

*Modern Critical Views: Maya Angelou, Gwendolyn Brooks, Langston Hughes, Zora Neal  
Hurston, and Toni Morrison*

*American Literature*

*CLC Contemporary Literary Criticism*

*Twentieth Century Literary Criticism*

*Twentieth Century Literature*

*Novels for Students*

*Poetry for Students*

*Short Stories for Students*

*Critical Survey of Poetry: ELS*

*Studies in Short Fiction*

*Studies in Fiction*

*Contemporary Literature*