

Spring 1-15-2015

# ENG 4750-001: Studies in African American Literature

Fern Kory  
*Eastern Illinois University*

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Fern Kory  
Coleman Hall 3365  
fkory@eiu.edu  
581-6291

Spring 2015  
MWF 11–11:50 in CH 3150  
Office Hours: MTWF 9:30 – 10:45  
& by appointment

**English 4750: *Studies in African American Literature (Writing Intensive)***  
*Study of genres, movements, periods, and major writers in African-American literature.*

## Our Topic: The Harlem Renaissance

### Books

**Anthologies:** *The Best of the Brownies' Book*, ed. Dianne Johnson-Feelings (BBB)  
*The New Negro* (1925), ed. Alain Locke (NN)  
*The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, ed. David Levering Lewis (PHRR)

**Non-Fiction:** *The Harlem Renaissance*, Steven Watson (HR)  
*The Big Sea* (1940), Langston Hughes (autobiography)

**Novels:** *Quicksand* (1928), Nella Larsen  
*The Blacker the Berry* (1929), Wallace Thurman  
*Not Without Laughter* (1930) Langston Hughes

## Tentative Schedule of Readings & Assignments

**Week 1** January 12, 14, 16

M Introductions  
W Read HR 3-16 (background information) + Review time-line (handout); Read "Returning Soldiers" (essay), DuBois PHRR 3-5 + PHRR 744-745 (biographical info); D2L Post: quote, then describe the style & effect of one passage from DuBois essay & comment on 2 specific points in background or biographical info.  
F Read HR 32-39 (background information on Claude McKay) + "If We Must Die" (1919) + more poems by McKay (NN 133-135 & 214); Print + Annotate 1 poem.

**Week 2** January [19], 21, 23

M *Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday: No Class Meeting*  
W Read HR 16-20 + 25-27 (background on African American Magazines) + HR 49-61 (background on Hughes) + "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (1921) HR 181  
F Read from *The Big Sea*, Hughes 1-18 + 50-89

**Week 3** January 26, 28, 30

M Read "Preface" to *The Best of the Brownies' Book* (BBB 12-22) + begin reading facsimile of April 1921 issue in back of book, after BBB 297 (front cover - 111)  
W Finish April 1921 *Brownies' Book* (112 - back cover) + Afterword (BBB 335-347)  
F Read HR 40-47 + *The Big Sea* 241-243 (Jean Toomer information) + poems "Georgia Dusk" and "Song of the Son" from *Cane* (1923) NN 136-137

**Week 4** February 2, 4, 6

- M Read stories "Carma" and "Fern" from *Cane* (1923) NN 96-104
- W Read HR 27-31 + 65-67 (background on the Civic Club Meeting in 1924 + 1925 Opportunity & Crisis Awards) + HR 72-77 (more background on Hughes & "The Weary Blues," his award-winning poem)
- F Read more poems by Langston Hughes (NN 141-145)

**Week 5** February 9, 11, [13]

- M Read HR 67-72 (background on Hurston) + "Drenched in Light" PHRR 694-702; Grad. Students also read *Color Struck* PHRR 703-719 (optional for undergrads)
- W Read "Spunk" (NN 105-111) + "How It Feels to Be Colored Me" (handout)
- F *Lincoln's Birthday: No Class Meeting*

**Week 6** February 16, 18, 20

- M Read "The Typewriter," Dorothy West PHRR 501- 509
- W Read HR 48-49 + 54-56 + 77-81 (background Cullen + "Yet Do I Marvel" 1923) + poems by Cullen from *Color* (1925) in PHRR 242-249
- F Read HR 23-25 (background on Alain Locke) + "The New Negro" NN 3-19 + "Negro Youth Speaks," Locke NN 47-53  
1<sup>st</sup> D2L Score covers posts up to this point in the semester

**Week 7** February 23, 25, 27

- M Read *The Big Sea* 238-241 + "City of Refuge" & "Vestiges," Fisher NN 57-75 + 75-84; Grad Students add "The Caucasian Storms Harlem" (1927) PHRR 110-117
- W Read Poems by G. Johnson, Spencer, Grimke NN 146-148; Grad. Students add poems by Bennett & H. Johnson NN 225 + 300
- F Read "The Creation," James W. Johnson NN 129-133 + HR 21-23 (background)

**Week 8** March 2, 4, 6

- M Read HR 85-89 & 91-92 OR PHRR 81-86 + *The Big Sea* 233-238 (background on Thurman + the magazine *Fire!!* 1926) + "Cordelia the Crude," Thurman PHRR 628-633 + "Wedding Day," Bennett PHRR 363-369
- W Read HR 90-91 (background Nugent) + "Smoke Lilies and Jade," Nugent PHRR 569-583 + "Luani of the Jungle" (1928), Hughes PHRR 584-592
- F Read essays "The Criteria of Negro Art," DuBois PHRR 100-105 + "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," Hughes 91-95

**Week 9** March 9, 11, 13

- M Read essay "The Negro Art Hokum," Schuyler 96-99
- W *Mid-term Quest*
- F Research Topic Proposal DUE

SPRING BREAK

**Week 10**      March 23, 25, 27

M      Begin *Quicksand*

W      Continue *Quicksand*; Read HR 103-144 (Background + pics 110-123)

F      *Meet in Booth Library*

**Week 11**      March 30; April 1, 3 ~ Conference appointments with Sources

M      Finish *Quicksand* + Read "On Being Young—a Woman—and Colored," Bonner

W      *Research Day*

F      *Resource List + Presentation Plan DUE*

**Week 12**      April 6, 8, 10\* ~ Conference appointments available

M      *Draft Presentation DUE*

W      *Outline of Rationale DUE*

F      *English Studies Conference  
Presentation DUE*

**Week 13**      April 13, 15, 17 ~ Conference Appointments with Draft Rationale

M      Begin *The Blacker the Berry*

W      Continue *The Blacker the Berry*

F      *Rationale DUE*

**Week 14**      April 20, 22, 24

M      Finish *The Blacker the Berry*

Final Exam Topic Proposals DUE this week

W      Begin Self-Selected Reading

F      Self-Selected Reading + Book Talks (3)

2<sup>nd</sup> D2L Score covers posts through this date

**Week 15**      April 27, 29; May 1

M      Self-Selected Reading + Book Talks (4)

W      Self-Selected Reading + Book Talks (3)

F      Read HR 157-181 (Epilogue) + PHRR 77-80

**Final Exam**    Tuesday, May 5      12:30 - 2:30

## Course Goals

- to improve our ability to evaluate literary works associated with the Harlem Renaissance
- to improve our ability to talk and think productively about the role of race (including whiteness) in America during this period and in our own time
- to read enough works of Harlem Renaissance literature to provide us with a basis for identifying trends, traditions and innovations
- to identify issues that recur in discussions of Harlem Renaissance literature, and to articulate and consider our own positions on these issues in relation to that discussion
- to appreciate the craftsmanship and creativity that contribute to the literary and artistic quality of individual works of Harlem Renaissance literature
- to identify the thematic concerns explored in Harlem Renaissance literature and compare the treatment of similar themes in works by various writers and illustrators
- to become better informed about the historical contexts in which Harlem Renaissance literature was produced, and use that information to understand and appreciate the choices made by writers and artists working in this complex rhetorical situation
- to compare the purposes or goals of the producers of Harlem Renaissance literature, the varied audiences their literary output was designed to address, and the strategies used by authors, illustrators and publishers to impact their audiences and achieve their goals
- to consider how class, gender, sexuality, region, religion, and other aspects of intersectional identity and environment complicate what it means to be "African American," the extent to which that complexity is reflected in texts, and how that complexity plays out given the the multiple or intersectional identities of characters, authors, artists, publishers, critics, librarians, educators, scholars and readers.
- To find ways to make use of information and ideas developed in the course of this class to contribute to our growth as students, professionals (e.g. educators), and citizens
- And?

**Responsibilities & Policies**

- 1.) Keep in touch! Late work will be penalized unless we come to an understanding *before* the due date. If you are experiencing temporary difficulties, contact me as soon as possible. *No late work or revisions will be accepted during Finals week.*
- 2.) Attendance counts. If you have three (3) or more *un-excused* absences, you will lose at least half of the points available at the end of the semester for “participation.”
- 3.) Use MLA or APA style documentation for the Works Cited page (MLA) or References page (APA) and the parenthetical citations that refer readers to this list of sources. Use the *latest MLA Handbook* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) or *APA Publication Manual* (6<sup>th</sup> edition) or a reliable print or electronic guide with up-to-date information and examples.
- 4.) Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else’s phrasing, ideas or visuals and using them in your own oral, written or visual work without identifying and giving credit to their source. This is a serious academic offense, and could result in a failing grade for the plagiarized assignment or this course, and might also incur other university penalties. At the very least, any work with problematic citations will have to be revised before it can receive a grade. Consultants in the Writing Center will be happy to work with you or answer questions about how to quote, paraphrase, summarize—and cite—your sources.
- 5.) You must complete all major assignments to pass this course.

**Information & Resources**

**Students seeking Teacher Certification in English Language Arts** should provide me with one of the yellow “Application for English Department Approval to Student Teach” forms available in a rack outside the office of Dr. Melissa Ames (CH 3821).

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU’s Code of Conduct. Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

**Students with disabilities** in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the **Student Success Center** for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. For an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

Drop in (CH3110) or call (581-5929) the **EIU Writing Center** to make an appointment at any point in the writing process, from brainstorming, planning and drafting to editing. Our hours are Monday through Thursday 9 am – 3 & 6 – 9 pm, and from 9 am – 1 pm on Fridays.

**Major ASSIGNMENTS**

**Discussion Posts on D2L** (up to 250 points) ~ Twice this semester you will receive a score for analytic and reflective responses to assigned readings based on these criteria:

- attention to specific details in analysis of literary works + consideration of the intended effects of those choices on the work as a whole and on readers
- development of ideas-in-progress, spelled out as fully & precisely as possible
- use of terms and concepts introduced in lectures, class discussion, and readings
- recursiveness (“second thoughts”): re-consideration and refinement of ideas over the course of the semester, exploration of connections within and between texts
- completeness *\*late* posts will be penalized substantially. Deductions for *missing* posts have an even more devastating effect on your score, so “better late than never”

**“Approaches to the Harlem Renaissance” Presentation** (up to 150 points) + **Formal Written Rationale** (up to 250 points) ~ For the English Studies Day Conference you will create a presentation (power point) or display (poster, slide show, video) that highlights a way of understanding Harlem Renaissance literature. Your approach might focus on a type of context information (legal, cultural, historical, social, biographical), a critical perspective (e.g. queer, postcolonial) or another “angle” on the period that your research supports. You will also compose a formal rationale (4 - 5 pages in APA or MLA-style) that describes your approach, validates the resources you consulted or selected, and demonstrates—with reference to specific texts—how your approach illuminates this literature for your target audience (e.g. scholars, readers, educators). \*NOTE: Both the rationale and presentation artifacts can be revised and re-submitted 1 week after being returned to you with a grade. → **GRADUATE STUDENTS** will complete a 10-12 page research paper (up to 400 points) in lieu of the *\*rationale* + *\*final exam*. Audience, purpose, and genre will be negotiated.

**Participation** (up to 50 points) ~ Attend consistently to maximize your participation score—and learning. Beyond that, you should prepare for class by doing assigned reading in an active, engaged way. Take notes; write out questions and observations; mark key passages with sticky notes. Treat discussion posts as an opportunity to articulate, develop and clarify your ideas. *That will prepare you to participate productively.* Then you will be ready to **share** ideas, information and questions in group work and in class discussion, and **respond** thoughtfully, critically and respectfully to other people’s comments and questions.

**Mid-Term Quest** (up to 150 points) will focus on the works read up to that point

**Final: In-class Essay** (150 points) will require you to analyze and compare three works read during the semester (at least one since mid-term) in light of one trait or concern.

**GRADES** will be based on the percentage you earn of the 1000 points available.

*Note:* I may adjust these point values if we add, cancel, or revise any assignments.

D2L Posts + Informal Writing Assignments (100 + 150)	= 250
Mid-term Quest	= 150
Presentation + Artifact (poster, lesson plan, power point...)	= 150
*Rationale (Essay)	= 250
*Final Exam Essay	= 150
Participation + Attendance	= 50

**The bottom line:** 91% & up = A   81 - 90% = B   71 - 80% = C   61 - 70% = D