Summer 6-15-2001

ENG 2705-011: African-American Literature

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Course Policy

Goals: My goals for this course are relatively simple. I hope you will finish this semester with an awakened appreciation for and curiosity about African-American history and literature, and with more refined critical reading abilities. I also hope you will better understand the development of African-American literature as a tradition and the questions that shape each stage in that development: *When do Africans become African-Americans? What is the relationship of African-American culture to Africa? What is the nature and purpose of an African-American literature? Besides reflecting African-American experience, how is African-American literature different from other American literatures? What is the relationship of the vernacular to the literary?*

Formal Papers and Exams: You will have three formal papers, a final exam, and several in-class writings. I will be available to read drafts of your papers if you give them to me at least three days in advance of the due date. Please be prepared to share your papers with classmates. Exams will include material from history lectures and will be made up primarily of essay questions and short answers.

Attendance and Lateness: If you expect an A or a B for the course, you should have no more than two unexcused absences. I will not automatically dock your cumulative grade, but your absences will seriously affect your classroom participation grade and will almost inevitably affect your other grades. If lateness becomes a problem, I will consider latenesses as absences in determining your classroom participation grade.

Late work: I cannot get papers graded efficiently and keep track of everyone's work if late papers are coming in willy nilly under my door and in my box. In any case, you should leave the university with the ability to get professional-looking work in on time. I will, therefore, subtract half a letter grade per day from every late paper. If you know there may be a conflict, you should arrange to hand your paper in ahead of schedule.

Plagiarism: Taking the words or ideas of another person without crediting that person is a serious matter and will be treated as such. Cases of intentional plagiarism will result
in an NC for the course. Unintentional plagiarism, however, is also serious. You are responsible for knowing how to properly cite other writers and will be penalized for failing to do so.

Grades:

20% first paper
10% second paper (including presentation)
20% third paper
25% final
25% classroom participation (classroom participation will also be used to determine borderline grades)

Problems: If you have any problems regarding scheduling, grades, papers, etc., please call me, come to office hours, or make an appointment. I'd be happy to talk to you about any of your concerns.

Students with Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities may receive help. Contact the coordinator of the Office of Disability Services at 6583.

Syllabus

M J 11
T J 12
introduction; history
The Vernacular Tradition:
all marked spirituals, gospel songs, and blues songs; all marked "secular rhymes," jazz songs and rap songs--also, "The Revolution will not be Televised"

W J 13
from The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, pp. 140-164
from Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs, pp. 209-244

R J 14
from Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral by Phillis Wheatley, pp. 167-177

F J 15
"The Goophered Grapevine" by Charles Chesnutt, pp. 523-531

M J 18
*paper 1 due*

T J 19
"Africa for the Africans" by Marcus Garvey, pp. 974-976; Claude McKay, poems, pp. 984-993

W J 20
from Their Eyes Were Watching by Zora Neale Hurston, pp. 1041-1049; Langston Hughes 1254-1265

R J 21
from Black Boy by Richard Wright
**F J 22**  
from *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, pp. 1518-1535; "Sonny's Blues" by James Baldwin, pp. 1694-1717

**M J 25**  
*paper 2 due*  
Amiri Baraka 1879-1883; Nikki Giovanni 1983-1984

**T J 26**  
"In Search of our Mother's Gardens" by Alice Walker, 2380-2386  
Audre Lorde, poetry, 2204-2210

**W J 27**  
The Colored Museum, by George Wolfe

**R J 28**  
catch up

**F J 29**  
Song of Solomon

**M Jl 2**  
*paper 3 due*  
Song of Solomon

**T Jl 3**  
Song of Solomon

**R Jl 5**  
Song of Solomon