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ENG 2705-001: African American Literature

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African American Literature: Course Syllabus

August
T 25: Course introduction
R 27: African American literature and the literary canon ("Preface")
   The Vernacular Tradition (3-94)
   (All page numbers are from The Norton Anthology...unless otherwise noted. Read the introductory prose and scan the songs.
   Throughout the course, read all prefaces to historical sections and head notes to the individual authors that we're reading.)

September
T 1: Premises and Contexts for the Study of African American Literature; continue reading and scanning "The Vernacular Tradition"
R 3: (continued)

T 8: The Construction of Culture: Making a Life within Enslavement
R 10: Slavery and Freedom (151-162)
   Frederick Douglass, Narrative... (387-452)

T 15: (continued)
R 17: (continued)

T 22: Legacies—Sojourner Truth (245-255) and William Wells Brown (315-325)   Essay #1 assigned
R 24: Reconstruction (541-554)
   Booker T. Washington, Up from Slavery (570-602)

T 29: W. E. B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (686-766; Chapters 1, 3, 5, 6, 10 and 14 for class discussion)

October
R 1: (continued)

T 6: Harlem Renaissance (953-962)
   W. E. B. Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art" (777-784);
   Schomburg (962-967); Locke (983-993); Garvey (995-1003)
R 8: McKay (1003-1010, especially "Africa" and "America");
   Schuyler (1220-1223); Hughes (1288-1291; 1311-1314)
   Take-home midterm examination assigned

T 13: Zora Neale Hurston, (1019-1022; 1041-1053)
   Their Eyes Were Watching God
R 15: (continued) Take-home midterm examination DUE

T 20: Jean Toomer, Cane (1168-1219)
R 22: (continued) Essay #1 DUE
T 27: Hughes (1291-1311); Countee Cullen (1339-1351, especially “Heritage”); Brown (1248-1266)

R 29: video Lightin’ Hopkins; Blues (30; 45; 48-63); Audio Companion-Disc #1: 11-18; Audio Companion-Disc #2: 24; Essay #2 assigned

November

T 3: Realism, Naturalism, Modernism (1355-1368)
Richard Wright (1399-1410); from Black Boy (1471-1487)

R 5: Robert Hayden (1516-1534, especially 1525-1528)

T 10: Gwendolyn Brooks (1623-1649, especially 1633-1638)
R 12: Ralph Ellison (1535-1548; 1570-1578)
Ellison, Invisible Man

T 17: (continued)
R 19: (continued)

Thanksgiving Recess

December

T 1: James Baldwin (1696-1713, especially “Stranger in the Village”) and “Sonny’s Blues” (1728-1749)
R 3: James Baldwin, Go Tell it on the Mountain

T 8: (continued)
R 10: Black Arts Movement (1831-1850)
Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream” and Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet,” Audio Companion-Disc #2: 22-23

Read all selections below, but see especially:
Larry Neal (2038-2050), “The Black Arts Movement”

Group presentations TBA on:

Mari Evans (1850-1852), “I Am a Black Woman” (1851)
Etheridge Knight (1908-1911), all three poems

Hoyt Fuller (1852-1859), “Towards a Black Aesthetic”
Addison Gayle, Jr. (1911-1918), “The Black Aesthetic”

Audre Lorde (1919-1926), especially “Poetry Is Not a Luxury”

Michael Harper (2070-2075), all poems
Haki Madhubuti (2090-2096), all poems

Essay #2 DUE

Final examination: Tuesday, December 15, 5:15-7:15