ENG 4750-001: Studies in African American Literature-Bluesology

Michael Loudon
Eastern Illinois University
Michael Loudon
Spring 2005 (3:00-4:45 TR CH 3160)
Office: CH 3361 (314D)
Phone: 581-6312

Office Hours:
TR 11-12; W 10-12
or by appointment
E-mail: mloudon@iu.edu

English 4750.001: Studies in African American Literature—Bluesology

Syllabus (tentative and subject to ongoing revisions):

January
T 18: The Essential History of the Blues (continued)—from Ida Cox to B. B. King—and discussion
Background readings: The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature: "Introduction: Talking Books" and "The Vernacular Tradition" (1-8); peruse the lyrics and "oral texts" from 8-148, especially 8-77, for an overview of what lyrics are readily accessible to you in print; read or re-read the following, especially if you have never encountered these texts: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, especially chapter two, pp. 400-401, in the last three paragraphs; The Souls of Black Folk, chapter 14 (758-765) and "Criteria of Negro Art" (777-784). In addition, the brief introductory sections in African-American Literature offer a rather succinct but useful overview of African American historical and literary developments—"The Literature of..." sections: 151-162; 541-554; 953-962; 1355-1368; 1831-1850; 2127-2139. Please have readings completed by the end of February.
R 20: Stomping the Blues (skim chapters 8-10 but look at photographs throughout the text)

T 25: Video: Feel Like Going Home (Sony DVD 55804, 2003)
R 27: (continued)—and discussion; Robert Santelli "A Century of the Blues" (12-59) and "Feel Like Going Home" (60-97) in The Blues: A Musical Journey

February
T 1: Wake Up Dead Man (1-47, including the photographs; 305-306); songs from Wake Up Dead Man (Rounder CD 2013) to be announced, along with respective sections in the text
R 3: Blues People (chapters 1-6)

T 8: Blues People (chapters 7-8, 10-12)
R 10: Video: Blues Story (Sony/Shout! Factory DVD 31226)—and discussion

T 15: Blues Story (continued)—and discussion
R 17: Excerpts from E. Sackheim, The Blues Line (handout)

T 22: Get Your Ass in the Water and Swim Like Me
R 24: (continued)
March
T  1: The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature: The poetry of Sterling Brown (1248-1265)
R  3: ...Norton Anthology...: The poetry of Langston Hughes (1288-1309); specific poems for discussion to be announced...
T  8: ...Norton Anthology...: “Sonny’s Blues” (1728-1750)
R 10: (continued)

Spring Break Recess-no classes March 14-18

T 22: ...Norton Anthology...: The poetry of Etheridge Knight (1908-1911) and Amiri Baraka (1937-1963)
R 24: (continued)

T 29: ...Norton Anthology...: The poetry of Sonia Sanchez (1963-1968) and Michael Harper (2070-2075)
R 31: (continued)

April
T  5: Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man: “Prologue” through Chapter 2
R  7: Chapters 3-6
T 12: Chapters 7-11
R 14: Chapters 12-15

T 19: Chapters 16-21
R 21: Chapter 22—“Epilogue”

T 26: Oral reports
R 28: Oral reports

Final Examination: for oral reports, Thursday, May 5, 12:30-2:30 in CH 3160