Course Content and Outcome Guide

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Course Number: Eng. 257
Course Title: African American Literature
Credit Hours: 4
Lecture Hours/wk: 4
Number of Weeks: 10/11
Special Fee: None

Course Description for Publication
This course introduces students to the literature of Americans whose roots are in Africa. The course covers the period of Reconstruction to the Harlem Renaissance. It incorporates novels, short stories, poems, autobiographies and plays. Focuses on the oral tradition and written texts of African Americans.
Prerequisite: Placement into WR 121

Course Activities and Design
Students read, discuss, write and perform research on related topics and events presented in the literature. Class activities may include instructor lecture, whole class discussion, small group work, student presentations and guest lectures. Instructors may use videotapes and CD recordings to reinforce lectures. Students may use the African American Literature Instructional Web page for Eng.256/257/258, which has links to numerous other Pan African literary sources and related historical topics. Students may attend a library visitation class to develop the latest library, web research and documentation skills.

Intended Outcomes
Students should be able to:

• Understand that African American literature is part of a large body of literature written by people of African descent in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean.
• Produce independent research in African American Literature and relevant events in American and world history.
• Comprehend the relationship between economics, culture, history, politics and African American literature.
• Relate the Black vernacular (church songs, blues, jazz, be-bop, sermons, stories and the oral tradition) to the literature.
• Relate African American literature to the historical, cultural, sociological, religious, and political contexts in which it was written.
• Understand the impact of Black explorers, soldiers, educators, inventors, cowboys, scientists, politicians, artists and writers nationally and internationally.
• Understand the impact of the Black press and other literary contributions of African Americans to America.
• Write clear, focused, coherent essays about literature for an academic audience, using standard English conventions of grammar and style.
Assessment

Students will complete a term project, typically a research paper of 1500-2000 words in length, pertinent to the literature of the period. Instructors may also permit alternatives to the traditional research paper. Such alternatives include the following possibilities: scrapbook/family history projects; websites; PowerPoint presentations; multimedia presentations; portfolios of creative writing or visual art forms; dance, theatrical or spoken word performances. Instructors who permit such alternatives will ensure that students also write substantive analytical pieces in the form of journal, examination, or other appropriate format. Additionally, instructors may use a variety of other assessment tools such as quizzes, participation, etc.

Competencies

- Awareness of key literary concepts.
- Perform research using primary and secondary sources including the Internet and document sources.
- Critical reading of historical accounts
- Small group collaboration
- Increased critical thinking skills
- Ability to make connections between the literature and historical events.

Key Concepts:

- Autobiography
- Be-bop
- Blues
- Call and response
- Double consciousness
- Great Migration
- Harlem Renaissance
- Jim Crow
- Garveyism
- Gospel
- Jazz
- Journalism
- Niagara Movement
- Novel
- Oration
- Pamphlet
- Pan-Africanism
- Patois
- Playing the dozens
- Reconstruction
- Sermon
- Slave narratives
- Socialism
- Spirituals
- Talented Tenth
- Toasts
- Vernacular tradition

Texts
Most instructors use anthologies such as the Norton Anthology, supplemented by additional books, articles, and web sites each term.

**Anthologies:**


Some instructors may choose to augment anthology use with novels or additional historical texts such as:


Olive, Gilbert. *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth, A Bondswoman of Olden Time: With a History of Her Labors and Correspondence Drawn from her "Book of Life."*


**Web Sites**

- Web Resources on African American Writers and Literature: [http://www.bluefield.wvnet.edu/library/afamlinks.htm](http://www.bluefield.wvnet.edu/library/afamlinks.htm)
- African American Literature 256, 257, 258 [http://spot.pcc.edu/lrc/snjoku/romanskiEng257.htm](http://spot.pcc.edu/lrc/snjoku/romanskiEng257.htm)
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture [http://www.nypl.org/research/sc/sc.html](http://www.nypl.org/research/sc/sc.html)
The primary purpose of the Course Content and Outcome Guide is to provide faculty a SAC approved outline of the course. It is not intended to replace the Course Syllabus, which details course content and requirements for students.