COURSE:

English 315 – Black American Writers is a survey course in American-Black literature from 1746 to the present. It focuses on essays, poetry, drama, short stories, raps, jazz, gospel songs, spirituals and novels written by Black Americans.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

To motivate students to read, discuss, perform, and write about literature by Black writers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. discuss literature that will present the literary heritage of Black Americans
2. critically examine the literary works that have influenced the thinking of Black Americans
3. use a number of critical techniques
4. write effective essays about Black literature
5. broaden their vocabularies
6. prepare an oral presentation for secondary school students
GENERAL METHODS:

1. Lecture
2. Debate/Discussion
3. Interpretations of literary works
4. Critical Analyses
5. Periodic Examinations

SPECIFIC METHODS:

1. A brief study of the major periods in American literature
2. Study the relationships of the cultural setting to the literature of a particular period
3. Study the important aspects of an author’s life and the techniques he or she employed
4. Study the style, subject matter, structure, form, theme, idea and appeal of selected works

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Read all assignments, attend and participate in class.
2. Write two critical papers; no late papers will be accepted. The first paper is due March ________, 2002.
3. Prepare a group presentation to represent a specific era: slavery, reconstruction, renaissance or contemporary.
4. Attendance is important no more than three absences are acceptable. Excessive absenteeism (6) will affect your grade. Punctuality is important. The roll will be checked five minutes after the hour. Three tardies will equal an absence.
5. Young men are to remove their hats before entering the class.
6. Participate in community service projects, such as poetry festivals, black literature programs for middle and high students, etc.

GRADING PROCEDURES:

Two (2) critical papers .................................................. 20%
Group Presentation and Research .................................. 20%
Examination (MIDTERM) ............................................. 10%
Journal ........................................................................ 20%
Final Examination ....................................................... 20%
Class/Community Participation ..................................... 10%

100%

UNIT I. CONDITIONS OF SLAVERY AND OPPRESSION

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE: SLAVERY

RATIONALE:

To introduce one of the earlier Black literary genres, the slave narrative, to learn of the atrocities of slavery from the slave’s perspective.

OBJECTIVES:

After successfully completing this unit, the student will be able to do the following:

1. explain the significance of the Black narrative
2. discuss the importance of Equiano’s autobiography
3. write about the African culture
4. discuss the atrocities of slavery

CONTENT:

This unit on the Conditions of Slavery and Oppression will focus on:

1. Olaudah Equiano – The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equicano
2. Frederick Douglass – Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
4. Phillis Wheatley, “On Being Bought from Africa to America”
5. “The Slave Auction” - Frances W. Harper
6. “The Slave Mother”
7. The Fugitive Slave Narrative – Harriet A. Jacobs
REFERENCES:

Brawley, Benjamin. Early Negro American Writers (1970)

Nichols, Charles H. Many Thousands Gone


UNIT II – MAJOR ABOLITIONIST VOICES

RATIONALE:

To present the major voices of protest.

OBJECTIVES:

After completing this unit, students will be able to:

1. analyze David Walker’s appeal
2. write an appeal
3. discuss excerpts from Clotelle
4. evaluate The Confessions of Nat Turner

CONTENT:

1. David Walker’s Appeal
2. William Wells Brown’s Clotelle

REFERENCES:

Aptheker, Herbert. One Continuous Cry: David Walker’s Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World (1965).


UNIT III. RECONSTRUCTION

RATIONALE:
This unit focuses on making freedom work for the masses of ex-slaves.

OBJECTIVES:
Upon completing this unit, students will be able to:

1. sing with new meaning “Free at Last”
2. discuss Dunbar’s poems “Sympathy” and “We Wear the Mask”
3. analyze Washington’s “The Atlanta Exposition Address”
4. explain the horrors of lynching from Ida B. Wells – Barnett’s perspective.

CONTENT:
1. Paul Laurence Dunbar’s “Sympathy” (614), “We Wear the Mask,” (615).
   Souls of Black Folk

REFERENCES:
Brawley, Paul Lawrence Dunbar: Poet of His People (1936)
Gayle, Addison: Oak and Ivy: A Biography of Paul Lawrence Dunbar (1971).

UNIT IV. VOICES OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

RATIONALE:
This unit focuses on a new class of writers who express their attitudes freely on a variety of topics.
OBJECTIVES:

After studying the Harlem Renaissance, students will be able to:

1. discuss the major writers
2. analyze the literature of this period
3. present selection orally

CONTENT:

1. Precursor of the Harlem Renaissance, James Weldon Johnson
2. Major Writers:
   Claude McKay
   “If We Must Die”
   “America”

   Langston Hughes
   “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”
   “The Weary Blues”
   “Mother to Son”
   “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”

   Countee Cullen
   “Heritage”
   “Yet Do I Marvel”

   Zora Neale Hurston
   “Spunk”
   “Sweat”

   Jean Toomer
   “Cane”

REFERENCES

Dickson, Donald C. A Bio-Bibliography of Langston Hughes

UNIT V. CONTEMPORARY NOVELS

RATIONALE:

Students are to read two novels, which should be in the literary canon.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be able to read and interpret Ellison’s *Invisible Man* and Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*.
2. Students will write critical essays about *Invisible Man* and *Song of Solomon*.
3. Students will discuss Ellison’s and Morrison’s biographies.

REFERENCES:

Atlas, Marilyn Judith, Michigan State University,

Blake, Susan L., “Folklore and Community in Song of Solomon.”
*Melus*. 7.3, (Fall 1980) (pp. 77-82).

Skerrett, Joseph T., Jr., “Recitation to the Griot: Storytelling and Learning

UNIT - SLAVERY

Friday, January 19 Organization

Monday, January 22 The Slave Narrative –
Olaudah Equiano’s Narrative

Wednesday, January 24 Olaudah Equiano’s Narrative

Friday, January 26 “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass”

Monday, January 29 “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass”

Wednesday, January 31 Douglass’s “Oration”

Friday, February 2 Douglass’s “Oration”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, February 5</td>
<td>The Life of Solomon Northrop: “Half Slave, Half Free”</td>
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<td>Wednesday, February 7</td>
<td>Continuation . . “Half Slave, Half Free”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, February 9</td>
<td>Phillis Wheatley – “On Being Brought from Africa to America”</td>
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<td>Frances W. Harper – “The Slave Mother”</td>
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<td>Monday, February 12</td>
<td>Harriet A. Jacobs – “The Fugitive Slave” Narrative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, February 14</td>
<td><strong>EXAM #1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, February 16</td>
<td><strong>UNIT II – Major Abolitionist Voices</strong></td>
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<td>David Walker’s “Appeal”</td>
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<td>Monday, February 19</td>
<td>From William Wells Brown’s “Clotelle”</td>
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<td>Wednesday, February 21</td>
<td>“The Confessions of Nat Turner”</td>
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<td>Friday, February 23</td>
<td>First Critical Essay is Due</td>
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<td>Ten Black Writers Respond to</td>
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<td>William Styron’s “Confessions of Nat Turner”</td>
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<td>Monday, February 26</td>
<td>Ten Writers Respond, Cont.</td>
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**UNIT II – RECONSTRUCTION**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, February 28</td>
<td>Paul Lawrence Dunbar’s “Sympathy” and “We Wear the Mask”</td>
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<td>Friday, March 2</td>
<td>Booker T. Washington Excerpts from “Up From Slavery”</td>
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<td>Monday, March 5</td>
<td>W.E.B. Du Bois – “Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others”</td>
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<td>Souls of Black Folk</td>
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<td>Wednesday, March 7</td>
<td><strong>EXAM #II</strong></td>
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UNIT IV – VOICES OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, March 9</td>
<td>Precursor of the Renaissance&lt;br&gt;James Weldon Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, March 12</td>
<td>Major Writers:&lt;br&gt;Claude McKay, “If We Must Die”&lt;br&gt;“America”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, March 16</td>
<td>Countee Cullen, “Heritage”&lt;br&gt;“Yet Do I Marvel”&lt;br&gt;Jean Toomer, “Cane”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, March 19</td>
<td>Zora Neate Hurston, “Spunk Sweat”</td>
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UNIT IV – INTRODUCTION, THE MODERN BLACK NOVEL

*Ralph Ellison – The Invisible Man*

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, March 21</td>
<td>The Invisible Man Cont’d</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, March 23</td>
<td>The Invisible Man Cont’d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, March 26</td>
<td>Ellison Cont’d</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, March 28</td>
<td>Toni Morrison – Song of Solomon</td>
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<td>Friday, March 30</td>
<td>Song of Solomon</td>
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<td>Monday, April 2</td>
<td>Song of Solomon</td>
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<td>Wednesday, April 4</td>
<td>Song of Solomon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, April 6</td>
<td>Critical Paper is Due&lt;br&gt;Cane Cont’d</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, April 9</td>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
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<td>Wednesday, April 11</td>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
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Monday, April 6  
Oral Presentation

Wednesday, April 18  
Oral Presentation

Friday, April 20  
Oral Presentation

Monday, April 23  
Oral Presentation

Wednesday, April 25  
Culminating Activities

Friday, April 27  
Culminating Activities

Monday, April 30  
Review

REFERENCES:


