E320: The Harlem Renaissance in Literature and the Arts, Spring 2007 (3 credit hours)

Instructor: Dr. Angela Shaw-Thornburg       Office Hours: TR: 12:20-2, 3:20-3:40
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SCSU Catalog Course Description: This is an upper-level, three-credit-hour English course designed to support the English and Liberal Arts majors. Students will make a study of works representative of the cultural capital of African-American life that flourished approximately between 1919 and 1934. Focusing on the social, musical, artistic, and literary origins of this movement, as well as the different literary and artistic genres created during this era, this course is designed to introduce students to the analysis of major literary works and genres within the context of the larger culture and debates of the Harlem or New Negro Renaissance. We will focus on the ways in which literature represents, responds to, and shapes intellectual and political transformations in Harlem Society and African American culture during the period, with special attention to the meaning of migration, the construction of black identity, and issues of difference within black America. We will also consider the impact of the Harlem Renaissance, including its representation in contemporary culture.

(NCTE/NCATE Standards addressed are noted by parenthetical numbers.)

Course Objectives:
- To be acquainted with the literature, criticism, historical, and cultural background of African American literature produced during the Harlem Renaissance. (3.1.3) (3.1.4) (3.5.1) (3.5.1.1) (3.5.1.3) (3.5.1.4)
- To gain an understanding of the cultures producing the texts, the interrelationships among them, and their relevance and connections to contemporary culture. (2.2) (2.6) (3.6.1)
- To improve critical reading and writing skills. (3.2.3) (3.2.5) (3.3.1) (3.3.2) (3.3.3) (3.4.1)
- To develop an appreciation of literary genres, traditions, and movements. (3.1.8) (3.5.1.2)
- To develop research skills and implement them in the writing of assignments. (3.7.1)
- To improve oral as well as written communication skills in class discussion and presentation of projects. (3.1.2) (3.2.4)

Instructional Methods: Lecture, discussion, quizzes, group work, oral presentations, and individual projects

Required Texts and Materials
James Weldon Johnson, Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man
George Schuyler, Black No More
Jean Toomer, Cane
Alain Locke (ed.), The New Negro
Nella Larsen, Quicksand
Jessie Fauset, Plum Bun
Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God
Course Packet of Readings
Three-Ring Binder for Packet
Internet Access

Evaluation (1.1)
- Three Formal Papers: 50%
- Harlem Renaissance Project: 20%
- Participation & Class Work: 20%
- Presentations: 10%

Formal Papers: You will write one short paper and two longer papers on topics assigned by handout or proposed by you two weeks prior to the due date for the paper. These papers need to be typed using a word-processing program (preferably MS Word) and should be in MLA format. Papers with excessive mechanical errors, papers substantially below length, and papers submitted after the due date will not be accepted. You may request a one-day extension on any one of your papers due this semester. Papers will be graded according to the rubric “Paper Checklist.”
Harlem Renaissance Project: This project requires you to complete research on the impact of the Harlem Renaissance on post-Renaissance or contemporary culture and politics. Elements of the project include the development of a research question in consultation with me, a bibliography of at least ten works, a three-page research narrative that discusses the trends you discovered as you did your research, and a presentation supported with a visual aid. Your project will be graded according to a rubric.

Participation and Class Work: This is your class. Your preparation and willingness to participate are the most significant factors in determining your experience in this classroom. Spend some time at the beginning of the semester considering how you can contribute to our class. This is also my class. My role in the classroom is to moderate class discussion, prepare and organize learning activities and assignments—worksheets, reading responses written in class, group work, web assignments, and quizzes—that will help you meet the course objectives above; to evaluate your performance in meeting those objectives, to shape a learning environment in which every person has a voice, and to ensure that we have a safe learning environment. Our respective roles, in practice, should mean that you do more talking than I do.

Presentations: You will lead class discussion on two of the texts listed on the course outline. Your responsibilities for the day include a brief overview of the historical context of the text and/or the impact of the text, a list of the sources you consulted, your response to the text, and at least three discussion questions you would like us to consider for the day. These elements should be presented to your classmates as a handout. If you would like me to make copies of your handout, please stop by during office hours at least one day before the presentation. Sign-up will be held during the second week of class.

Additional Course Policies

English Department Grading Scale
A=90-100
B=80-89
C=70-79
D=60-69
F=59 and below

Without exception:
You must submit all formal work to pass this class. A missing paper or presentation will lead to a final grade of “F” in this class.

No work will be accepted as of the end of the class period on the last day of class.

You will be dropped from the course with a grade of “F” if you plagiarize a paper.

I do not accept late work. Work submitted under my door, via e-mail, or to my mailbox is considered late, unless you have made alternative arrangements with me ahead of the due date.

Due dates and deadlines: All work is due at the start of class on the day listed. I will not accept work after the due date. If there is a reasonable, documented explanation for missing a presentation, I will permit you (at my discretion) to present on another date.

Attendance: I expect you to be present at each scheduled class meeting, unless you have a contagious illness or have some very good excuse backed up with documentation. I also expect that you will come prepared to participate. Lack of preparation is grounds for dismissal from class and will result in an absence. Excessive absences and tardiness will result in your dismissal from class and a final grade of “F.” You will be dropped from the course on the fourth absence. You are considered absent if you miss more than fifteen minutes of a class. You are tardy if you miss more than ten minutes of a class. Three tardies equate to one absence. Students who disrupt or interfere with the learning environment in our classroom will be dismissed, will receive an absence for that day, and will receive a zero for that day’s work.

You are responsible for material covered, assigned, or distributed on days missed, regardless of the reason for the
absence. If you have an emergency and can’t make it to class, please notify me.

Cancellation of class: Generally, a notice will be posted on the door or board if I will be missing a class. If no notice is posted, please have someone take roll and collect any assignments due for the day if I have not arrived by 8:15. Leave the roll and collected assignments with one of the administrative assistants in the Faculty Support Office. Please provide an active SCSU e-mail address or text-message enabled phone number where you can be notified of a last-minute class cancellation. You will need to acknowledge receipt of the cancellation notice and the assignment for the day.

Academic honesty: This one is simple. Do not take credit for work that is not your own. Do not knowingly allow others to submit your work as their own. Such theft interferes with the learning process. It will not be tolerated. When you use the language, ideas, or organization of ideas of another person, you must use the documentation formats listed in your writing handbook to avoid plagiarism. Generally, a parenthetical citation (“Author #”) and a works cited page listing the bibliographical information in MLA format is sufficient.

Presenting information gleaned from general sources (encyclopedias, the internet) as if it were common knowledge is plagiarism. Common knowledge is anything that an average person would be likely to know off the top of her head. Even if you happen to know a fact or have information that is not common knowledge, you must do the research to support your knowledge. Cutting and pasting any portion of any work published on the internet and submitting it as your own is plagiarism.

Taking credit for work that is not your own or aiding another person in such a deception is unethical, and leads to the severe penalties outlined in your Student Handbook. The minimum penalty for an instance of cheating or plagiarism is a grade of “0” for the Review the pertinent sections in your handbook, as you are responsible for knowing this information. Students who plagiarize by submitting an essay written by another person as their own work will receive a grade of “F” for the course. Document your writing and research process with good notes and copies of drafts. In cases of suspected plagiarism, you will need to produce these items.

ADA Policy: If you are a student with a disability, it is your responsibility to inform me of this and any reasonable accommodations needed during the first week of class. Please consult the Office of Disabled Student Services at 803-536-7245 for more information.

Cell phones, beepers, etc.: No beeping, whirring, or ring-tones of any kind should be audible during class. Turn it all off before coming into class. Anything that rings during class becomes mine until our next class meeting. I am willing to take some other valuable in lieu of your phone if there is a legitimate and significant reason that you need your phone for that day.

I reserve the right to change this syllabus and reading list at any time during the semester with prior notification.

I acknowledge receipt of the syllabus governing this class. I agree to abide by the policies included in this syllabus.

____________________________________________________
Signature

Name
Date
Phone
E-mail
Course Outline (Subject to Change)

Weeks 1 and 2: Defining the Harlem Renaissance
DuBois, “Returning Soldiers” (handout)
Collins, “Aaron Douglass Chats About the Harlem Renaissance” (handout)
Baker, “Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance” (handout)
First Preface to The Book of Negro American Poetry (1921) (handout)
Foreword to Fire!! (handout)

Week 3: Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man (1912/1927)
DuBois, “The Forethought,” “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” and “The Sorrow Songs” (handout)
Clips from Jazz (2000), Dir. Burns
Floyd, “Black Music in the Harlem Renaissance” (handout)
Selected Criticism
Paper 1 due _______________________________________________________________________

Week 4: Cane (1923)
Selected Criticism

Weeks 5 and 6: Central Debates of the Harlem Renaissance
DuBois, “Criteria of Negro Art” (handout)
Schuyler, “The Negro Art Hokum” (handout)
Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”
Wright, “Blueprint for Negro Writing”
Story, “Patronage and the Harlem Renaissance: You Get What You Pay For” (handout)
Selections from Fire!! and The New Negro
Preface to God’s Trombones (handout)
Garvey, “Africa for the Africans” (handout)

Week 7: Visual Arts and Drama of the Harlem Renaissance
Against the Odds: Artists of the Harlem Renaissance (1998), Dir. Amber Edwards
Images and selections from Harlem Renaissance: Art of Black America
Images from Fire!! and The New Negro (handout)
James Van der Zee photographs (handout)
McKay, “Black Theater and Drama in the 1920s: Years of Growing Pains”
Gilbert, “Environment” (handout)
Paper 2 due _______________________________________________________________________

Weeks 8-12: The New “Negress”: Women in the Harlem Renaissance
Quicksand (1928)
Plum Bun (1929)
Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937)
Wall, “Passing for What? Aspects of Identity in Nella Larsen’s Novels” (handout)
Story, “Gender and Ambition: Zora Neale Hurston in the Harlem Renaissance” (handout)
Selected Criticism
Paper 3 due _______________________________________________________________________

Weeks 13-15: Dreams Deferred/The Afterlife of the Renaissance
Black No More (1931)
Hughes: “Harlem” (handout)
Hughes’ Dream Harlem (2002), Dir. Joseph
Selection from Morrison, Jazz, (1992)
Student Presentations