



ENGL. 319.050 AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE I: 1619-1932
Fridays, 5:30 pm to 8:10 pm, B2023

Sample Syllabus for General Education: Socio-Cultural Diversity Cluster III

Students will be exposed to academic and cultural experiences that promote intellectual, social and aesthetic awareness which enable them to improve their understanding of self, past and present societies. They will be provided with general knowledge and intellectual skills in literature and the humanities. These skills will enhance their personal value system and empower them to promote the quality of their personal lives and to contribute to their communities, their professions, the nation, and the world

Dr. Brenda M. Greene, Office 1015C
Office Hours: Friday, 4:30 to 5:30 PM
MEC Voice mail (718) 270-4941
Email bgreene@mec.cuny.edu

Course Description

This course presents selected readings from African American literature, oral and written, from the 17th century through the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s.

Pre-requisites: ENGL 211/ENGL 209

Required Textbooks (available at the Medgar Evers College Barnes and Noble Bookstore)

African-American Poetry: An Anthology 1773-1927, Dover Publications, Dover Thrift Edition, 1997.

Brown, Harper, Chestnutt and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Editor, *Three Classic African-American Novels: Clotel, Iola Leroy, The Marrow of Tradition*, Vintage.

Douglass, Jacobs and Kwame Anthony Appiah, Introduction, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave & Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Modern Library, 2004.

Eversley & Robert Reid-Pharr, Eds. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: or, Gustavaus Vassa*, Modern Library Classics, 2004.

Johnson, Washington and DuBois, *Three Negro Classics by James W. Johnson, Booker T. Washington and William E. B. Dubois* (Mass Market Paperback), Avon, 1999.

Course Readings – These will be distributed to you throughout the semester.

Reference Book- *A Writer's Reference* by Diane Hacker, 6th Edition, Bedford/St Martin, 2009.

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the diversity of Black literature from the colonial period to the Harlem renaissance and its nuances of affirmation and resistance. As participants in this course, you will do extensive reading in early African American literature and develop your critical writing, thinking, and reading skills. Moreover, you will develop your ability to synthesize and explicate the complex issues in the oral and written literature of the African diaspora from new historic, psychological, feminist, formalistic, post-colonial and cultural and political perspectives.

General Education Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will satisfy the following general education outcomes.

Intellectual and Practical Skills, including

- a. Inquiry and analysis
- b. Critical and creative thinking
- c. Written and oral communication

Personal and Social Responsibility, including

- Intercultural knowledge and competence

Course Requirements

Literary Essays

- A literary essays (4 to 5 typewritten double-spaced pages) on the work of a writer studied in the course will be required. Your choices are the novels of Olaudah Equiano or Harriet Jacobs or the poetry of Phillis Wheatley. Your essay will focus on the literary perspectives and critical scholarship raised in the texts of these writers. (20%)
- Paper should be typed in 12" Times New Roman with no more than 1" margins. Your paper must use the MLA Style and must include at least three citations, including the text studied. You should refer to the *Writers Reference* for the correct format of paper and works cited.
- A final literary essay on the work of William Wells Brown, James Weldon Johnson or Charles Chestnutt is required. Your final essay should include an analysis of the texts reads in class as well as at least five outside relevant critical, historical, or literary sources. The minimum length of this essay is 10 pages. (30%)

Class Participation

You are expected to arrive on time to class and to attend class on a consistent basis. As a member of this class you will contribute to an intellectual and stimulating learning community. You will raise critical questions and argue for the merit of your responses. (10%)

In-Class Writing/Double Entry Journal

You are required to keep a double entry journal that represents your responses to required readings. A minimum of four double journal entries are required for each class session. You should bring the journal with you to each class session as it will serve as the basis for discussion of texts. Additionally, much of your in-class work will involve collaborative learning. Therefore, you will be asked to develop collaborative responses to issues raised from the readings and to write critical responses to selections and readings discussed in class. (40%)

Course Evaluation

Completion of Assignments

All students are expected to complete all assignments. Failure to turn in an assignment will have a negative effect on your final grade even if you do well on those assignments that you do submit

Extra Credit

During the semester you will have an opportunity to attend literary readings, film discussions, workshops, screens, etc related to literature. You may also listen to radio and television interviews of writers. You can receive extra credit by writing reader response reflections and literary analyses of these programs. Finally, you may read related texts which have not specifically been assigned by me and write a reflective response. These assignments can help to bolster your final grade at the end of the semester.

You work in this course will be graded according to the A-B-C-D-F scale. “Incomplete” grades (unless in the event of a **documented** medical or personal emergency) will not be granted.

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism:

Please refer to the CUNY website for a complete set of definitions for what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty. A brief explanation: Any work you present must be yours. If any part of your work is not yours, you must either directly quote or paraphrase the portions that belong to someone else. You can find information on quoting and paraphrasing in Lipson's *Doing Honest Work in College* as well as Diana Hacker's *Pocket Manual of Style*.

“Academic Integrity refers to the ethical standards and policies that govern how people work and interact in the academic enterprise at a college or university. These standards and policies attempt to do more than define and condemn what is wrong or unethical;

they also attempt to provide a foundation for the mutual trust and individual responsibility necessary in a healthy academic community¹.”

Some forms of Academic Dishonesty include: Cheating, Fabrication, Plagiarism, Multiple Submission (turning your work, as a whole, finished product, into more than one class), Carelessness, and Electronic Dishonesty. Please see the CUNY website on Academic Integrity: <http://www.cuny.edu/about/info/policies.html>

NOTE: If you are found violating any of these policies, you will (1) fail the assignment and/or course, (2) be reported to the Chair of the English Department, and be subjected to the appropriate disciplinary action.

Grading Criteria

In-class writing & double entry journals	40% of the grade
Short essay (4-5 pages)	20% of the grade
Final Literary Essay (10 pages)	30% of the grade
Class participation	10% of the grade

Course Outline

Week 1- Aug. 31	Introduction & Overview
Week 2-Sept 7	African American Anthology: Poets, Phillis Wheatley & George Moses Norton. Review of Critical Perspectives for Text Analysis.
Week 3 – Sept 14 and	<i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i> , Introduction and Chapters I to VI.
Week 4 - Sept 21 to	<i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i> , Chapters VII to X11.
Week 5- Sept 28	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> by Harriet Jacobs, Preface, Introduction and Chapters I to XX.
Week 6- Oct. 5	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> by Harriet Jacobs, Chapters XXI to XLI.
Week 7 – Oct.12	Essay # 1 Due <i>Introduction, Narrative of the Life and Escape of William Wells Brown and Clotel: or The President’s Daughter</i> by Williams Wells Brown. Chapters I to XV111.

¹ This definition is pulled from DePauw University’s Academic Handbook.

- Week 8 – Oct. 19 *Clotel: or The President's Daughter* by Williams Wells Brown. Chapters XIV to XXV111.
- Week 9 – Oct. 26 *The Marrow of Tradition* by Charles Chestnutt, Chapters I to XIX.
- Week 10 – Nov. 2 *The Marrow of Tradition* by Charles Chestnutt, Chapters XX to XXXVII.
Review of Double Entry Journal
- Week 11- Nov. 9 *The Autobiography of An Ex-Colored Man* by James Weldon Johnson,
- Week 12 – Nov 16 Study Groups for *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E. B. DuBois, Chapters I (The Foreword) to Chapter VI.
- Week 13 – Nov 30 *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E. B. DuBois, Chapters VII to “The After Thought”
- Week 14 – Dec 7 Oral Presentations of Final Papers; Double Entry Journals Due
- Week 15- Dec. 14 FINAL LITERARY PAPER DUE