

E376S/AFR374F.2 : *African American Literature Since the Harlem Renaissance*

Professor: Dr. Meta DuEwa Jones

Class Meets SPRING 2010 Tuesday & Thursday 3:30-4:45 PM, PAR 308

Class Unique #: E376S/ 35035; AFR 374F.2, 35550

Office hours: Parlin 128, Tuesday and Thursday: 2pm-3:00pm and by appointment

Tel.: 471-8743, E-mail: metadj@mail.utexas.edu

Course Description

This course will explore the significance of key historical, cultural and political events in terms of their influence on movements and developments in African American Literature and Culture from the Harlem Renaissance to the contemporary moment. While our readings will include a range of literary genres, including poetry, drama, prose fiction, autobiography, children's literature and critical essays; we will also maintain a special emphasis on poetry, poetics and performance. We will discuss and analyze a variety of poetic forms and their relationship to other media, including music and visual art. We will read a wide variety of poems, focusing particularly on the thematic and structural relationship between: poetry and memory, poetry and nation, poetry and the body, poetry and community. We will particularly examine how memory, music, migration, love, and death are filtered through the prisms of generation, culture, gender, race, class and sexuality in African-American Literature. This is a Substantial Writing Component Course and thus we will engage in a significant amount of writing, peer review and revision. We will develop our capacities for critically reading, writing and analyzing poetry, prose, music and film.

Books Required:

Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea* (1940)

Ntozake Shange, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide* (1975)

Cyrus Cassells *The Mud Actor* (1982, 2000)

Toni Morrison, *Jazz* (1992)

Ashley Bryan's *ABC of African American Poetry* (2001)

Course Packet of Additional Readings will available from Abel's Copies on January 22nd. Abel's Copies is located at: University Towers, 715D West 23rd Street, Austin TX 78705. The telephone number is: Phone: (512) 472-5353. The e-mail address is: info@abelscopies.com

Grading Criteria:

Active Class Participation 10%

Reading/Writing Quizzes 10%

Critical Essay Review#1 (4-5 page essay) 20%

--Includes: Thesis Claim Sentence and Evidence Draft (1 page)

Critical Essay Review#2 Revision (6-7 page) 25%

--Includes: Revised Thesis and Critical Source

--Includes: Additional Revision

Research Presentation and Critical Response (1 page) 10%

Final Three Essay Take Home Exam (4 page) 25%

Letter Grade Numerical Equivalents and Plus-Minus Grading:

Students' final course grade will be determined on the basis of the rubric listed below. Please note: to ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. Also note that the University does not recognize the grade of A+.

A = 94-100

A- = 90-93

B+ = 87-89

B = 84-86

B- = 80-83

C+ = 77-79

C = 74-76

C- = 70-73

D+ = 67-69

D = 64-66

D- = 60-63

F = 0-60

Course Policies:

- Mandatory class attendance. This is a lecture and discussion based class with a strong emphasis on critical thinking and writing. Thus your regular and engaged participation in class is essential. You are allowed three unexcused absences. Each additional unexcused absence will lower your course grade by five points. Missing more than five unexcused classes will result in receiving a failing grade (F) for the course, regardless of the work completed for the course.
- I understand, however, that sometimes emergencies occur and therefore absences are unavoidable. Please contact me by e-mail if you are absent due to an illness or emergency. You must provide documentation (e.g. note from a physician or the Student Health Center) for the absence to count as an excused absence. You will not be penalized for missing class due to observance of an

official religious holiday, provided you follow the appropriate requirements of the University of Texas (see note below).

- Please note: Your timely presence is important for the class discussion. Tardiness counts for one-half absence, more than five minutes tardy equals absent.
- BRING the appropriate reading to Class. Failure to bring the book, course readings, or handout to class counts as a detraction from your class participation grade. If you have any difficulty obtaining the books, contact Professor Jones in advance of the class period.
- In the event of an absence, you are responsible for knowing what was discussed in class as well as for getting any missed handouts or assignments before the next class period or the assignment is due.
- In the event of an absence, if graded papers or assignments are distributed, they will NOT be brought to the next class period. It is your responsibility to make arrangements to pick up graded assignments from the professor (for example, by attending office hours or making an appointment) when you have missed class on the day of grade distribution.
- In the event of an absence on the date of peer review: There are no make-ups for missed peer review. That assignment counts for part of the class participation for that scheduled date.
- In class writing assignments count as part of your class participation grade. Thus, in fairness to those students present in class on that day, no make-ups for in-class assignments. This includes no make-ups for quizzes, except in the case a documented excused absence.
- You are responsible for completing the reading before coming to class.
- Late papers, take home assignments or examinations will be not be accepted except under approved and documented emergencies.
- Any incomplete assignments will result in a lower final grade and will jeopardize your ability to pass the course. It is your responsibility to ensure that your work is turned in promptly. It is your responsibility to Keep copies of

returned, graded assignments. Be sure to save all written assignments on a backup disk, cd or usb flash drive.

- All papers and take home assignments should be typed, double-spaced with 1 inch margins and a legible font size. The paper should also follow the *MLA Format* guidelines.
- E-mail submission of papers and other written assignments, examinations or projects will NOT be accepted. Hardcopies are required. In the event of email submission of a paper, the assignment is considered late until a hardcopy is submitted to the professor.
- All papers and take home assignments should be turned in to class unless otherwise informed.
- Course Schedule: The course schedule is tentative and may change during the semester due to classroom dialogue, engagement with the readings and scheduling conflicts. Thus, I reserve the right to change items on the syllabus. In the event of any changes, students will be promptly notified.
- Observance of Religious Holidays
A student who misses an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, provided that he or she has properly notified the instructor. It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin that the student must notify the instructor at least 14 days prior to the classes scheduled on dates he or she will be absent to observe a religious holy day. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, the notice should be given on the first day of the semester. The student will not be penalized for these excused absences, but the instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to complete satisfactorily the missed assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the excused absence.
- Accommodations for Students With Disabilities
The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259 or 471-4641 TTY. Once the office certifies your needs, I will work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

E376S: African-American Literature Since the Harlem Renaissance
Course Schedule and Assignment Due Dates

Week One

- Tu. January 19 Introduction, Syllabus and Course Overview
 Th. January 21 The Harlem / "New Negro" Renaissance: "A Cultural Flowering"
 Review Websites on Blackboard: Harlem Renaissance

Week Two

- Tu. January 26 Helene Johnson, "Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem," Claude
 McKay, "If We Must Die," "Georgia Douglass Johnson, "I
 Want to Die While You Love Me," "The Heart of A Woman,"
 Biographies & Poems
 Th. January 28 W. C. Handy, "St. Louis Blues," Lyrae Van-Clief Stefanon, "Bop:
 A Haunting" and "Spring Bop," Al Young, "Something About
 The Blues," "The Blues Don't Change," "A Dance for Ma
 Rainey," "A Low-Flying Bues for Somebody"

Week Three

- Tu. February 2 Documentary Screening: Hughes' Harlem Dream
 Poems by Hughes: "Dream Montage," "I, Too Sing America,"
 "The Weary Blues" Poem by Claude McKay, "America"
 Th. February 4 Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain"
 Countee Cullen, "Heritage"

Week Four

- Tu. February 9 Zora Neale Hurston, "What White Publishers Won't Print"
 Excerpt, Dust Tracks on the Road
 Th. February 11 The Big Sea, Rampersad, "Introduction"
The Big Sea, I. Twenty One (to "I've Known Rivers")

February 11th Critical Review Essay Claim Sentence Evidence Draft Due

Week Five

- Tu. February 16 The Big Sea, I & II. (to "Paris in the Spring/Poem")
 Th. February 18 The Big Sea, II. & III. Black Renaissance (to "Poetry")

Week Six

- Tu. February 23 The Big Sea, III. (to "Postscript" end)
 Th. February 25 "Langston Hughes and Alfred Knopf, Inc., 1925-1935"/
 By Randy Lewis, U.T. American Studies

Week Seven

- Tu. March 2 *Documentary Screening: Toni Morrison, The Writer*
Jazz (Foreword to Page 51, "From freezing hot to cool.")
 Th. March 4 *Jazz* (P 52, "Like that day in July" to 114, "In the City.")

Tuesday March 4th Critical Review Essay (4-5p) Due**Week Eight**

- Tu. March 9 Student Group Conferences: Critical Review Essay
 Th. March 11 *Jazz* (P 116, "And when spring comes to the City," to 162,
 "Golden Gray . . . was ready for those deer eyes to open.")

Week Nine *March 15-20* SPRING BREAK March 16 and 18 No Class Meeting

Week Ten

- Tu. March 23 *Jazz* (P 165, "A thing like that could harm you." to 184,
 "But where is she?")
 Th. March 25 *Jazz* (P 186, to end of novel)

Week Eleven**Thursday March 30th Critical Review Essay 5-7pp Revision Due**

- Tu. March 30 *Peer Review/Writing Day*
 Th. April 1 *For Colored Girls* (1st third of choreopoem/play)

Week Twelve

- Tu. April 6 *For Colored Girls* (2nd third of choreopoem/play)
 Th. April 8 *For Colored Girls* (final third to end of choreopoem/play)

Week Thirteen

- Tu. April 13 *Documentary Screening: Furious Flowering/African-American Poetry*
 Cyruss Cassells: Mud Actor
 Th. April 15 Cyruss Cassells: Mud Actor

Week Fourteen**Tuesday April 20th Critical Review Essay Complete (5-7 pp) Due**

- Tu. April 20 Cyruss Cassells: Mud Actor
 Th. April 22 Ashley Bryan's ABC of African American Poetry

Week Fifteen

Tu. April 27 African American Poetry Research Presentations
Th. April 29 African American Poetry Research Presentations

Take Home Essay Questions Distributed on Thursday, April 29th in Class

Week Sixteen

Tu. May 4. African American Poetry Research Presentations
Th. May 6. *Class Summary and Course Review*
African American Poetry Research Presentations

Take Home Essay Exam Due: Thursday, May 6th.
(Hard Copy Must be turned in during last class)
No exceptions. No Extensions.