

EN 4343/6343: AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Early Writers

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Description

Early African American literature emerged out of a trans-Atlantic experience of capture, global dispersion, colonization, enslavement and emancipation. The survivors this *maafa* transplanted on American soil a centuries-old legacy of expressive culture that originated on the African continent and that continues to influence contemporary literary and cultural expression across the African Diaspora. This course focuses on African American expressivity in orature and literature. Beginning with the Vernacular Tradition, it will cover the literature of Enslavement and Freedom, 1746-1865; the Reconstruction and Reaction, 1865 to 1919; and the early period of the Harlem Renaissance, 1919 to 1929.

Course Texts

The required text for all students is:

- *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay, general editors.

Additionally, the following texts are required of all graduate students:

- *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter* by William Wells Brown
- *Blake; or, The Huts of America*, by Martin R. Delaney
- *Three Negro Classics: Up From Slavery* by Booker T. Washington, *The Souls of Black Folk* by W. E. B. DuBois, and *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* by James Weldon Johnson, edited by John Hope Franklin
- *The African American Novel in the Age of Reaction: Three Classics-- Iola Leroy* by Frances E. W. Harper, *The Marrow of Tradition* by Charles W. Chesnutt, and *The Sport of the Gods* by Paul Laurence Dunbar, edited by William L. Andrews
- *The Complete Fiction of Nella Larsen: Passing, Quicksand, and the Stories*
- *Cane*, by Jean Toomer

Course Requirements

All students will take the mid-term and final examinations. Additionally, students will make periodic oral reports on assigned works. Undergraduate students will be required to write a literary research paper of a minimum of 7 pages, and graduate students will write an annotated bibliography of a work or author not studied in class and a literary research paper of at least 15 pages.