

Summer 2021

AP/EN 2231 6.0A (SU)	African American Literature
Course Director:	Eshe Mercer-James mercer_and_james@yahoo.ca office hours: Tues 11am-12pm, or by appointment
Time:	Lectures posted Tues/Thurs, 10am
Delivery Format:	x ONLINE – (asynchronous delivery) – There is no set course meeting time. Students may engage with course content/materials 24/7.
Description:	This course provides an introduction to African American literature. Writing by Black people in the United States has been a contentious issue—laws were passed to prevent slaves from learning how to read and write, and then their illiteracy was used to confirm their inhuman slave status. Slaves attempted to write themselves out of the peculiar institution with slave narratives, but it is not until the late nineteenth-century that fiction by African Americans was published in any great quantity. This course begins in the 1890s and ends a century later for a survey through the development of a national racialized literature. This includes questions of racial politics in content alongside politicized techniques like folklore traditions, dialect, and music. We will look at how the literature interacts with contemporary mainstream Western art forms, and how racialization might alter these forms. We will also ask the questions of what links these works together besides the race of the authors, and why a national and racialized categorizing of literature might be useful (besides racism).
Category:	C
Historical Requirement:	N/A
Requirements:	Reading Responses (6 x 1-2 pgs) and Participation: 40% Mid-term: 15% Essay (6-8 pgs): 25% Final: 20%
Reading List:	Charles Chesnutt, “The Goophered Grapevine” (August 1887, <i>The Atlantic</i>) from <i>The Conjure Woman</i> (1899) and “The Wife of His Youth” (July 1898, <i>The Atlantic</i>) from <i>The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories from the Color Line</i> (1899) Jean Toomer, <i>Cane</i> (1923) Jessie Redmon Fauset, <i>There is Confusion</i> (1924) James Baldwin, <i>Going to Meet the Man</i> (1948) Dudley Randall, editor. <i>The Black Poets</i> (1971) August Wilson, <i>Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom</i> (1982)

	Walter Mosely, <i>Devil in a Blue Dress</i> (1990) Toni Morrison, <i>Jazz</i> (1992) Edwidge Danticat, <i>Krik? Krak!</i> (1996) Zora Neale Hurston, <i>Hitting a Straight Lick with a Crooked Stick</i> (2020) *some readings are available in anthologies or online
Open To:	Yr 2, 3