

Fall/Winter 2021-2022

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| AP/EN 2231 6.0A (Y) | African American Literature |
| Course Director: | Professor Eshe Mercer-James eshe@yorku.ca |
| Time: | Seminar: Tuesdays 11:30am - 2:30pm |
| Delivery Format: | SEMINAR – in-person |
| 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 will begin in 1890s and end a century later for a survey through the development of a national racialized literature. This includes questions of racial politics in content alongside racialized techniques like folklore traditions, dialect, and music. We will look at how the literature interacts with contemporary mainstream Western art forms and think about 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 what considerations should be made within a national and racialized categorizing of literature. |
| Category: | C |
| Historical Requirement: | N/A |
| Requirements: | Participation: 15% Reading Responses: 10% Mid-term: 15% Essay 1: 15% Essay 2: 25% Final: 20% |
| Reading List: | Charles Chesnutt, “The Goophered Grapevine” from <i>The Conjure Woman</i> (1899) and from <i>The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories from the Color Line</i> (1899) Frances E.W. Harper, <i>Iola Leroy</i> (1892) Jean Toomer, <i>Cane</i> (1923) Jessie Redmon Fauset, <i>There is Confusion</i> (1924) Langston Hughes, <i>The Weary Blues</i> (1926) |

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| | 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 Mosley, <i>Devil in a Blue Dress</i> (1990) Toni Morrison, <i>Jazz</i> (1992) Beverly Jenkins, <i>Night Song</i> (1994) Edwidge Danticat, <i>Krik? Krak!</i> (1996) Zora Neale Hurston, <i>Hitting a Straight Lick with a Crooked Stick</i> (2020) |
| Open To: | Year 2, 3 |