

ENGL 12: AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2025
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Demonstrated proficiency in English by placement via multiple measures OR through an equivalent placement process OR completion of ESLL 125 & ESLL 249.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 3: Arts & Humanities
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Identify fundamental elements of African American culture as represented in the literature.
- Identify significant literary, social, cultural and political issues in 19th-21st century African American writing.

Description

Literature by African Americans beginning with slavery, and continuing through Reconstruction, into the 20th and 21st centuries. Study of many of the current stereotypes in American cultural mythology about African Americans. Study of the complex and varying forms of resistance and strategies for survival that African Americans have been forced to develop. Examination of issues and strategies in writings from the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, including audience, identity (self), gender, family, culture, politics, spirituality, and language. Intended for students wishing to transfer and/or students interested in exploring African American literature.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Identify significant literary, social, cultural, and political issues in 19th-21st century African American writing.
- Recognize the tenets of the American slave system and their effects on 19th-21st century writers.
- Compare various forms of resistance to slavery as represented in the literature.
- Examine various writing styles with relation to audience and purpose.
- Identify fundamental elements of African American culture as represented in the literature.
- Understand one's own culturally-determined perspective and how it might be viewed in the context of racial discourse, from the perspective of others.

Course Content

- Significant literary, social, cultural, and political issues
 - Construction of the literary Self
 - Autobiography as act of liberation
 - Definition and exploration of "double-consciousness" (Dubois) and social and cultural implications for both blacks and whites
 - Abolition
 - Reconstruction and Post-Reconstruction
 - Great Migration
 - Harlem Renaissance
 - Negro Protest Literature
 - Exploration of contemporary African American writers in relevant social contexts
- Tenets of American slave system
 - Construction of racist stereotypes to justify slavery
 - Social and political norms of slaveholding society
 - Popular literary genres for southern and northern white men and women
- Forms of resistance
 - Literary forms and tropes
 - Metaphors of Spiritual Resistance
 - Testimonies of physical and cultural resistance
 - Community-based sensibilities
- Writing styles with relation to audience and purpose
 - Slave Narratives
 - Poetry
 - Drama
 - Novel
 - Expository and Personal Essay
- Literary representations of African American culture
 - West African cultural retentions
 - Creations in American culture: Black English, Spirituals, Blues, Jazz, Rap, Hip-Hop
 - Issues of mixed heritages: color consciousness, class, and categorization
 - Gender
 - Family and kinship ties
 - Spirituality
- Understanding one's own culturally determined perspective
 - Race as a social construction
 - Social and economic contexts for racial categories
 - Historically determined views of human beings as "other"
 - Internalization and projection of culturally determined racial categories

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

- When taught on campus, no special equipment needed.
- When taught online, ongoing access to learning management system.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Inquiry writing projects: based on module topics, completed via research, investigation, etc.

Class discussions: whole class, groups or individuals may lead; include analysis of texts using literary devices, reading strategies, etc.

In-class presentations using solo or group format

Midterm inquiry project: students use questions to research local aspects of African American literature to produce a multi-modal project (digital, print, oral, etc.)

Final inquiry project: students' exploration/interrogation expands to a multi-modal project seeking to answer questions related to global aspects of African American literature; project includes digital, print, and oral components

Quizzes to assess comprehension and application of literary devices, analysis of texts, etc.

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture

Discussions

Audio and visual presentations

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

. [The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African 1789.](#) 1789.

Douglass, Frederick. [Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.](#) 1845.

Jacobs, Harriet. [Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.](#) 1861.

Brown, William Wells. [Clotel.](#) 1853.

. [Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1938.](#) .

Andrews, William L., and Henry Louis Gates, eds.. [Slave Narratives \(Library of America\).](#) 2000.

Lewis-Giggetts, Tracy M.. [Black Joy.](#) 2022.

Rudisel, Christine, and Bob Blaisdell, eds.. [Great Short Stories by African American Writers.](#) .

Griffin, Farah J.. [Read Until You Understand.](#) 2021.

Daley, James. [Great Speeches by African Americans.](#) .

Morrison, Toni. [The Source of Self-Regard: Selected Essays, Speeches, and Meditations.](#) 2020.

Kendi, Ibram X.. [How to Be an Anti-Racist.](#) 2019.

Jealous, Ben. [Reach: 40 Black Men Speak on Living, Learning & Succeeding.](#) 2015.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. [Between the World and Me.](#) 2015.

. [The Norton Anthology of African American Literature.](#) 2014.

. [Three Great African American Novels: The Heroic Slave \(F.Douglass\), Clotel \(William Wells Brown\), Our Nig \(Harriett E. Wilson\).](#) .

Young, Kevin. [African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle & Song.](#) 2020.

Reed, Ishmael. [From Totems to Hip-Hop: A Multicultural Anthology of Poetry Across the Americas.](#) 2022.

Wilson, August. [Fences.](#) 1985.

Shange, Ntozake. [for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf.](#) 1975.

Nottage, Lynn. [Sweat.](#) 2015.

Wolfe, George C.. [The Colored Museum.](#) 1986.

Wilson, August. [A Soldier's Play.](#) 1981.

Hansberry, Lorraine. [A Raisin in the Sun.](#) 1959.

Bell, Bernard. [The Folk Roots of Contemporary Afro-American Poetry.](#) .

Perkins, Useni Eugene. [Poetry from the Masters: The Black Arts Movement: an Introduction to African-American Poets.](#) .

Sherman, Joan, and James Madison, eds.. [African American Poetry Anthology: 1773-1927.](#) .

Texts older than five years are included because these represent, in part, the historical and literary context that is not only necessary, but required for the proper study of African American literature.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Reading and analyzing literary texts
2. Formal essays
3. Informal writing projects, such as journal entries, reader responses
4. In-class examinations
5. Class participation, student presentations

Discipline(s)

English