



Survey of African American Literatures I: Beginnings through the Harlem Renaissance

Dr. Delia Steverson

AML 3605/AFA3930

Fall 2020

Office Location
Phone and Email
Preferred form of Contact
Office Hours

This course is designed as an introductory survey of texts and discourses within the African American literary tradition. Because of these unprecedented times, we will focus our attention on African American resistance. As we explore critical works within this tradition, from slavery to the Harlem Renaissance, we will frame our close textual readings and literary analyses within the context of critical movements and discourses in social, cultural, and literary history. We will be particularly engaged in examining the manner in which literary works and other forms of African American cultural production reveal and respond to social and cultural ideologies, especially those that impact constructions of difference and the formation of identity, subjectivity, and/or the notion of the self.

Course Learning Goals: At the end of the semester, students will be able to

- Become confident in using African American literature and history to establish strategies for resistance today
- Become familiar with critical periods, discourses, and writers in African American literary tradition
- Develop an understanding of the historical and cultural contexts that shape African American literary tradition, specifically the early national, reconstruction, and early twentieth-century periods

- Gain the confidence and ability to speak in a sophisticated and critical fashion about African American literature
- Produce or improve a neutrally-written account of an article for Wikipedia for knowledge to be disseminated around the globe
- Produce a literary close reading that addresses both the form and the content of one or more text(s) in the construction of an argument about the text's meaning
- Develop effective written communication skills

Communications: I will communicate with you primarily through Canvas, most of the time through the announcements page or through Canvas Email. Please **allow 12-24 hours for a response**. We'll also be using Slack, which is a neat app that helps all of us stay in touch with each other and share both important but also fun information. This is a great way to get to know your other classmates as well as communicate with your Wikipedia group. Be sure to join the Slack.

Learning Environment: We're all in this together this semester. **My main request is that you give yourself, me, and each other some GRACE.** Let's make the best out of our online experience. I expect you to enter the Zoom meetings on time, with your camera on and your microphone ready. You can expect me to do the same.

Be kind and gentle with each other. You can still disagree, but do it in a constructive way. Have patience! This is important, because we want to be

I don't mind snacks or drinks on Zoom. Just mute your microphone and try not to let it distract you or your classmates. Be respectful of my time and your classmates' time by being present and engaged with that day's material. My

patient and understanding with each other. I'll be patient with you and please **be patient with me.**

Be yourself in this digital space, and at the same time think about how you can be your best self, despite the unprecedented times. **I do not tolerate bullying or extreme disrespect**—whether that be toward each other or toward myself. If you feel bullied in our class environment, *please* communicate that with me and I'll rectify the situation.

classes are generally discussion-based, so share your opinions—I look forward to hearing them, and I'm sure your classmates do too! **Let's have some fun!**

Required Reading and Other Course Materials

- ✚ Frederick Douglass—[Narrative of the Life](#)
- ✚ All other readings and videos are available via documents or Course Reserves on Canvas

Required Technology: Zoom, Adobe Reader, High-speed internet connection, Slack, YouTube

Assignment Breakdown (Out of 100%)

Discussions and Structured Note Taking	35%
Wikipedia Assignment	35%
Op-Ed Essay on Violence and Resistance	15%
Final Essay on Combating Racial Injustice	15%

Policy on Late and Make-Up Work

Daily assignment due dates will be listed on Canvas. It is your responsibility to turn in assignments on time. Late essays will be docked half a letter grade for each day they are late. Late daily assignments will lose 1 point for each day they are late. However, I do understand that sometimes life happens—I’m here to see you succeed, not fail. Just talk to me in advance if there becomes a circumstance that

would require you to miss a deadline. The earlier you discuss it with me, the easier it will be to figure out an alternative plan.

Grade Return Timing

It is my goal to return your graded work to you in a timely fashion. **Expect at least two weeks turn-a-round** for major assignments (essays, projects). For everyday assignments, please allow **at least a week for** feedback.

Point Range for this Class:

Letter Grade	Range:		Letter Grade	Range:	
A	100 %	to 94.0%	B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%	C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%	C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%	C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%

Letter Grade	Range:		Letter Grade	Range:	
D+	< 70.0 %	to 67.0%	D-	< 64.0 %	to 61.0%
D	< 67.0 %	to 64.0%	F	< 61.0 %	to 0.0%

UF Course Policies

- ✚ **Inclusion and Accessibility:** I am committed to making our classroom as accessible as possible for all students. I'd love to hear your input regarding how I can make online teaching more accessible for everyone. We all learn in different ways and it's important to me that you feel supported throughout the semester. Please let me know as soon as possible if you need specific accommodations, and I will do my absolute best to make sure that all students have multiple ways of accessing our class information. Additionally, it's a good idea to connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). I invite you to share your letter with me, so that I will be better equipped to help support your learning needs.
- ✚ **Workload:** As a Carnegie I, research-intensive university, UF is required by federal law to assign at least 2 hours of work outside of class for every contact hour. For our class, these may include reading/viewing assigned material and doing explicitly assigned individual or group work, as well as reviewing notes from class, synthesizing information in advance of exams or papers, and other self-determined study tasks.
- ✚ **Student Evaluations:** Evaluations are important. I'd love your professional and respectful feedback on the quality of my instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available from [the Gatorevals website](#).
- ✚ **Recording Zoom Sessions:** To make our virtual classroom more accessible, our Zoom meetings will be recorded, but the chat feature will not. Also, please know that office hours are confidential and will *not* be recorded.

Attendance: It should go without saying that attendance and participation are mandatory for your success in this class.

Formatting: Please write in MLA format. For the sake of accessibility, you may choose to write in either Times New Roman, Tahoma, or Verdana font. If you need more information on MLA formatting, [check out the Purdue Owl.](#)

College is tough! Here's a list of additional UF resources that might aid you along the way:

- [Disability Resource Center](#) helps to provide an accessible learning environment for all by providing support services and facilitating accommodations, which may vary from course to course. Once registered with DRC, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.
- [University Police](#)
- [Career Connections Center](#) connects job seekers with employers and offers guidance to enrich your collegiate experience and prepare you for life after graduation.
- [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) provides counseling and support as well as crisis and wellness services including a [variety of workshops](#) throughout the semester (e.g., Yappy Hour, Relaxation and Resilience).
- [Dean of Students Office](#) provides a variety of services to students and families, including [Field and Fork](#) (UF's food pantry) and [New Student and Family programs](#).
- [Multicultural and Diversity Affairs](#) celebrates and empowers diverse communities and advocates for an inclusive campus.
- [Office of Student Veteran Services](#) assists student military veterans with access to benefits.
- [ONE.Uf](#) is the home of all the student self-service applications

List of Graded Work

NOTE: To succeed in this class, it is imperative that you complete all of the graded work. Also, take extra care to make sure that you upload the correct document to Canvas. Double check your submissions.

Discussion Posts and Structured Note-Taking (35%)

Throughout the semester, you will both post to the discussion board and complete handouts before, during, and/or after you read/view the assigned material. Generally, each daily assignment is worth **10-points each**. Sometimes they will be graded for completion, but most times, they will be graded for quality and engagement with the material.

Submit: Either through Discussions page or via Assignments (will be specified)

Wikipedia Assignment (35%)

- **Annotated Bibliography (10%)**
 - An annotated bibliography details the sources you have chosen for your article. Each entry should contain MLA-formatted bibliographic citation as well as a summary, evaluation, and usefulness of the source.
- **Editing/Creating an article (10%)**
 - You will choose one article from the predetermined list to either edit or create. Your grade will focus not simply on the amount of material you create, but rather the quality of that material. There will be scheduled class time to work on some of the modules, but it is ultimately your responsibility to stay on task with that week's assignments, which are located on our shared Wikipedia dashboard.
- **In-Class Presentation (7.5%)**
 - You (and your group members if applicable) will present an 8-9 minute presentation addressing your experience during the Wikipedia process. You will consider your process with critiquing articles, peer review, feedback, Wikipedia generally, and you will summarize your contributions.
 - Your presentation should incorporate some form of creative medium.
 - Submit: In-Class and through Canvas link
- **Reflective Response (7.5%)**
 - You will write a reflective essay assessing your Wikipedia contributions and working in a group. I'm interested to know what challenges, breakthroughs you had as well as your evaluation of the participation of your other group members. Refer to the Wikipedia guidelines on our dashboard that offer questions to help guide you through your response. Minimum Three full pages.
 - Submit: Through assignment link on Canvas

Violence and Resistance: Op-Ed Essay (15%)

For this assignment, you will write an opinion piece, or Op-Ed, that responds to the following prompt: Taking into account the surge of political protests surrounding racial injustice that have occurred this year in 2020, use your unique narrative voice to craft a 1000-1200 word Op-ed that takes a stance on the following question: **Is violent resistance justified because of violent oppression?**

Combating Racial Injustice Essay (15%)

Your final assignment will respond to the following prompt: What can we learn from African American literature through the Harlem Renaissance that applies to the condition of Black life today? What can African American literature teach us about how to combat racial injustice today? What strategies do African American authors use in the past that can be valuable for Black liberation today?

Total Value: 100%

Schedule of Readings

Week 1 T 9/1	Introduction; Syllabus Review
R 9/3	<p>Debating the Nature of the Negro</p> <p>David Hume—from <i>Of National Characters</i></p> <p>Immanuel Kant—from <i>Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime</i></p> <p>Josiah Nott and Gliddon—from <i>Types of Mankind</i></p> <p>Thomas Jefferson—from <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i></p> <p>Correspondences between Benjamin Banneker and Thomas Jefferson</p> <p>James McCune Smith—from <i>On the Fourteenth Query of Thomas Jefferson's Notes on Virginia</i></p>
Week 2 T 9/8	<p>Resisting Slavery</p> <p>David Walker—"The Appeal" article II</p> <p>William Lloyd Garrison—"Editorial on Walker's Appeal"</p> <p>Henry Highland Garnet—"An Address to the Slaves of the United States of America"</p> <p>Anonymous—"Report of Debate between Frederick Douglass and Henry Highland Garnet at the national Convention of Colored Citizens"</p>
R 9/10	<p>Frederick Douglass—<i>Narrative of the Life</i>, Preface and Chapters 1-9</p> <p>James Olney—"I was born': Slave Narratives, their status as Autobiography, and as Literature"</p>
Week 3 T 9/15	<p>Frederick Douglass—<i>Narrative of the Life</i> Chapters 10-11 and appendix</p> <p>Dickson Bruce, Jr—"Politics and Political Philosophy in the Slave Narrative"</p>
R 9/17	<p>Harriet Jacobs—<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (1861)</p> <p>Preface, Chapters I, II, V, X, XII, XIV, XVII</p> <p>Optional: XXI, XXIX, XXXIX, XL, XLI</p> <p>John Sekora—"Black Message/White Envelope: Genre, Authenticity, and Authority in the Antebellum Slave Narrative"</p>

Week 4 T 9/22	Robert Smalls podcast on Criminal
R 9/24	Victor Sejour—"The Mulatto" S—Theresa, A Haytien Tale Frances Smith Foster—"How do you Solve a Problem like Theresa?"
Week 5 T 9/29	Racial Uplift Amid "The Negro Problem" Booker T. Washington—"The Atlanta Exposition Address," "Industrial Education for the Negro"
R 10/1	Panel: <i>Complicity & Complexity: Facing Unbearable Truths in North Carolina</i>, 1-2:30 Discussion: <i>A history of Slavery, Race, and Policing</i>, 2:30-3:30
Week 6 (Begin Wikipedia Project) T 10/6	Debrief on Webinar Intro to Wikipedia
R 10/8	W.E.B DuBois— <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> : "The Forethought," "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" and "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others," "The Talented Tenth"
Week 7 T 10/13	Wikipedia Tutorial
R 10/15	Bring Complete Rough Draft of Op-Ed Essay to Class Peer Review Optional: Watch video on Elaine Massacre
Week 8 T 10/20	On Lynching, Riots, and Black Criminality Ida B. Wells— <i>A Red Record</i> Chapters 1, 6, 10, and one other chapter of your choosing; "The Convict Lease System" in <i>The Reason Why...</i> and "Lynch Law"
R 10/22	No Class: Mental Health Thursday
Week 9 T 10/27	Alice Dunbar Nelson—"I Sit and Sew," "Brass Ankles Speaks," "Stones of the Village"
R 10/29	Work in class on Wikipedia article
Week 10 T 11/3	Inventing the New Negro Watch—" Against The odds: Artists of the Harlem Renaissance "
R 11/5	Alain Locke—"The New Negro" Wilfred Adolphus Domingo— <i>What are We, Negroes or Colored People?</i>

Week 11 T 11/10	Zora Neale Hurston—"Sweat," "The Gilded Six-Bits," "What White Publishes won't Print," Intro to <i>Hitting a Straight Lick with a Crooked Stick</i> by Genevieve West Watch: <i>The Gilded Six bits</i>
R 11/12	Langston Hughes—"The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," "Mother to Son," "I, Too," "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "The Weary Blues," "Harlem," "Madam and the Rent Man"
Week 12 T 11/17	Separatism vs. Integration: On Pan-Africanism Marcus Garvey's Back to Africa Movement <i>from Call and Response</i> ft. DuBois, Garvey, Hurston, A Phillip Randolph
R 11/19	Time in class to work on in-class presentations
Week 13 T 11/24	Film In-class Presentations
R 11/26	NO CLASS—Holiday
Week 14 T 12/1	View Wikipedia presentations Begin discussing final essay
R 12/3	View more Wikipedia presentations Workshop Combating Racial Injustice Essay Don't forget: Wikipedia Reflective Essay due FRIDAY Dec 4 th at 11:59pm
Week 15 T 12/8	Asynchronous Meeting—write final essay Reading for fun/Optional— Garvey—"Address to Second UNIA Convention" DuBois—"Manifesto of the Second Pan-African Congress" <i>On PanAfricanism</i> Schuyler v. Haynes

**Combating Racial Injustice Essay due December 15th at 5pm.