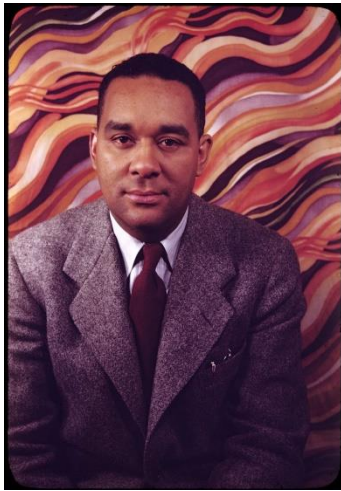


# Survey of African American Literatures II: From 1945 to the Present

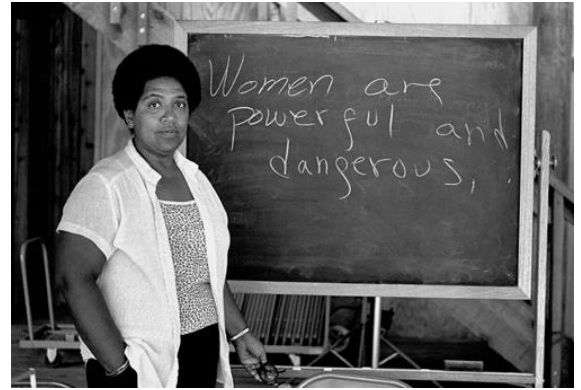
Dr. Delia Steverson

## Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed as an introductory survey of texts and discourses within the African



American literary tradition. As we explore critical works within this tradition, from 1945 until the present, 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. Students will consider these larger questions: What is African American literature? What makes a text “African American”? Why does this matter? What is the purpose of African American literature?

## Required Texts

- ✚ Richard Wright—*Native Son* (1940)
- ✚ Amiri Baraka—*Dutchman* (1964)
- ✚ Toni Morrison—*Sula* (1973)
- ✚ Ernest Gaines—*A Lesson before Dying* (1993)
- ✚ Nafissa Thompson-Spires—*Heads of the Colored People* (2018)
- ✚ Paul Beatty—*The Sellout* (2015)
- ✚ Other readings available via Canvas and/or at UF libraries



## Course Requirements and Grades Distribution

### Evaluations (2)—30%

- ✚ Evaluations will consist of one critical essay question and one close reading. Make sure you take sufficient notes in class!

### Discussion Questions (5%) and Discussion Responses (15%)—20%

- ✚ Discussion Questions: One week before each response is due, you will upload by **11pm Two** discussion questions to Canvas. Those discussion questions should be focused on that entire week's readings. They cannot be yes/no or true/false questions. Generally, effective questions ask *how*, *why*, and *what*. Your questions can focus on a specific theme, concept, line, chapter or any other type of connection you make. You may also use our in-class discussions as a springboard to develop thoughtful questions as well as connect the discussion questions to previous readings. Think about what interests you. Questions turned in after 11pm will be docked half a letter grade each day they are late.
- ✚ Discussion Question Responses—Min. **500 words**: SIX Total: You will respond to any of your classmates' previously posted discussion questions. You may respond to a maximum of two questions, but the response must read as a cohesive essay. Make sure you write the questions at the top of the page. Some responses will be graded for completion and others will be graded more vigorously. The due dates for the responses will be indicated on the syllabus. The responses should be uploaded to **Canvas by 11pm** on the due date. Late responses will be docked half a letter grade for each day it is late.

### Lead Group Discussion—15%

- ✚ Once throughout the semester, you will be responsible for leading your group's discussion for that day. The way you choose to lead discussion is up to you. The point is to give the class critical points of departure for discussing that day's texts. Feel free to be creative. For instance, you can bring in outside texts (historical documents, blogs, current events, films, art, music, literature, etc) or create an in-class assignment. Whatever your "lesson plan" will be for that day, please **email to me by 8pm the day before** you present, your lesson plan that includes **2-3 discussion questions**.

### Quizzes, In-Class Assignments, and Participation—20%

- ✚ Be prepared to take a short reading comprehension quiz most days that I assign readings (5 points per quiz). In-class assignments will often serve as a place of departure for our discussion and can be in the form of handouts, writing assignments, or other avenues. You will work individually, with a partner, or with a group.
- ✚ It should go without saying that attendance and participation are mandatory for your success in this class. It is imperative that you are present and on time. Remember that quizzes CANNOT be made up, regardless of the circumstance. In-class assignments can be made up, but must be turned in a week after your absence—otherwise it's a zero. Make sure you

get with a classmate to catch you up. If you are on time and have perfect attendance, you will be rewarded **FIVE** extra points on your final evaluation.

### **Outside Activity and Analysis—15%**

- ✚ Minimum of **1000 words**. Final due date: **April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 11:45am**. Late assignments will NOT be accepted.
- ✚ You will be required to attend one UF/community-sponsored event throughout the semester. You may choose from the list of approved events located on Canvas or you may get pre-approval from me of an event of your choice. Complete the following:
  - Sign in on the Sign-In Sheet (if available)
  - Take one or two photos at the event and use the photos to answer the questions—what’s going on in the photo? Why is it important?
  - Give an overview of the event: include the when, what, and where
  - Observations: What were the most fascinating aspects of the event? Why? What questions do you have?
  - What did you learn? In what ways does the event relate to what we have been discussing in class or about African American history and literature in general? Be specific, citing examples.

### Accommodations Statement

I strive for the classroom to be as accessible as possible. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the UF Disability Resource Center (352.392.8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### Schedule of Readings

<b>Week 1</b> 1/6	Introductions
1/8	Syllabus Review
1/10	Review of African American literature through Harlem Renaissance Assign discussion groups; sign up for discussion leading
<b>Week 2</b> 1/13	George Schuyler—“The Negro Art Hokum” Langston Hughes—“The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” W.E.B Du Bois—“Criteria of Negro Art”

	Kenneth Warren—"Does African-American Literature Exist" <a href="https://www.chronicle.com/article/Does-African-American/126483">https://www.chronicle.com/article/Does-African-American/126483</a>
1/15	Richard Wright—"The Ethics of Living Jim Crow" Richard Wright—"Blueprint for Negro Writing"
1/17	Richard Wright— <i>Native Son</i> (1-59) <a href="https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.499539/2015.499539.native-son_djvu.txt">https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.499539/2015.499539.native-son_djvu.txt</a>
<b>Week 3</b> 1/20	No Class—MLK Holiday
1/22	Richard Wright— <i>Native Son</i> pages 60-163
1/24	<i>Native Son</i> (Finish book 1 and 2) to page 270
<b>Week 4</b> 1/27	<i>Native Son</i> Pages 271-325 <b>Group Discussion 1</b>
1/29	<i>Native Son</i> Pages 326-381
1/31	<i>Native Son</i> Pages 382-End Richard Wright—"How Bigger was Born" <b>Discussion Questions One due</b>
<b>Week 5</b> 2/3	Maurice Charney—"James Baldwin's Quarrel with Richard Wright" James Baldwin—"Many Thousands Gone" in <i>Notes of a Native Son</i> (1955)
2/5	John Henrik Clark—"Introduction" in <i>Black American Short Stories</i> James Baldwin—"Going to Meet the Man" Frank Yerby—"The Homecoming"
2/7	Lorraine Hansberry— <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> (1959) <b>Discussion Response One Due</b>
<b>Week 6</b> 2/10	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>
2/12	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> Ossie Davis—"The Significance of Lorraine Hansberry" Natalie Moore—"Lorraine Hansberry and Chicago Segregation" <a href="http://www.thehistoryreader.com/contemporary-history/lorraine-hansberry-and-chicago-segregation/">http://www.thehistoryreader.com/contemporary-history/lorraine-hansberry-and-chicago-segregation/</a> <b>Discussion Questions Two due</b>
2/14	Lorraine Hansberry—"The Negro Writer and his Roots: Toward a New Romanticism" Adrienne Braconi—"African American Women Dramatists, 1930-1960"

<b>Week 7</b> 2/17	Larry Neal—"The Black Arts Movement" Amiri Baraka—"The Myth of a 'Negro Literature'" Hoyt Fuller—"Towards a Black Aesthetic" Addison Gayle—"Cultural Strangulation"
2/19	Amiri Baraka— <i>Dutchman</i> (1964) Aimee Zygmanski—"Amiri Baraka and the Black Arts Movement" <b>Discussion Response Two due</b>
2/21	Haki Madhubuti—"Toward a Definition: Black Poetry of the Sixties," "Introduction [to <i>Think Black</i> ]," "Two Poems," "Gwendolyn Brooks" Gwendolyn Brooks—"We Real Cool," "kitchenette building" "The Chicago <i>Defender</i> Sends a Man to Little Rock" Mari Evans—"I am a black woman"
<b>Week 8</b> 2/24	Sonia Sanchez—"TCB" Nikki Giovanni—"For Sandra," "Beautiful Black Men," "Nikki-Rosa" Audre Lorde—"Poetry is Not a Luxury," "Power" Gil Scot-Heron—"The Revolution will not be Televised" <a href="https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/herontelevised.html">https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/herontelevised.html</a> <b>Group Discussion 2</b>  <b>Discussion Questions Three due</b>
2/26	<b>EVALUATION ONE</b>
2/28	In Class: <i>The Black Power Mixtape</i>
<b>Week 9</b>	No Class—Spring Break
<b>Week 10</b> 3/9	Toni Morrison—"Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" Toni Morrison— <i>Sula</i> Page 1-66 (or beginning through the year 1922) <b>Discussion Response Three due</b>
3/11	<i>Sula</i> Page 66-111 (or year 1923 through year 1937)
3/13	<i>Sula</i> Pages 112-end (or year 1939—end) Barbara Smith—"Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" <b>Group Discussion 3</b>
<b>Week 11</b> 3/16	Ernest J. Gaines— <i>A Lesson Before Dying</i> (1993) Chapters 1-11
3/18	<i>A Lesson Before Dying</i> Chapters 12-21 Willie Francis's two executions <a href="https://allthatsinteresting.com/willie-francis">https://allthatsinteresting.com/willie-francis</a>

3/20	<i>A Lesson Before Dying</i> Chapters 22-end Ernest Gaines—"Writing <i>A Lesson before Dying</i> " <b>Discussion Questions Four due</b>
<b>Week 12</b> 3/23	Film: <i>A Lesson before Dying</i> (1999)
3/25	Film: <i>A Lesson before Dying</i> (1999) Trudier Harris—"Do What Big Mama Sez: Ernest J. Gaines's <i>A Lesson before Dying</i> "
3/27	Film: <i>A Lesson before Dying</i> (1999) <b>Discussion Response Four due</b>
<b>Week 13</b> 3/30	Nafissa Thompson Spires <i>Heads of the Colored People</i> —"Belles Lettres," "The Body's Defenses against Itself," "Fatima, the Biloquist: A Transformation Story" Countee Cullen—"Incident" <a href="http://holyojo.org/poetry/cullen.htm">http://holyojo.org/poetry/cullen.htm</a>
4/1	<i>Heads of the Colored People</i> —"The Necessary Changes have been made," "This Todd," "A Conversation about Bread" Frantz Fanon— <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> Ch.5 <b>Group Discussion 4</b> <b>Discussion Questions Five due</b>
4/3	Dr. Dee at a conference—no class
<b>Week 14</b> 4/6	Paul Beatty— <i>The Sellout</i> (2015) Prologue- Ch. 3
4/8	<i>The Sellout</i> Ch.4-9 Darryl Dickson-Carr—"Introduction" in <i>African American Satire: The Sacredly Profane Novel</i> <b>Discussion Response Five due</b>
4/10	<i>The Sellout</i> Ch. 10-14
<b>Week 15</b> 4/13	<i>The Sellout</i> Ch. 15-21 Hua Hsu—"No Compromises" <a href="https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/no-compromises?verso=true">https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/no-compromises?verso=true</a> <b>Group Discussion 5</b>
4/15	<i>The Sellout</i> Ch 22-end <a href="https://lithub.com/paul-beatty-on-los-angeles-lit-the-sellout-and-life-after-the-man-booker/">https://lithub.com/paul-beatty-on-los-angeles-lit-the-sellout-and-life-after-the-man-booker/</a> <b>Discussion Questions Six due</b>
4/17	Responding to Kenneth Warren from <i>African American Review</i> 44.4

	Adam Bradley—"Our Mayan Prophecy" Soyica Colbert—"On Tradition" John Ernest—"Canals and Rivers" Warren's Response—"Leaving WAS Behind [with Response]"
<b>Week 16</b> 4/20	<b>EVALUATION TWO</b>
4/22	In Class Assignment, complete evaluations <b>Discussion Response Six due</b> <b>Outside Activity Analysis due</b>