GROSSMONT COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

Curriculum Committee Approval: 11/29/2022

Approved by GCCCD Governing Board: 12/13/2022

ENGLISH 238 – BLACK LITERATURE

1. Course Number Course Title Semester Units

ENGL 238 Black Literature 3

Semester Hours

3 hours lecture (48-54 total hours); 96-108 outside-of-class hours ; 144-162 total hours

2. Course Prerequisites

None

Corequisite

None

Recommended Preparation

None

3. Catalog Description

This course introduces students to a survey of Black literature, focusing on the early oral tradition, literature of slavery and freedom, the Harlem Renaissance, Modernism, the Black Arts Era, and the contemporary period. Reading selections may consist of poetry, short stories, plays, novels, and nonfiction prose, including essays, letters, political tracts, autobiographies, speeches, and sermons. Students analyze the literature and apply critical theory to describe critical events in the histories, cultures, and intellectual and literary traditions, with special focus on the lived experiences, social struggles, and contributions of African Americans in the United States. Note: Also listed as ETHN 238. Not open to students with credit in ETHN 238.

4. Course Objectives

The students will:

1. Analyze, interpret, and assess Black literary works within the social, political, historical, cultural and aesthetic contexts that have Black experience experiences in the United States.
2. Evaluate the literary and intellectual contributions Black writers have made to American culture, as well as the linguistic, historical, philosophical, social, political, and aesthetic impact of Black literature on American culture and society.
3. Apply literary theory (which may include Critical Race Theory, Critical Gender and Sexuality Theory, American Studies, New Historicism, Formalism, and Marxist Theory) to analyze the literature, with special focus on the lived experiences and social struggles of Black Americans.
4. Analyze and articulate concepts such as race and racism, racialization, ethnicity, equity, ethno- centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization, sovereignty, imperialism, settler colonialism, and anti-racism as analyzed in any one or more of the following: Native American Studies, African American Studies, Asian American Studies, and Latina and Latino American studies.
5. Critically analyze the intersection of race and racism as they relate to class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, language, and/or age in Native American, African American, Asian American, and/or Latina and Latino American communities.
6. Critically review how struggle, resistance, racial and social justice, solidarity, and liberation, as experienced and enacted by Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans and/or Latina and Latino Americans are relevant to current and structural issues such as communal, national, international, and transnational politics as, for example, in immigration, reparations, settler- colonialism, multiculturalism, language policies.

5. Instructional Facilities

Standard Classroom

6. Special Materials Required of Student

None

7. Course Content

1. Black literature from the following literary periods:

1) Oral Tradition, including Spirituals, Gospel, Blues, Ballads, Work Songs, Songs of Social Change, Jazz, Rhythm and Blues, Rap, Hip Hop, Sermons, Speeches and Folktales (i.e., “Go Down, Moses,” “This Little Light of Mine,” “Good Morning Blues,” “No More Auction Block,” “The Signifying Monkey,” “We Shall Overcome,” Gil Scott-Heron, Public Enemy, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X).

1. Literature of Slavery and Freedom, 1746-1865 (i.e., Jupiter Hammon, Lucy Terry, Phillis Wheatley, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Jacobs, Elizabeth Keckley, Frederick Douglass, Frances E. W. Harper).
2. Literature of the Reconstruction to the Harlem Renaissance, 1865-1940 (i.e., David Walker, Henry Highland Garnet, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Charles Chesnutt, Sterling A. Brown, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen).
3. Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, 1940-1960 (i.e., Dorothy West, Richard Wright, Margaret Walker, Robert Hayden, Gwendolyn Brooks, James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, Ann Petry).
4. The Black Arts Era, 1960-1975 (i.e., Amiri Baraka, June Jordan, Lucile Clifton, Ishmael Reed, Michael S. Harper, Nikki Giovanni, Quincy Troupe, Sonia Sanchez).
5. Contemporary period, 1975-present (i.e., Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Ernest J. Gaines, Sherley Anne Williams, Alice Walker, August Wilson, Ntozake Schange, Rita Dove, Jessica Care Moore, Saul Williams, Patricia Smith, Suzan-Lori Parks, Octavia Butler).
6. Introduction to the terms, methodologies and conceptual models used to study African American Literature in the United States, including race and ethnicity, racialization, equity, ethno-centricism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization, and anti-racism.
7. Literary theories (which may include Critical Race Theory, Critical Gender and Sexuality Theory, American Studies, New Historicism, Formalism, and Marxist Theory) and how they can be used to analyze the literature, with special focus on the lived experiences and social struggles of African Americans.
8. The intersection of race and ethnicity, as expressed in the literature and in the lived experiences of writers, with other forms of difference affected by hierarchy and oppression, such as class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, and/or age.
9. The struggle, resistance, social justice, solidarity, and liberation, as expressed in the literature and experienced by African American communities, and how these topics are relevant to current issues.
10. The ways in which African American literature and its authors have actively engaged with anti-racist issues, practices, and movements to build a diverse, just, and equitable society.

8. Method of Instruction

1. Lectures and presentations by the instructor and visiting writers and/or speakers
2. Facilitation of student analysis, interpretation, and discussion of literature
3. Student reports and/or oral presentations on selected topics or authors
4. Films and audio recordings
5. Individual conferences
6. Field trips to appropriate cultural and literary activities

9. Methods of Evaluating Student Performance

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, one of which must be essay exams, skills demonstration or, where appropriate, the symbol system.

1. Summaries on assigned readings.
2. Annotated bibliographies of African American authors and cultural figures.
3. Academic essays, such as research papers or comparative analyses.
4. Reader responses/journals on assigned readings or class activities.
5. Quizzes on assigned readings and materials.
6. Analysis, interpretation, and discussion of literature in class and via homework assignments.
7. Student reports and/or oral presentations on selected topics or authors.
8. Group and individual projects, such as podcasts, presentations, infographics, etc.
9. Reviews of literary arts activities and events.
10. In-class exams, including the final exam.
11. Out-of-class evidence-based analytical essays (prepared in standard MLA format).

10. Outside Class Assignments

1. Sample Comparison/Contrast Paper: Choose two readings from different time periods and discuss how the historical, political, and social context within which they were writing influenced their literary works, such as social movements, legislature, institutionalized racism, activism, etc. Focus on some common ground these works share as well as some nuanced differences.
2. Sample Argument Paper: Choose one of our early activist writers and write an argumentative paper about how this writer might respond to a modern social justice movement. What aspects of the movement would this author support, and why? What, if any, aspects of the movement might they find limited or problematic? Your paper should include a strong thesis and a balance of both sides of the issue.
3. Sample Researched Multimedia Presentation: Students will sign up for a reading or author that will be covered on the syllabus. Ahead of that assigned reading, the student will create a multimedia presentation, to include at least 500 words of writing and at least two alternative media, such as video clips, audio clips, images, infographics, hyperlinks to web sites, blogs, etc. The presentation will focus on historical, political, cultural, and/or biographical information to help contextualize the assigned reading for that class session.
4. Sample Current Event Assignment: Select an article, video, or other text that reflects a current issue that affects the Black/African American community. In one page, discuss the significance of this issue and any connections you can make to topics/readings we’ve discussed in class so far.
5. Sample Event Reflection: After attending a cultural or literary event on the campus or in the greater community, reflect on how the themes or topics covered relate to a concept or reading we’ve discussed in this course.

11. Representative Texts

a. Representative Text(s):

1. Gates, Henry Louis, Jr., ed. *The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature (with CD)*. 3rd ed., New York: W.W. Norton, 2013.
2. Jarrett, Gene Andrew. *The Wiley Blackwell Anthology of African American Literature: Volume 1, 1746 to* *1920*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014.
3. Jarrett, Gene Andrew. *The Wiley Blackwell Anthology of African American Literature: Volume 2, 1920 to present*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014.

b. Supplementary texts and workbooks:

1. Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Boston: Cengage Learning, 2011.
2. Asante, Molefi Kete, and Clyde Ledbetter. *Contemporary Critical Thought in Africology and Africana Studies*. Edited by Molefi Kete Asante and Clyde Ledbetter. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington books, 2016.
3. Barnet, Sylvan and William E. Cain. *A Short Guide to Writing About Literature*. 12th ed., New York: Longman Publishers, 2011.
4. Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2006.
5. McDougal, Serie. *Research Methods in Africana Studies*. New York: Peter Lang, 2014.
6. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed., New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009.
7. Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Vintage, 2007.
8. Smith, Patricia. *Blood Dazzler*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2008.
9. Trethewey, Natasha. *Thrall*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012.
10. Wright, Richard. *Black Boy*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008.
11. As selected by the instructor.

Addendum: Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, our students will be able to do the following:

1. Use literary terminology and basic critical theory to discuss, analyze, synthesize, and interpret Black literary works in various genres.
2. Write evidence-based literary analyses of Black literature demonstrating close reading and interpretive skills, logical reasoning, and argumentative strategies.
3. Analyze how Black literary texts portray struggle, resistance, social justice, solidarity, and/or liberation, and how the texts engage with anti-racist issues, practices, and movements to build a diverse, just, and equitable society.