

Appendix 13.1  
African American Literature, Pre-1930 Syllabus  
Amy E. Earhart

**Course Description**

Major works of the African American literary tradition from the eighteenth century to 1930 studied within cultural and historical context. By the end of the course, you should have acquired an integrated, interdisciplinary understanding of the progression of African American literature from the early Americas to 1930.

**Required Texts**

Do not purchase an older edition; it will not contain our required course texts.  
*The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature*, 3rd ed. Ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie McKay. New York: Norton, 2014.  
Chesnutt, Charles. *The Marrow of Tradition*. Ed. Nancy Bentley and Sandra Gunning. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2002.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate an integrated, interdisciplinary understanding of the major issues in African American Literature,
- Demonstrate the ability to read critically,
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret literary texts,
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate critical ideas in formal and informal writing,
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and cultural milieu in which texts are produced, and
- Demonstrate proficiency in the use of current technologies to evaluate, analyze, and integrate information from a variety of sources.

## Assignments

Class responses (5% each, 10% in total)

Each student is required to sign up for two class responses. On the days that you are a class respondent, you will come to class prepared to discuss the assigned text. Preparation includes careful reading of the assigned materials; a paragraph that highlights the crucial issue(s) in the text; one support item (map, picture, song, etc.); three prepared questions that you will post to the discussion board twenty-four hours prior to class; and the desire to help direct the class discussion.

Course Project (50% of class grade)

This semester we will be completing a project that integrates research, writing, and analysis. We will be researching the Millican Riot, a local historical event. (<http://millican.omeka.net>). The project will include the following components:

- Research Strategy (10% of project grade)
- Annotated Bibliography (30% of project grade)
- Digital materials on Omeka (10% of project grade)
- Research paper (50% of project grade)

2 Exams (20% each, 40% in total)

## Calendar of Assignments

### The Literature of Slavery and Freedom, 1746–1865

#### Week One

##### Day One

Course Introduction; View *The Black Atlantic (1500–1800)*

##### Day Two

"The Vernacular Tradition," 3–10, "The Literature of Slavery and Freedom, 1746–1865, Overview," 75–87, Eloudah Equiano, "A Narrative," 112–137

## **Week Two**

### Day One

Phyllis Wheatley, "From Poems," "To the University of Cambridge," "On Being Brought," 137–141, 143–144, David Walker, "Appeal," 159–171

### Day Two

View *The Age of Slavery* (1800–1860)

## **Week Three**

### Day One

Sojourner Truth, "Ar'n't I a Woman," 176–180, read headnote for Maria Stewart, 181–186, Quilting in the Tradition

### Day Two

Introduce Course Project, Bring Laptops

## **Week Four**

### Day One

Harriet Jacobs, from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 221–261

### Day Two

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, 326–393, Research Analysis Due

## **Week Five**

### Day One

Douglass Continued

### Day Two

Frances E. W. Harper, 445–448, "Ethiopia," 448, "The Slave Mother," 450–451, "The Two Offers," 460–466

## **Literature of the Reconstruction to the New Negro Renaissance, 1865–1919**

## **Week Six**

### Day One

In-Class Workshop Day, Bring Laptops

## Day Two

"Literature of the Reconstruction to the New Negro Renaissance, 1865–1919," 505–520, View *Into the Fire*, read headnotes for Booker T. Washington, 548–579

## Week Seven

### Day One

Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*

### Day Two

Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*

## Week Eight

No Class, Spring Break

## Week Nine

### Day One

Pauline E. Hopkins, "Talma Gordon," 633–645, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "A Red Record," 667–669, Annotated Bibliographies Due

### Day Two

In-Class Workshop Day, Bring Laptops

## Week Ten

### Day One

W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Souls," 679–683, 687–709

### Day Two

James Weldon Johnson, "The Autobiography," 792–847

## Week Eleven

### Day One

Johnson, "The Autobiography," 848–893

### Day Two

"Harlem Renaissance, 1919–1940," 953–962 View *Making a Way Out of No Way*

## Harlem Renaissance, 1919–1940

### Week Twelve

#### Day One

Arthur A. Schomburg, "The Negro Digs," 944–949, Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," 1302–1305, "The Weary Blues," 1307, "I, Too," 1308, "Harlem," 1319, "When the Negro Was in Vogue," 1324–1339

#### Day Two

Marcus Garvey, "Africa for the Africans," "The Future as I See It," 984–992, Paul Robeson, "I Want to Be African," 1260–1264

### Week Fourteen

#### Day One

In-Class Workshop Day, Bring Laptops

#### Day Two

In-Class Workshop Day, Bring Laptops, Omeka Due

### Week Fifteen

#### Day One

Jean Toomer, "Cane," 1141–1149 (through "Carma"); "Portrait in Georgia," through "Seventh Street," 1158–1164; "Avey," 1165–1169

#### Day Two

Zora Neale Hurston, "Sweat," "How It Feels," "The Gilded Six Bits," 1029–1050

### Week Sixteen

#### Day One

Claude McKay, "If We Must Die," 1000–1004, "To the White Fiends," 1005, Research Paper Due

#### Day Two

Final Exam