Fall 2015

ENGL 2071

E. Bryant

University of New Orleans

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English 2071

African American Literature I

Fall 2015

Tues. & Th. 2:00-3:15, ED 106

Instructor:  Dr. E. Bryant

Office: LA 351 (280-3962)...ebryant@uno.edu

Office Hours: Tues. & Th 12:30-1:30; 3:30-5:00; Fri. 2:00-3:00, and by appointment

Course Objective

The primary objective of this course is to acquaint you with a wide selection of works by African American writers from the mid-eighteenth century to 1935. Too often the literary output of African American authors is dismissed as insignificant or is ignored altogether. This course is intended to show that the literature of black American authors is indeed significant and certainly does warrant attention.

Format

All classes will be geared toward discussion. You are strongly urged to participate in the class discussions. Your class participation can favorably affect your grade, so please don’t be hesitant to speak out: air your thoughts; voice your questions—participate.

Course Requirements

There will be three exams, two during the semester and the ever-popular final. You will also be required to write two short papers of approximately five pages.

Grade Distribution:

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<td>Exam #1</td>
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<td>Exam #2</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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Attendance Policy and Classroom Etiquette
Attendance is **NOT** optional. You are expected to attend each class meeting. Emergencies do arise, of course, but these emergencies should not arise every other week. Please keep in mind that excessive cuts can and will lower your final grade. Additionally, you run the risk of being placed on attendance probation and ultimately dropped from the course if you rack up too many cuts. To be more specific, if you are absent more than six times, you will fail the course.

You are expected to come to class on time. Coming in late and leaving the room during class are distractions, as is texting during class. Just as in church or at dinner with your parents, please turn off your cell phones.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Although it may be tempting to take a short cut and plagiarize, as the great blues singer Bobby Bland once sang, “Yield not to temptation!” If I discover you have plagiarized, I will file the required Academic Dishonesty Report and then fail your plagiarized assignment.

**Texts**

The primary text that we will be using is *Call and Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African American Literary Tradition*, edited by Patricia Hill Collins. In addition, we will be reading two novels: Charles Chesnutt’s *The Marrow of Tradition* and Langston Hughes’ *Not Without Laughter*.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, students will be able to

a) analyze critically a poem or short story of moderate length

b) understand and explain the various stages of African American literature beginning with its eighteenth-century inception

c) formulate and support a thesis in response to a literary work and then compose a thesis-driven term paper

**Schedule**

The following are the works that we will be reading and discussing in the course. Please note that we will discuss these works in the exact order in which they appear. You will also notice that I do not have specific dates when each work will be discussed. That’s intentional, and it’s because I don’t want to confine us to only a certain amount of time on any one work. For example, if the discussion of Phillis Wheatley and her poems is fruitful, I don’t want to stop it and move on to the next work simply because the schedule says we have to. So just read everything in order. We always manage to cover all the works by the end of the semester.
Phillis Wheatley: Biographical sketch, pp. 92-97, and the poetry and prose on pp. 98-104.

Lucy Terry: Biographical sketch and poem (“Bars Fight”), pp. 90-91.


James Whitfield: Biographical sketch, pp. 375-376, and “America,” pp. 377-381. Copy of “To Cinque” to be handed out.


Lectures on the African American novel. This material is not in the textbook, so come prepared to take detailed notes.

EXAM #1

Paul Laurence Dunbar: Biographical sketch, pp. 600-604, poems on pp. 604-615. Additional poems will be distributed.


EXAM #2


Countee Cullen: Biographical sketch, pp. 908-910. Poems: “Yet Do I Marvel” and “A Song of Praise” both on p. 915. Additional important poems to be handed out.