

Fall 2015

## **ENGL 5093**

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*University of New Orleans*

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**English 5093--001**

**Studies in Black Literature**

**Fall 2015**

**Tues & Th 11:00-12:15**

**Milneburg Hall 263**

**Instructor: Dr. E. Bryant**

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

**Office Hours: Tues and Th 1:00-2:00, 3:30-4:30, Fri 2:00-3:00, and by appointment**

### **Course Objective**

This course is designed to acquaint you with that period known as the Harlem Renaissance, a period that scholar Arnold Rampersad has characterized as “that dramatic upsurge of creativity in literature, music, and art within black America” that flowered during the Roaring Twenties. We will focus on selected poems, short stories, novels and plays of that era.

### **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 papers, one of approximately five pages and the other of 20 pages.

#### **Grade Distribution:**

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Exam #1    | 20% |
| Exam #2    | 20% |
| Final Exam | 20% |
| Paper 1    | 10% |
| Paper 2    | 30% |

### **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 four 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 *Double-Take: A Revisionist Harlem Renaissance Anthology*, ed. Venetria K. Patton and Maureen Honey. In addition, we will be reading two novels: Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and Ann Petry's *The Street*.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

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

- a) understand and explain the history and the literature of the Harlem Renaissance
- b) understand and explain what differentiates the literature of the Harlem Renaissance from mainstream American literature and from African American literature prior to 1919
- c) formulate and support a thesis in response to a literary work and then compose a thesis-driven term paper

In addition, graduate students will be able to

- 1) professionally deliver a 30-minute presentation to a class of undergraduates and fellow graduate students
- 2) compile a critically sturdy, graduate-level annotated bibliography

## 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 Langston Hughes and his 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.

### Background Lectures on the Harlem Renaissance [Be sure to take notes here]

**Claude McKay:** Poems in *Double-Take* ("If We Must Die," p. 273; "The Harlem Dancer," p. 272; "Harlem Shadows," p. 278). Additional poems will be distributed.

**Countee Cullen:** Poems in *Double-Take* ("Yet Do I Marvel," p. 559 and "From the Dark Tower," p. 559). Additional poems will be distributed.

**Langston Hughes:** Poems in *Double-Take* ("The Negro Speaks of Rivers," p. 460; "Song from a Dark Girl," p. 469). Additional poems will be distributed. Also, Hughes' play titled *Mulatto: A Tragedy of the Deep South*, p. 476 in *Double-Take*.

**Zora Neale Hurston:** "Sweat" in *Double-Take* (p. 329), "The Gilded Six-Bits" (to be distributed), and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

**Rudolph Fisher:** "City of Refuge" in *Double-Take*, p. 388.

**Angelina Grimke:** *Rachel* [a play] and "Goldie" [a short story]... (pp. 189 and 174, respectively, in *Double-Take*); there will also be a presentation/lecture on Grimke's short story "The Closing Door," which is not in your anthology.

**Georgia Douglas Johnson:** Poems in *Double-Take* and on handouts to be distributed—also, there will be a presentation/lecture on Johnson's one-act play titled *Safe*, which (again) is not in your anthology.

**Helene Johnson:** Poems in *Double-Take* ("Magula," p. 601; "Bottled," p. 602; "Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem," p. 605). Additional poems will be distributed.

**Ann Petry:** *The Street*

Several presentations/lectures by the graduate students on Claude McKay's Harlem tales and on author Dorothy West ("the last leaf on the tree of Harlem," as she once referred to herself).