PELLISSIPPI STATE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MASTER SYLLABUS

AFRICAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE
ENGL 2331

Class Hours: 3.0
Credit Hours: 3.0
Laboratory Hours: 0.0
Date Revised: Spring 03

Catalog Course Description:

This course introduces students to literature written by major African American writers. It examines the vernacular (voice), the conventional literary devices, and the diverse writing strategies; discusses the universal themes found in the literature of the following periods: “Narratives of Slavery,” “Literature of the Reconstruction To The New Renaissance” (1865-1919) and the “Harlem Renaissance” (1919-1940). The course examines the writing of African Americans found in the following genres: essays, short stories, drama, and a novel. The course seeks to improve the students’ abilities to read critically, to write analytically, and to substantially increase their knowledge of African American literary traditions and writers.

Entry Level Standards:

The student should be able to plan and write analytical essays, have basic research skills, and write papers about literature. Students must demonstrate proficiency in standard English grammar, spelling, mechanics and source documentation. In addition, students should be familiar with basic literary terminology and genres.

Prerequisite:

ENGL 1020

Textbook(s) and Other Reference Materials Basic to the Course:


I. Week/Unit/Topic Basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Course Introduction; Zora Neale Hurston’s essay “Characteristics of Negro Expression”; Will to Adorn, Use of Metaphor and Simile, The Double Descriptive, Verbal Nouns, and Nouns from Verbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Vernacular Tradition; The History and Defining the Vernacular: Spirituals,</td>
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Gospel, The Blues

3
Secular Rhymes and Songs and Music: Jazz, Ballad, Work Songs, Rap

4
Sermons/Essay: C. L. Franklin, Martin Luther King

5
The Literature of Slavery and Freedom: 1746-1865; The Earliest Known Works

6
Lucy Terry’s poem “Bars Fight”; Phillis Wheatley’s “On Imagination”; Sojourner Truth’s Speech/Essay “Ar’n’t I A Woman?”

7
Frederick Douglass (open selections); James M. Whitfield’s “Self-Reliance”

8
Literature of the Reconstruction to the New Negro Renaissance: 1865-1919

9
Charlotte Forten Grimke’s Journal; James Weldon Johnson (open selections)

10
Paul Laurence Dunbar (open selections)

11
Harlem Renaissance Arthur A. Schomburg’s autobiography/essay

12
Langston Hughes and other writers (open selections)

13
Realism, Naturalism, Modernism Period: 1940 - 1960; Lorraine Hanberry’s play A Raisin in the Sun

14
A Raisin in the Sun

15
A Raisin in the Sun

16
Final Exam

II. Course Objectives*:

A. Respond thoughtfully to the expression of enduring human concerns. IV.2

B. Recognize the distinctive interpretations of experience offered by African American writers of the slavery and freedom, reconstruction, Harlem Renaissance, and realism-naturalism-modernism periods. III.2, IV.2, IV.3

C. Demonstrate a high level of critical and analytical thinking skills in writing and discussion. III.2

D. Work independently to interpret and present assigned topics in a seminar setting. I.2, I.4, III.2

*Roman numerals after course objectives reference goals of the university parallel program.

III. Instructional Processes*:

Students will:

1. Work in teams to discuss and analyze literature. Communications Outcome, Personal Development Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome,
2. Read assigned works of literature and participate in class discussion.  
   *Communication Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Cultural Diversity and Social Adaptation Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*

3. Use word processing software to write essays analyzing assigned poetry, essays, fiction, and drama, evaluating both the aesthetic value of texts and the historical influences that affect them.  
   *Communication Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Technological Literacy Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*

4. Develop research skills using and evaluating library and Internet sources.  
   *Technological Literacy Outcome, Information Literacy Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*

5. Develop oral presentation skills to present individual or group information.  
   *Communication Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*

6. Attend various cultural, historical, or educational opportunities on or off campus.  
   *Communication Outcome, Personal Development Outcome, Cultural Diversity and Social Adaptation Outcome, Transitional Strategy*

7. Internalize the work ethic by regularly attending class, being punctual, being dependable, cooperating with the teacher and other classmates, contributing to class discussion and projects, and acting in a professional manner while in class.  
   *Personal Development Outcome, Transitional Strategy*

*Strategies and outcomes listed after instructional processes reference Pellissippi State’s goals for strengthening general education knowledge and skills, connecting coursework to experiences beyond the classroom, and encouraging students to take active and responsible roles in the educational process.*

**IV. Expectations for Student Performance**:  

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Identify universal themes, and trace the vernacular elements found in African American writings of each period studied. A, B

2. Illustrate these themes and vernacular elements by references to works read. B

3. Define and discuss primary genres of the slavery and freedom writers, such as spirituals, poetry, and essays. C

4. Identify and explain major tenets of reconstruction writers, such as Grimke, Johnson, and Dunbar. A, B, C

5. Discuss and illustrate differences in techniques and styles found in all periods from the Slavery/Freedom through the contemporary writer. A, B, C

6. Discuss major characteristics of the renaissance writings, such as the blues, jazz, poetry, and essays. A, B, C

7. Discuss the diverse psychological techniques by writers of each period studied. C

8. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between life and literature by
relating biographical information about major writers of each period studied. A, B

9. Write responses and analytical papers on appropriate topics relating to the works studied. D

10. Write insightful, appropriately developed, and mechanically correct answers to essay questions concerning the works studied. D

11. Demonstrate an understanding of the literature and its background by presenting a writing or conducting an oral discussion of a particular author’s style or of a particular genre to the class. A, C, D

*Letters after performance expectations reference the course objectives listed above.

V. Evaluation:

A. Testing Procedures: 35% of grade

Exams: there will be two exams, each counting 10% of your final grade. The exams will include multiple choice, short answers, identifications, and essay questions. Exams will cover material read since the previous exam. Journal entries and class notes will be of great help.

Quizzes: Three take-home quizzes will be given based on the reading of the three act play: A Raisin in the Sun. You will be quizzed on the plot, characters, and minor themes found in each act. The drama quizzes are 15% of the final grade. In addition, a biographical synopsis of the author will be required.

B. Laboratory Expectations:

N/A

C. Field Work: 65% of grade

Journal Responses: Journal responses should summarize the literary characteristics of the writing of each historical period discussed in class. In other words, the journal responses should be at least a one page typed summary of your class notes. You will be required to submit journal entries after a number of works have been discussed in class; therefore, taking notes in class will be essential. You will be required to submit ten journal entries. Each entry will have a numerical value of 15 points. The journal will represent 15% of the final grade. The journal entries will also be helpful when reviewing for exams and quizzes.

*Since this is a TWAV designed course, the journal responses represent class participation.

Papers: You will be required to write two major essays. One will be a critical analysis of the novel requiring research of at least three scholarly secondary sources. It should include references to both the primary and secondary sources. The other will be a comparison/contrast theme paper (across genres; a poem, an essay, and a short story) requiring biographical research and biographical synopsis of the authors. The essays are 40% of the final grade. Journal entries and class notes will be of great help with the papers.

Project: For the course project, you will select one of the following:

-- Write a piece in the style of a particular author or in a particular genre that is characteristic of one the literary periods or authors studied in class.

The details of this project will be discussed early in the course, and the project can be submitted at any time during the semester; however, it is recommended that you complete the project during the first half of the semester. The project is 10% of the final grade.

D. Other Evaluation Methods:
E. Grading Scale:

A  930-1000
B+  920-929
B   840-919
C+  830-839
C   750-829
D   660-749
F   0-659

VI. Policies:

A. Attendance Policy:

Attendance, promptness, and participation are essential to success in college courses. The general attendance policy of the College states that students must be present for at least 75 percent of scheduled class meetings in order to receive credit for the course; thus, students who miss 25 percent of class meetings will fail the course. Therefore, any student who must miss an excessive number of classes for any reason is advised to withdraw from the College under the "Mitigating Circumstances" provision as described in the PSTCC Catalog.

B. Academic Dishonesty:

Any student found engaging in an act of academic dishonesty will be promptly dismissed from the course with a grade of F. Academic dishonesty includes the following:
- Plagiarism—presenting someone else’s words or ideas as your own;
- Collusion—allowing other people to write, to revise, or to alter significantly the text of a paper that is supposed to be your work alone.