

PELLISSIPPI STATE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MASTER SYLLABUS

AFRICAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE
ENGL 2331

Class Hours: 3.0

Credit Hours: 3.0

Laboratory Hours: 0.0

Revised: Spring 2009

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 Course Materials:

Gates, Henry Louis Jr., and Nellie Y. McKay, eds. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997.

Hughes, Langston, ed. *The Best Short Stories by Black Writers: The Classic Anthology from 1899 to 1967*. New York: Little Brown and Company (Canada) Limited, 1967.

Toure’. *Soul City*. New York: Little Brown and Company, 2004.

I. Week/Unit/Topic Basis:

Week	Topic
1	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
2	The Vernacular Tradition; The History and Defining the Vernacular: Spirituals, Gospel, The Blues

- 3 Secular Rhymes and Songs and Music: Jazz, Ballad, Work Songs, Rap
- 4 The Literature of Slavery and Freedom: 1746-1865; The Earliest Known Works
- 5 Lucy Terry's poem "Bars Fight"; Phillis Wheatley
- 6 Literature of the Reconstruction to the New Negro Renaissance: 1865-1919
- 7 Harlem Renaissance Arthur A. Schomburg's autobiography/essay
- 8 Langston Hughes and other writers (open selections)
- 9 Realism, Naturalism, Modernism Period: 1940 - 1960
- 10 Short Stories
- 11 Drama: Lorraine Hanberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*
- 12 *A Raisin in the Sun*
- 13 Novel: *Soul City*
- 14 *Soul City*
- 15 Final Exam

II. Course Objectives*:

- A. Respond thoughtfully to the expression of enduring human concerns. II.1, 6; 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, 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, 4; II.1, 6; III.2

*Roman numerals after course objectives reference TBR's general education goals.

III. Instructional Processes*:

Students will:

1. Work in teams to discuss and analyze literature. *Communications Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*
2. Read assigned works of literature and participate in class discussion. *Communication Outcome, Humanities and/or Fine Arts 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, Technological Literacy Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*
4. Develop research skills using and evaluating library and Internet sources. *Communication Outcome, Technological 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, 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. *Transitional Strategy*

*Strategies and outcomes listed after instructional processes reference TBR'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.

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:

N/A

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. According to the PSTCC Catalog & Handbook, Prohibited activities include but are not limited to the following practices:

C. Accommodations for disabilities:

Students who need accommodations because of a disability, have emergency medical information to share, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated should inform the instructor immediately, privately after class or in her or his office. Students must present a current accommodation plan from a staff member in Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) in order to receive accommodations in this course. Services for Students with Disabilities may be contacted by going to Goins134 or 126 or by phone: 694-6751(Voice/TTY) or 539-7153. More information is available at www.pstcc.edu/departments/swd/