

FALL 2016

LIT 343: African American Literature

African American Fiction & Drama since 1900

Dr. Quan M. Ha

Office hours: Tues & Thurs 2:00-3:30

Class meetings: Tues & Thurs 3:30-4:50

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Office: LA 213

Classroom: LA 307

Course Description

LIT 343 focuses on African American fiction and drama since 1900. The short stories, novels, and plays selected for this course focus on the art and politics of race and gender in African American literature since the beginning of the 20th century. Important milestones covered in this course include the Great Migration, the Harlem Renaissance, the Great Depression, the Civil Rights Movement, and the second renaissance. Students will be introduced to texts written by both representative and lesser-known African American authors, as well as the socio-historical context that shaped and informed each period. We will examine these primary topics and issues: (1) the New Negro vs. the tragic mulatto, (2) defining a new black aesthetic, (3) writing as a form of resistance, (4) the black vernacular, (5) the relationship between Marxism/socialism and black nationalism, (6) a commitment to revolutionary struggle, (7) the latent sexism and oppression of black women, (8) racial and sexual identity, (9) the psychosocial consequences of racism and the search for truth in contemporary African American fiction, (10) memory and myth, etc.

Upon your completion of the course, you will be able to

- understand the development of African American literature since the Civil War
- contextualize African American literature within its specific socio-historical context
- familiarize yourself with important voices in African American literature
- analyze and interpret African American literature critically
- understand important issues, problems, conflicts, and challenges that complicate the definition of black identity

10 Required Textbooks

1. Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem* (fiction)
2. Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (drama)
3. Trey Ellis, *Platitudes* (fiction)
4. Ernest J. Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying* (fiction)
5. Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred* (fiction)
6. James Baldwin, *Blues for Mr. Charlie* (drama)
7. Ntozake Shange, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf* (drama)
8. George C. Wolfe, *The Colored Museum* (drama)
9. Gloria Naylor, *The Women of Brewster Place* (fiction)
10. LIT 343 Coursepack (will be sent to your email)

Classroom policies

1. You are not allowed to read newspapers or class-unrelated materials while class is in session.
2. The use of cell phones, beepers, or other electronic devices is prohibited during class.
3. Any persistent talking or sleeping while the instructor or another student is speaking will result in (1) a warning and (2) then your dismissal from the classroom.
4. You are permitted to use laptops during class for note-taking and other class-related work only.
5. Behave in a courteous and respectful manner toward your instructor and your fellow students.

E-mail correspondence

Use your UM e-mail account for electronic correspondence with the instructor. You may expect my response within 48 hours (except weekends and holidays). I expect you to use a professional tone in your correspondence with me. E-mails that have no greeting or express a disrespectful tone will not be answered.

Attendance and Tardiness

1. Tardiness of between 5 and 10 minutes will be noted: each such tardiness after the first two will be counted as an unexcused absence; tardiness of 20 minutes or longer will be treated as an unexcused absence.
2. If you have to leave class early due to personal problems, inform me before class starts.
3. You are allowed TWO free absences. After your second unexcused absence, 10 points will be deducted for each additional absence. More than 5 unexcused absences will result in the failure of the course.
4. If you miss no class, I will add 10 bonus points to your final grade.
5. Make-up quizzes are for excused absences only.

Assignments

- TWO RESEARCH ESSAYS (7-8 pages/essay): Specific instructions to be announced.
- ONE CLOSE-READING ESSAY (4 pages): due a week after your presentation
- ONE ORAL PRESENTATION: You will prepare 8 questions for class discussion over the readings you have been assigned. Make enough copies of your questions and bring them to class for distribution.
- TWO EXAMS (in class): Specific instructions to be announced

- **READING QUIZZES:** At the beginning of each class meeting, you will take a reading quiz.

Grades

Grades will be assigned as percentage scores (0-1000) throughout the term. Ultimately, your final grade will be converted to the university's letter grade system using this scale:

A (931-1000)	A- (900-930)	
B+ (870-899)	B (840-869)	B- (800-839)
C+ (770-799)	C (740-769)	C- (700-739)
D (640-699)	F (below 640)	

- Reading quizzes----- 200 points
- Two major research essays----- 400 points (200 points/each)
- Two exams----- 200 points (100 points/each)
- Oral presentation----- 50 points
- One close-reading essay ----- 100 points
- Active participation in class discussion----- 50 points

TOTAL: 1,000 points

Policies on written assignments and in-class tests

1. Late papers will be penalized with a 10% deduction for each day after the due date, including weekend days. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from turning in a paper on time, please talk to me **BEFORE** the paper is due. I am not likely to make allowances after the deadline has come and gone.
2. All papers are to be typed in 12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced. Follow the MLA guidelines for formatting, citations, and documentations.
3. For each formal essay, you must enter my corrections and turn in the revised version. Failing to do this will result in a zero on the assignment.
4. Do not ask me to proofread your essays electronically (via email). If you need help with your papers, please schedule an appointment, or just come during my office hours.
5. Under no circumstance will I offer make-up tests/exams.

Grade Appeals

If you wish to appeal a grade, you should first consult with me. You will have 7 days, from the time the grade is assigned/posted, to set up an appointment with me to discuss the grade. After 7 days, all grades are final.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations for coursework. To request accommodation, please contact me as soon as possible in the semester. I will work with you and Disability Services in the accommodation process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at <http://www.umt.edu/dss/> or call 406.243.2243 (Voice/Text).

Academic Integrity

Refer to http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php for information about academic misconduct. If you are found guilty of academic misconduct, legal action will be taken. It is your responsibility as a student to understand the Student Conduct Code described in the link above.

Reading Schedule (subject to change)

The symbol [●] indicates the readings from the Coursepack, which will be sent to your email.

Week 1: Aug. 29 - Sept. 04

Tues: Introduction + syllabus

Thurs: The Goophered Grapevine + Uncle Wellington's Wives + The Lynching of Jube Benson ●

Week 2: Sept. 05--11

Tues: *Home to Harlem* (pp. 1-159)

MCKENZIE W.

Thurs: *Sleeper Wakes* + *Mulatto* ●

ELWYN O.

Week 3: Sept. 12--18

Tues: *Home to Harlem* (pp. 160-end)

KATIE M.

Thurs: *The Scapegoat* + *Fern* + *Truant* ●

Week 4: Sept. 19--25

Tues: *Blues for Mister Charlie*

CHASE G.

Thurs: *A Raisin in the Sun*

JASMINE B.

Week 5: Sept. 26—Oct. 02

Tues: *Kindred* (pp. 1-131)

NICOLE J.

Thurs: *The Gilded Six-Bits* + *Sweat* + *Muttsy* ●

Week 6: Oct. 03--09

Tues: *Kindred* (pp. 132-end)

ZACH T.

Thurs: *Funnyhouse of a Negro* + *Richardson's Compromise* ●

Week 7: Oct. 10--16

Tues: *Exam # 1*

Thurs: *Dutchman* ●

MARJORIE T.

Week 8: Oct. 17--23

Tues: *Platitudes* (pp. 1-96)

KAITLYN M.

Thurs: *The Richer, the Poorer + Bright and Morning Star* ●

***** *Essay # 1 due*

Week 9: Oct. 24--30

Tues: *Platitudes* (pp. 97-end)

MADISON I.

Thurs: *Solo on the Drums + Train Whistle Guitar + The Screamers* ●

Week 10: Oct. 31—Nov. 06

Tues: *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf* ELIZABETH W.

Thurs: *Flying Home + Steady Going Up + Singing Dinah's Song* ●

Week 11: Nov. 07--13

Tues: Election Day / NO CLASS

Thurs: *The Colored Museum*

RACHAEL J.

Week 12: Nov. 14--20

Tues: *A Lesson Before Dying* (pp. 1-124)

KYLE H.

Thurs: *Barbados + Recitatif + Roselily* ●

Week 13: Nov. 21--27

Tues: *A Lesson Before Dying* (pp. 125-end)

DELISA B.

***** *Essay # 2 due*

Thurs: Thanksgiving / NO CLASS

Week 14: Nov. 28—Dec.04

Tues: *The Women of Brewster Place* (pp. 1-88)

MAISIE G.

Thurs: *Everyday Use + Bloodchild + Motherhood 2000* ●

Week 15: Dec. 05--11

Tues: *The Women of Brewster Place* (pp. 89-end)

JENNESSA A.

Thurs: Review & Conclusion / Last day of class

Exam # 2: TBA