



**ENGL 245 - The Image of African Americans in Literature and Films**

**Catalog Entry**

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Discipline English

Course Number 245

Course Title The Image of African Americans in Literature and Films

**Units:** 3.000

**Lecture Hours:** 54.000

**Scheduled Laboratory Hours:**

**TBA:**

**Total Contact Hours:** 54.000

**Additional Outside-of-Class Hours:** 0.000

**Total Outside Class Hours:** 108.000

**Total Student Learning Hours:** 162.000

**Requisites**

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*Prerequisite: Completion with a grade of "C" or better or a Passing grade in: ENGL 101 or ENGL 101H*

**Catalog Description**

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Examines literature and films by and about African-Americans in relationship to historical periods. Explores cultural, ethnic, and social environments for their impact on development of African-American images.

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Classification Code Y - Credit Course

Transfer Code A - Transferable to both UC and CSU.

SAM Priority Code E - Non-Occupational

TOPS Code 1501.00 - English

Repeatability Code NR - Non-Repeatable

Open Entry/Exit No

Grading Options Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass

**CIC Approval**

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11/27/2023

## Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. identify important African-American authors, major works by and about African-Americans, and major themes in African-American literature and film;
2. analyze images of the African-American in literature and film and the thematic, social, and political contexts from which those images are created;
3. produce college-level academic writing that demonstrates literal comprehension of texts, critical analysis, ethical use of primary and secondary sources, and correct MLA format and documentation.

## Course Objectives

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*At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:*

1. demonstrate familiarity with important African-American authors as well as key works, genres, and themes pertinent to the study of African-American literature and film;
2. analyze and interpret themes found in the literature and intellectual movements of the media and time periods covered;
3. demonstrate understanding of appropriate academic discourse and the conventions of critical literary analysis;
4. relate the literary and cultural texts to their historical, philosophical, social, political, regional, and/or aesthetic contexts;
5. demonstrate comprehension of the above through class discussion, written exams, and essays using appropriate MLA documentation and citation form.

## Course Content

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### Course Lecture Content

Literary analysis is implicitly critical in nature and therefore requires a high degree of critical thinking skills.

The use of critical skills will be used to varying degrees in order to:

1. identify and respond to the writer's central purpose;
2. determine the philosophical/artistic assumptions implicit in the content and structure of literary works;
3. apply criteria of literary/artistic excellence developed by the various "schools" of interpretation;
4. discover the importance and utility of his/her own experience in the world as a tool for criticizing literature;
5. distinguish between his/her own responses to a work and the work itself;
6. identify levels and shades of meaning in figurative language and in literary symbols;
7. predict probable consequences within the plot line by recognizing adumbration and then justify those assumptions;
8. recognize the close relationship or identity of form and content in literature;

9. analyze works in terms of generic conventions and changes;
10. evaluate and recognize works' importance to the body of African-American literature or film;
11. write and orally present analyses of chosen works, appropriately documenting and citing resources;
12. situate works within their cultural/social/historical/artistic contexts;
13. identify and evaluate characterizations which establish positive and negative images of African Americans;
14. develop an appreciation of the African-American traditions in literature and films.

Appropriate selections from the following:

#### Unit 1: The Vernacular Tradition

Folktales  
Sermons  
Spirituals  
Gospel  
The Blues  
Jazz  
Rhythm and Blues  
Hip Hop  
Rap

#### Unit 2: Literature of Slavery and Freedom, 1746-1865

*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*  
Phillis Wheatley poems  
*From The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*  
Harriett Jacobs-*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*  
*Narrative the The Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave*

#### Unit 3: Literature of the Reconstruction to the New Negro Renaissance, 1865-1919

Booker T. Washington - *Up from Slavery*  
Charles W. Chesnutt stories (1858-1932)  
W. E. B. Du Bois - *The Souls of Black Folk*  
Paul Laurence Dunbar poems

#### Unit 4: Harlem Renaissance, 1919-1940

Marcus Garvey - *Africa for the Africans*  
Claude McKay poems  
Zora Neale Hurston stories  
Jean Toomer  
Sterling A. Brown  
Langston Hughes poems  
Countee Cullen poems  
Nella Larson *Passing*

#### Unit 5: Realism, Naturalism, and Modernism, 1940-1960

Richard Wright stories  
Ralph Ellison stories  
Gwendolyn Brooks  
James Baldwin stories

Lorraine Hansberry - *A Raisin in the Sun*

Unit 6: The Black Arts Era, 1960-1975

Mari Evans - *I am a Black Woman*

Hoyt Fuller - *Toward a Black Aesthetic*

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

Martin Luther King Jr. - "Letter from Birmingham Jail"

Addison Gayle Jr. - *The Black Aesthetic*

Amiri Baraka poems

Eldridge Cleaver - *Soul on Ice*

Larry Neal - *The Black Arts Movement*

Toni Cade Bambara stories

Unit 7: Literature since 1975

Maya Angelou poems

Toni Morrison - *Beloved*

Alice Walker stories

August Wilson - *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*

Jamaica Kincaid stories

Gloria Naylor stories

David Walker poems

Walter Mosley - *Equal Opportunity*

Harryette Mullen poems

Unit 8: Images of African Americans in Film

Early Period (to 1951)

Independent African-American Filmmakers

Oscar Micheaux Films

Race Movies

Blackface and Hollywood Depictions

*Birth of a Nation*

*The Jazz Singer*

*Gone with the Wind*

Integration Period (1949-1969)

Sidney Poitier

*Raisin in the Sun*

*Lilies of the Field*

Dorothy Dandridge

Carmen Jones

*Porgy and Bess*

Experimentation Period (1960-1990)

Comedy

Godfrey Cambridge

*Cotton Comes to Harlem*

*Watermelon Man*

Richard Pryor

*The Busy Body*

*Stir Crazy*

Eddie Murphy

*Trading Places*

*Coming to America*

Violence and Blaxploitation

Shaft

Foxy Brown

Established Actors and Movies (1980 - Present)

James Earl Jones

Morgan Freeman

Halle Berry

Denzel Washington

*Do the Right Thing*

*A Soldier's Story*

*Glory*

*Malcolm X*

*The Hurricane*

*Remember the Titans*

*Antwone Fisher*

*The Great Debaters*

*Barber Shop*

*Soul Food*

*Boyz 'n da Hood*

*The Help*

*42*

*Black Panther*

Themes: African Heritage, Slavery and Freedom, Race and Identity, Work and Education, Double Consciousness, Wearing the Mask, Passing, Invisibility, Individual and Social Responsibility, Civil Rights, Church and Family, Moses and the Promised Land, The Dream.

## Course Materials

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### Textbook

Gates, Jr., Henry Louis, et al. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* 3 WW Norton and Co Inc 0393911551 2014 Latest Edition; no comparable options on subject matter

Barrett, Gene Andrew Wiley Blackwell *Anthology of African American Literature, 1746-1920* 1st Wiley Blackwell 9780470657995 2014 Latest Edition; no comparable options on subject matter

Jones, Tayari *An American Marriage* paper Algonquin Books reprint 978-1616208684 2019

### Open Educational Resources

None

### Other Required Materials

Supplement with novels, such as *An American Marriage*, or classics especially Dover Thrift editions as they are inexpensive, or OER materials when possible, subject to department chair approval.

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- Class Discussions

## Description

- Both class and small group discussion.

- Directed Learning Activities

### Description

- DOTAs at Learning Center, Learning Center or English Department workshops and the Library Research workshops may be suggested to students for specific remediation needs, for deeper understanding of concepts, or for related literary career and study information.

- Group Study & Exercises

### Description

- Students may participate in group activities such as peer reviews, group writing activities, in-class analysis group work, etc.

- Handouts

### Description

- Handouts on key concepts.

- Lecture

### Description

- Instructor may use whiteboard/PowerPoint/Prezi (or similar) to lecture on cinematography and different types of literary elements, including but not limited to composition of a scene, genres, themes, purpose, and meaning.

- Lectures on key concepts and significant contributors to the genre.
- Lectures on literary elements, representations of African Americans in lit and film, and critical theories.

- **Media Presentations**

Description

- Film adaptations or other media components.
- Performances of dramatic readings.
- Historical modern films.

- **Oral Presentations**

Description

- Student presentations.

- **Reading Assignments**

Description

- Readings and films represent the African-American experience through socio-political and cultural lenses.
- Readings highlight how elements work together to convey meaning/theme/purpose.
- Readings represent diverse writers across genres: film, plays, novels, and poetry.

- **Visual Aids**

**Description**

- Media representations of African Americans.
- Charts, diagrams, infographics when applicable.

- **Writing Projects & Reports**

**Description**

- Literature reviews.
- Journals.
- Peer assessments.
- Other written homework assignments.

## **What learning activities or assignments are required outside of class?**

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### **Reading Assignments**

- Students will read various genres.
- Students will read criticism/analysis that reflects major literary historical, social, artistic, political, and cultural movements.
- Instructor may assign specific texts for outside reading or provide a list of approved texts for outside reading.

### **Writing Assignments**

- Students will respond to readings via journal assignments or similar.
- Students will develop documented, analytical essays that they will draft, revise, and peer review.

### **Other Assignments**

- Students will prepare for exams and oral presentations.



- May have multi-modal assignments that appeal to visual or kinetic kinds of learners such as vlogs, creating memes, wikis, or collages

**Total:** 108 hours

## Standards of Achievement

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How will learning be assessed? (Multiple measures must be used)

- Oral presentations or reports
- Reviews, responses, discussion questions, and/or journals
- Analytical papers
- Class discussion and activity participation
- Quizzes, exams (including essay questions), and final

Departmental standards for English 101 will be extended to all writing in this course.

The instructor will indicate the weighting of the graded activities in his or her individual course overview.

## Grading Scale

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**Scale:**

A 90 - 100%

B 80 - 89%

C 70 - 79%

D 60 - 69%

F less than 60%

**For Pass/No Pass:**

P = 70% and above

NP = Below 70%

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CB11: Course Classification Status Y - Credit Course