



Undergraduate Course Syllabus

LIT 350: The Black Literary Tradition

Center: Online

Course Prerequisites

ENG-120 or ENG-120H

Course Description

This course offers an overview of African American literature, with glimpses into African and Caribbean literature. Beginning around 1845 with Frederick Douglass's *Narrative*, students will read from various literary genres, including slave narratives, poetry, short stories, fiction, and plays that illuminate both the history of African America and changing ideas of race. Students will conduct ongoing independent research, which they will present to the class, on the major literary and historical periods we cover, including the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and early 1930s, the civil rights movement(s), the Black Arts movement of the 1960s, early 1970s, and the decades following. Reading works by Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, Ralph Ellison, Gwendolyn Brooks, Chinua Achebe, Toni Morrison, and Ishmael Reed, among others, will enable us to analyze how sexuality, gender, class, and nationality influence various writers' definitions of race and ethnicity.

Course Outcomes

- Recognize the complex relationship between the black literary tradition and its historical, social, and cultural context
- Construct critical positions on black literary texts based on a close reading of primary and secondary sources, and contextual analysis
- Understand and explain literary techniques, genres, and major ideas in black literature
- Compose an essay that focuses on a close reading of one or more literary texts, applying both formal literary techniques and historical and social context and incorporating secondary sources
- Develop an aesthetic appreciation for literature and the critical role it plays in culture and society

Required Materials

Using your learning resources is critical to your success in this course. Please purchase directly through the [SNHU Online Bookstore](#) rather than any other vendor. Purchasing directly from the bookstore ensures that you will obtain the correct materials and that the IT Service Desk, your advisor, and the instructor can provide you with support if you have problems.

The Norton Anthology of African American Literature

Henry Louis Gates Jr., Valerie Smith, and William

Andrews W. W. Norton & Co.

Third Edition

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As indicated in our core values, SNHU is committed to “embrace diversity where we encourage and respect diverse identities, ideas, and perspectives by honoring difference, amplifying belonging, engaging civilly, and breaking down barriers to bring our mission to life.”

This may or will be reflected in SNHU’s curriculum as we embrace and practice diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to provide the most transformative experience for our students, faculty, and staff. Because topics pertaining to DEI can be sensitive, please remember that embodying and practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion is one of our core values that you will encounter throughout the academic experience. In higher education, we are expected to think and engage critically. Use a growth mindset to embrace the diverse readings, course assignments, and experiences of your peers and faculty.

For more information about DEI at SNHU, please visit our website at the [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#).

Instructor Availability and Response Time

Your class interaction with the instructor and your classmates will take place on a regular, ongoing basis. Your instructor will be actively engaged within the course throughout the week. You will normally communicate with your instructor in the weekly discussions or the General Questions discussion topic so that your questions and the instructor’s answers benefit the entire class. You should feel free, however, to communicate with your instructor via SNHU email at any time, particularly when you want to discuss something of a personal or sensitive nature. Your instructor will generally provide a response within 24 hours. Instructors will post grades and feedback (as applicable) within seven days of an assignment’s due date, or within seven days of a late submission.

Grade Distribution

Assignment Category	Number of Graded Items	Point Value per Item	Total Points
Discussions	8	40	320
Response Papers	3	50	150
Journals	3	30	90
Final Project			
Milestone One	1	30	30
Milestone Two	1	60	60
Final Submission	1	350	350
			Total Course Points: 1,000

This course may also contain practice activities. The purpose of these non-graded activities is to assist you in mastering the learning outcomes in the graded activity items listed above.

University Grading System: Undergraduate

Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Points
A	93–100	4
A-	90–92	3.67
B+	87–89	3.33
B	83–86	3
B-	80–82	2.67
C+	77–79	2.33
C	73–76	2
C-	70–72	1.67
D+	67–69	1.33
D	60–66	1
F	0–59	0
I	Incomplete	
IF	Incomplete/Failure *	
IP	In Progress (past end of term)	
W	Withdrawn	

* Please refer to the [policy page](#) for information on the incomplete grade process.

Grading Guides

Specific activity directions, grading guides, posting requirements, and additional deadlines can be found in the Assignment Guidelines and Rubrics section of the course.

Weekly Assignment Schedule

All reading and assignment information can be found within each module of the course. Assignments and discussion posts during the first week of each term are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Assignments and discussion posts for the remainder of the term are due by 11:59 p.m. of the student's local time zone.

In addition to the textbook readings that are listed, there may be additional required resources within each module.

Module	Topics and Assignments
1	The Literature of Slavery and Freedom: Frederick Douglass <i>The Norton Anthology of African American Literature: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself; My Bondage and My Freedom; Life and Time of Frederick Douglass</i> 1-1 Discussion: Frederick Douglass 1-2 Journal: Slave Narratives, the Abolitionist Movement, and the Emancipation of the Slaves 1-3 Final Project Review

Module	Topics and Assignments
2	Literature of the Reconstruction and the New Negro Renaissance, 1865–1919: Booker T. Washington <i>The Norton Anthology of African American Literature</i> : Booker T. Washington section; <i>Up From Slavery</i> 2-1 Discussion: Atlanta Exposition Address 2-2 Response Paper: Booker T. Washington
3	Literature of the Reconstruction and the New Negro Renaissance, 1865–1919: W. E. B. Du Bois <i>The Norton Anthology of African American Literature</i> : W. E. B. Du Bois section; <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> 3-1 Discussion: Booker T. Washington vs. W. E. B. Du Bois 3-2 Journal: Importance of Education to African Americans in the Post-Civil War to World War I Period
4	Harlem Renaissance: Zora Neale Hurston <i>The Norton Anthology of African American Literature</i> : “Zora Neale Hurston”; “Sweat”; “How It Feels to Be Colored Me”; <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> 4-1 Discussion: Zora Neale Hurston 4-2 Final Project Milestone One: Topic Proposal/Thesis Creation 4-3 Response Paper: “How It Feels to Be Colored Me”
5	Harlem Renaissance: Langston Hughes <i>The Norton Anthology of African American Literature</i> : Langston Hughes section; “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”; “Homesick Blues”; “Mulatto”; “Song for a Dark Girl”; “Madam and the Rent Man”; “Juke Box Love Song”; “Dream Boogie”; “Harlem”; “Theme for English B”; <i>The Big Sea</i> 5-1 Discussion: Langston Hughes’s Poems 5-2 Journal: Hughes vs. Contemporaries 5-3 Final Project Milestone Two: Rough Draft and Peer Review
6	Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, 1940–1960: Gwendolyn Brooks <i>The Norton Anthology of African American Literature</i> : Gwendolyn Brooks section; “A Song in The Front Yard”; “Sadie and Maud”; “The Vacant Lot”; “The Rites for Cousin Vit”; “The Children of the Poor”; “The Lovers of the Poor”; “We Real Cool”; “Malcolm X”; “Riot” 6-1 Discussion: Gwendolyn Brooks 6-2 Final Project Milestone Two: Rough Draft and Peer Review
7	Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, 1940–1960: James Baldwin <i>The Norton Anthology of African American Literature</i> : James Baldwin section; “Everybody’s Protest Novel”; “Notes of a Native Son”; “Sonny’s Blues”; “Going to Meet the Man” 7-1 Discussion: James Baldwin 7-2 Final Project: Final Research Paper
8	Literature Since 1975: August Wilson <i>The Norton Anthology of African American Literature</i> : August Wilson section; <i>Joe Turner’s Come and Gone</i> 8-1 Discussion: Themes and Traditions 8-2 Response Paper: Since 1975

Attendance Policy

Online students are required to submit a graded assignment/discussion during the first week of class. If a student does not submit a graded assignment/discussion during the first week of class, the student is **automatically dropped** from the course for non-participation. Review the [full attendance policy](#).

Late Assignments Policy

Meeting assigned due dates is critical for demonstrating progress and ensuring appropriate time for instructor feedback on assignments. Students are expected to submit their assignments on or before the due date. Review the [full late assignment policy](#).

SNHU Student Handbook

Review the [student handbook](#).

ADA/504 Compliance Statement

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is dedicated to providing equal access to individuals with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008.

SNHU prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability and takes action to prevent such discrimination by providing reasonable accommodations to eligible individuals with disabilities. The university has adopted this policy to provide for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints regarding any action prohibited by Section 504, the ADA, or the ADAAA.

For questions about **support services, documentation guidelines, general disability issues, or pregnancy accommodations**, please visit the [Online Accessibility Center](#) (OAC).

As a student, you must complete an interactive intake process, with supporting documentation, in order to be granted accommodations. Once reasonable accommodations are approved by the OAC, you will receive an accommodations letter. You are then responsible for sharing the letter with your instructor. Accommodations are not retroactive.

If you feel you've been subject to discrimination on the basis of disability, by any party, you may file a complaint or grievance. For more information on the ADA/504 Grievance Policy, go to the [Disability and Accessibility Services](#) website.

Academic Integrity Policy

Southern New Hampshire University requires all students to adhere to high standards of integrity in their academic work. Activities such as plagiarism and cheating are not condoned by the university. Review the [full academic integrity policy](#).

Copyright Policy

Southern New Hampshire University abides by the provisions of United States Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code). Any person who infringes the copyright law is liable. Review the [full copyright policy](#).

SNHU Withdrawal Policy

Review the [full withdrawal policy](#).

Southern New Hampshire University Policies

More information about SNHU policies can be found on the [policy page](#).