

# English 9S: Black Liberty, Black Literature

Fall, 2007

TTh, 2:40–3:55 pm

Kohlberg 202

## Dr. Anthony S. Foy

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hours: W, 12–4 pm, or by appointment

Arising from the ‘tomb of slavery,’ African American literature has, from its origins, concerned itself with the ongoing project of freedom. By examining freedom as a problem of form, content and context that has structured the development of a black literary tradition, this course will introduce you to some of the most important work produced by black writers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

## Texts

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life* (1845)

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)

Charles Chesnutt, *Conjure Tales & Other Stories of the Color Line* (1899)

Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (1901)

Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* (1928)

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959)

LeRoi Jones, *The Dutchman* (1964)

Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

Rodrigues & Tuman, *A Norton Pocket Guide to Grammar and Punctuation*

\* PLUS additional readings, to be distributed via Blackboard

## Policies

I expect you to complete all assigned work; if you do not, you will fail the course automatically.

Participation & Responses	25%
Paper #1, <i>due week 5</i>	15%
Paper #2, <i>due week 10</i>	25%
Final Paper	35%

### –Participation & Attendance

This course has been designed to sharpen your abilities as critics and writers. Central to this process will be our discussions, which will allow you to test, refine, revise and expand your initial responses to the assigned readings. Therefore, I expect each of you, first, to read closely, carefully and thoroughly *before* we meet, and, second, to engage with our texts (and each other) thoughtfully *during* our meetings. I will grade each of you on the consistency and quality of this participation.

Because our discussions will be so important, your attendance is mandatory, and your final grade will suffer for unexcused absences.

Cellular phones, alarms and other such devices are disruptive; please silence them before class begins.

–Writing

For this course, you will be responsible for two basic types of writing: brief **responses** and longer, formal **papers**. The shorter assignments (2-3 pages each) will require you to respond critically to our readings. Although these responses may be less formal than your longer papers, I expect them to exhibit both depth of thought and clarity of language; in short, I expect you to take these responses as seriously as you take your longer papers.

Your formal writing assignments in this course will consist of **two short papers** (4–5 pages each) and a long **final paper** (7–9 pages). In order to strengthen your skills, you will be working with a Writing Associate (WA) for this course, and you will write your papers according to the following process:

- 1) You will submit the rough draft of your paper on the first due date for the assignment.
- 2) You will meet with the WA assigned to this course.
- 3) You will revise your rough draft based on the WA's comments and your own judgements.
- 4) You will submit the WA copy of your paper *in class* on the second due date for the assignment.
- 5) You will submit your final draft of the paper *electronically* by **4:00 pm** on the second due date for the assignment.

Your **WA** this semester will be: **Hansi Lo Wang** (hansi@warnewsradio.org)

**All of your final drafts must be submitted electronically** through **Turnitin.com**. This requires you to register for the class through the website. Our class **ID** is **1944911**; I will provide you with the password in class.

In order for you to get the most from this process of revision, you should adhere closely to the scheduled deadlines below. Therefore, I will grant **no extensions** for any of these papers, so be sure to submit each of these assignments on time.

**On form:** All writing assignments, whether submitted electronically or in class, should conform to these basic guidelines:

- 1) They should each include a **separate title page** (with paper title, your name, the course number, my name, and date), so that your name does not appear anywhere else in your paper beyond the title page.
- 2) They should be **double-spaced** and have **one-inch margins**.
- 3) They should include **numbered pages**.

**On plagiarism:** Whether the result of ill intent or mere ignorance, the incorporation of others' words into your writing as if they are your own constitutes plagiarism. Because I expect you to undertake your work in this course with the highest integrity and honor, I will not tolerate plagiarism, and I will submit any suspected case of academic misconduct to the associate dean for review by the **College Judiciary Committee**. In order to avoid **failure in the course, suspension, or expulsion from the College**, see to it that all submitted work is wholly your own; also, see to it that you cite accurately and consistently **all** sources (including those found on the internet) that you have consulted, referenced and quoted in your written work. For Swarthmore's policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct, pay close attention to the statement on academic and personal responsibility in the College's annual bulletin. For guidelines on plagiarism and proper citation, start at:

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/x10027.xml>

Be advised that I will routinely check your papers for improperly cited sources, using all resources available to me, including the Turnitin website.

## Course Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, you must complete each assigned reading for our *first* scheduled discussion of it.

### I

9/4 (T) Introduction

9/6 (Th) \*Thomas Jefferson, 'Query XIV: Laws,' from *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787)  
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life* (1845) [1–63]

### II

9/11 (T) Douglass, *Narrative* [64–113]  
\*Douglass, chapters 22–23 from *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855)

9/13 (Th) Harriett Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) [114–216]

### III

9/18 (T) Jacobs, *Incidents* [217–353]

9/20 (Th) Jacobs, *Incidents*

**Paper #1 DRAFT DUE** (in class)

### IV

9/25 (T) **FILM:** Marlon Riggs (dir.), *Ethnic Notions*

9/27 (Th) Charles Chesnutt, *Conjure Tales & Other Stories of the Color Line* (1899) [1–102]

### V

10/2 (T) Chesnutt, *Conjure Tales* [103–14; 188–205]

10/4 (Th) Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (1901) [3–51]

Paper #1 WA COPY DUE (in class)

**Paper #1 DUE** (electronically, by **4:00 pm**)

### VI

10/9 (T) Washington, *Up from Slavery* [51–146]

10/11 (Th) Washington, *Up from Slavery* [criticism, 175–92]  
\*W.E.B. Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk* (1903) [excerpt]

## Fall Break

### VII

10/23 (T) Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*

10/25 (Th) \*Alain Locke, 'The New Negro' & 'Negro Youth Speaks' (1925)  
\*Langston Hughes, 'The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain' (1926)  
\*Langston Hughes, 'Slave on the Block' (1934)

**VIII**

10/30 (T) Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* (1928)

11/1 (Th) Larsen, *Quicksand*

**Paper #2 DRAFT DUE** (in class)

**IX**

11/6 (T) \*Zora Neale Hurston, 'The Gilded Six-Bits' (1933)

11/8 (Th) \*Richard Wright, 'Long Black Song' (1938)

**X**

11/13 (T) Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959)

11/15 (Th) Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Paper #2 WA COPY DUE (in class)

**Paper #2 DUE** (electronically, by 4:00 pm)

**XI**

11/20 (T) LeRoi Jones, *The Dutchman* (1964)

**FILM:** Anthony Harvey (dir.), *The Dutchman*

11/22 (Th) NO CLASS (**Thanksgiving**)

**XII**

11/27 (T) Jones, *The Dutchman*

\*Jones, 'Black Writing' (1963) & 'LeRoi Jones Talking' (1964), from *Home*

11/29 (Th) \*Addison Gayle, 'Cultural Strangulation: Black Literature and the White Aesthetic' (1971)

\*Hoyt Fuller, 'Towards a Black Aesthetic' (1968)

**XIII**

12/4 (T) Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

**Final Paper DRAFT DUE** (in class)

12/6 (Th) Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

**XIV**

12/11 (T) Conclusion

**F**

12/20 (Th) **Final Paper DUE** (electronically, by 4:00 pm)

WA copy **DUE** (in my office, by 5:00 pm)