



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

HUMANITIES SEMINARS

Introduction to African American Literature

Spring 2020

Professor Bryan Carter

MONDAYS from 9 AM - 11 AM

JANUARY 27, FEBRUARY 3, 10, 17, 24, MARCH 2, 16, 23, 30, AND APRIL 6, 2020

Course Description:

African American literature has engaged consistently with the relationship between being black and being American. W. E. B. DuBois asked if that was even possible. Many writers and artists believed that control of representations of black Americans through art would lead to greater representation in political and social spheres. This course will examine some of the major debates and central texts of African American literature. The central theme of the course is the relationship between race, representation and identity. We will examine the social construction of African American literature of the 20th century, contextualized within a framework of American history, and how authors expressed themselves through various artistic genres as they sought to establish a unique identity within an oppressive, racist, gender biased and capitalistic society.

Name: Dr. Bryan Carter
Director, Center for Digital Humanities,
Associate Professor, Africana Studies

Dr. Bryan Carter received his Ph.D. at the University of Missouri-Columbia and is currently the Director of the Center for Digital Humanities and an Associate Professor in Africana Studies, at the University of Arizona. He specializes in African American literature of the 20th Century with a primary focus on the Harlem Renaissance.

Required Textbook for this course:

Gates, Henry, and Valerie Smith, eds. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. 3rd ed. Vol. 1 & 2. New York: W.W. Norton, 2014. Print.

Readings listed under each date are those to be discussed **ON** those days. Please try to read those assignments in advance.

Week 1

January 27

Introduction: Talking Books (**Norton Anthology, Volume 1**) pgs. xxxv – xlvi, Introduction
Talking Books, The Vernacular Tradition pgs. 3 – 10.

Please also look at the following Web Sites as supplemental information:

http://www.nps.gov/subjects/ugrr/discover_history/memory-and-myth.htm

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4175091>

(**Volume 1 of our Anthology**): The Literature of Slavery and Freedom pgs. 75 – 86, Also read:
Phillis Wheatley, pgs. 137 – 150

Week 2

February 3

David Walker, pgs. 159 – 171, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2931.html>

Sojourner Truth, pgs. 176 – 180

Voices of Social Protest – The Confessions of Nat Turner (see movie if you can, Birth of a Nation), <http://www.wfu.edu/~zulick/340/natturner.html>

Week 3

February 10

Charles Chesnutt, pgs., 580 – 618

Paul Laurence Dunbar, pgs. 894 – 916,

Week 4

February 17

Booker T. Washington, pgs. 548 – 550, 572 – 579

W.E.B. DuBois, pgs. 679 – 702

Week 5

February 24

The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man by James Weldon Johnson, pgs. 780 – 783, 792 – 871

Week 6

March 2

Introduction to Harlem Renaissance, pgs. 929 – 944.

Langston Hughes, pgs. 1302 – 1324

Zora Neale Hurston, pgs. 1029 – 1079,

AND “Spunk”: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5131/>

Jean Toomer, pgs, 1141 – 1170

Week 7

March 16

W.E.B. DuBois: "Criteria of Negro Art", pgs. 771 – 778,

<http://www.webdubois.org/dbCriteriaNArt.html>

AND Alain Locke: "The New Negro", pgs. 967 – 968, 973 – 981,

<http://literarymovementsmanifesto.wordpress.com/more/alain-locke-the-new-negro-1925/>

Week 8

March 23

Richard Wright (**The Norton Anthology of African American Literature Volume 2**), pgs. 119 – 132, AND "Bright and Morning Star" [Click Here to Read Online \(http://bit.ly/1JJ7T6R\)](http://bit.ly/1JJ7T6R) click

"Entire Issue" at the top middle of the page to read the story.

Ann Petry, pgs. 167 – 179, and The Novel as Social Criticism.

<https://www.evernote.com/shard/s1/sh/6bdacd10-6994-44c5-ac24-f570e4787bb6/b6cb01764fd3deafb5fdf7fd0ee9ef03>

Week 9

March 30

James Baldwin, pgs. 390 – 394, 413 – 435, 453 - 465

The Black Arts Era, pgs. 533 – 561

Audre Lorde, pgs. 637 – 652,

Amiri Baraka, pgs. 660 – 665, 674 – 688,

Sonia Sanchez, pgs. 708 – 725,

Nikki Giovanni, pgs. 879 – 886

Week 10

April 6

Malcolm X, pgs. 565 – 587,

Martin Luther King, pgs. 592 – 607

Alice Walker, pgs. 1176 – 1205

Maya Angelou, pgs. 944 – 957,

Toni Morrison, pgs. 985 - 1067