AFRICANA STUDIES

AFRICANA– CRN 28272;  ENGL– CRN 23231

AFR & ENGL 355B-001: Survey of Afr Am Literature Since 1940  (3 Credits)  Dr. Chipasula
Spring 2016  Office:  Faner 4028;  Phone: (618) 453-5018;  Email: fchipasu@siu.edu
T, TH:  11:00 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.,  Classroom:  Faner Hall 1004  Hours:  T:  3:30 – 4:30 P.M.
TH:  3:30 – 4:30 P.M.

Course Description

An examination of the literary texts, voices and movements in the U.S.A. from 1940 to the Present. Our exploration and analysis of themes and issues common to all the literature will serve as the basis for understanding the African American experience as articulated and presented both in imaginative literature and essays. Among these concerns are the continuing quest for freedom, identity, protest against racist oppression, and the writers’ interpretation of the enduring African American spiritual and cultural values. We shall focus on the major developments in African American literature after the Harlem Renaissance, especially the jazz-inspired Black Arts Movement and its impact on the contemporary literature of African Americans.

Course Objectives:

1: To provide students with a thorough overview of the new directions, movements and strategies in African American literature from the Harlem Renaissance to the present.

2: To help students appreciate the enduring themes, issues and concerns while taking note of such new trends as realism, naturalism and modernism in African American literature.

3: To foster an understanding of how literary texts continue to serve as vehicles for self-representation and self-definition among African Americans.

4: To help students recognize African American literature as a major force in the continuing struggle to humanize the American landscape.

5: To sharpen students’ critical and thinking skills necessary for further work in the field.

Required Text


Tentative Class Schedule

Jan 19 – 21:  Introduction: After the Harlem Renaissance, the Birth of Modern African American Literature?
  Video: Richard Wright: Black Boy

  Richard Wright (1908 – 1960): “Blueprint for Negro Writing” (125-132)

Feb 2 – 4:  Richard Wright and Protest, “The Ethics of Living Jim Crow” (132 -140)
  from Black Boy: Chapter XIII, “Booklist” & Chapter XVI, “Chicago” (141-156)

**Essay #1: February 11, 2016**

Poems: “Middle Passage”; “Runagate Runagate”; “Frederick Douglass”; “Those Winter Sundays” and other poems (225 - 233)
Video: *Amistad* [Selected scenes only]

Excerpts from *Invisible Man*: “Prologue”; “Chapter 1, “Battle Royal” and “Epilogue” (243 - 279)
Audio (Jazz): Louis Armstrong, “What Did I Do To Be So Black and Blue” (Lyrics by Andy Razaf, Gates & Smith, 25)


Mar 8 – 10: **Gwendolyn Brooks** (1918 – 2000): The Poet of Bronzeville: “kitchenette building”; “the mother”; “Sundays of Satin-Legs Smith”; “The Lovers of the Poor”; “We Real Cool” and other poems (324 - 343)

**Essay #2: March 10, 2016**

**Spring Vacation:** Saturday, March 12, 12:00 Noon through Sunday, March 20

Video: *The Price of the Ticket*; Audio: “Am I Blue” (Billie Holiday)


Apr 5 – 7: **Amiri Baraka** (1934 – 2014): *Dutchman* (Drama); “Black Art” & poems (637 - 646)

**Sonia Sanchez** (1934 – Present): Jazz Poems, “Summers of Sistuh Addict”; “blk/rhetoric”; “a/Coltrane/poem” (712; 713 - 714; 719 - 722)

**Jayne Cortez** (1934 – 2012): Poem, “How Long Has the Trane Been Gone” (771 - 773)
Audio CDs: (Jazz music) John Coltrane; Jazz Poems by Sanchez & Jayne Cortez

Apr 12 – 14: **Haki Madhubuti** (1942 – Present): “Introduction to Think Black”; Poems, “Gwendolyn Brooks”; “Don’t Cry, Scream” (860; 862 - 866)

**Nikki Giovanni** (1944 – Present): Poems, “Beautiful Black Men”; “Nikki-Rosa” and “Ego Tripping” (881-882; 885)

**Essay #3: April 9, 2016**
Maya Angelou (1928 – 2015): “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”; poems (944 - 957)
Paule Marshall (1929 – Present): “To Da-Duh, In Memoriam” (971 - 978)

Video: Toni Morrison and Bill Moyers

Video: NEA Big Read: Meet Ernest Gaines
Alice Walker (1944 – Present): Essay, “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens” (1181 - 1188)

Conclusion and Blessings

FINAL EXAM DATE: Thursday, May 15, 2016, 10:15 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.

Course Requirements:

a: Written Assignments:
Three Short Essays (Graded on the ABC scale) = 20% each.
IN CLASS/TAKE-HOME EXAM (Grading scale ABC) = 40%.

Grading Scale: A= 100 – 90  B= 89 – 80  C= 79 -70  D= 69 – 60  F=59

b: Reading Assignments: KEEP A JOURNAL.

You must read the scheduled work before class so that you may participate fully in the day’s proceedings. Read the texts closely, noting down in your journal things you do not understand as questions for me or the class. Also use your notes for making interesting observations during class discussions. Try to respond and to relate personally to these texts because active reading is a dialogue.

If you do not read, you will experience difficulties following the lectures and discussions. REMEMBER: Reading these texts is YOUR responsibility.

c: Others:

1: Attendance at all class sessions unless excused.*
2: Active and intelligent participation in class discussions.

Do not expect to make a perfect score if you sleep in class.

*PLEASE NOTE: Unexcused absences will lower your grade significantly.

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism will result in your failure of the course and have disciplinary action taken against you. The Student Conduct Code explains plagiarism on page 18 as “representing the work of another as one’s own work; preparing work for another that is to be used as that person’s own work; cheating by any method or means...” If you are unsure or have any problems citing the sources of your information, you may consult the instructor or use the services of the Writing Center. Avoid taking information from the Internet without citing the source correctly.