

# ENG 257

## African American Literature

Instructor: Dr. Ramycia McGhee

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Office Hours: **By appointment only via zoom class link WEDNESDAYS ARE BEST!**

Moodle: <http://elearning.linnbenton.edu>

CRN: 45010 Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 11:00am – 12:50pm

ZOOM LINK <https://linnbenton.zoom.us/j/513757839> (CAMERAS ON IS A REQUIREMENT)

Text: Norton Anthology of African American Literature

Edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Valerie A. Smith

“Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.”  
James Baldwin

**Course Description:** This course will examine the literary works of amazing African American writers. We will study the great Phillis Wheatley, the remarkable Frederick Douglass, the outstanding Harriet Jacobs, and the Legendary James Baldwin amongst many others. We will survey the relationship between writing and race through historical circumstances such as but not limited to slavery, Reconstruction, the Great Migration, and Jim Crow to name a few. Moreover, we will inquire, discuss, write, and better understand what role the writings by African Americans have played and continue to play in the everlasting fight for political freedom and social equality. Lastly, these powerful voices will enrich our understanding of not only American literature, but the significance of African Americans contributions to the literary diaspora.

**Literature Outcomes:** All literature courses at LBCC strive to achieve common goals. When you successfully complete ENG 257, you should be able to:

- Describe how African American culture, history, and literature explores the human condition.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how African Americans experience difference, power, and discrimination.
- Interpret and analyze African American literature through critical reading, writing, and discussion.
- Participate in activities that encourage personal awareness, growth, and/or creativity through the experience of African American literature.

### **Attendance / Participation and Time Management**

Attendance is crucial for many reasons. In this class, the expectations are to

- Plan to attend every class
- Be on time
- Be prepared and organized
- Ask questions
- Actively participate i.e. class discussions, readings, group activities etc.
- If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting the missed information.
- Organize and plan your time wisely.
- Complete assignments on time and in their entirety
- Get to know someone in class

**PLEASE COMPLETE ASSIGNED READINGS AND ASSIGNED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS PRIOR TO ATTENDING CLASS.**

The LBCC community is enriched by diversity of all kinds. We all share the privilege of thinking, learning, and working together in an encouraging environment. In our classroom community, we will work toward creating and enjoying a community of mutual respect, appreciation, and goodwill.

Additional Guidelines:

- **Academic integrity. Students are expected to adhere to high standards of honesty in their academic endeavors. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind are serious violations of these standards and will result, minimally, in the grade of “F” by the instructor. Simply put: Don’t plagiarize (using someone else’s work as your own without proper in-text citations and documentation).**
- **Late Work and Make-up Assignments: I do not accept late work or give make up work unless it is an emergency i.e. death in family, car accident, hospitalized. You must upload your paper to MOODLE TURNITIN to receive credit for assignments. I DO NOT EXCEPT EMAILED PAPERS UNLESS SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE, EMERGENCY, OR YOU HAVE CLEARED IT WITH ME PRIOR!**

**Campus Resources**

◆ Conferences with your teacher, please visit with me at <https://linnbenton.zoom.us/j/513757839> ◆ early in the term and often throughout the term with interests, questions, problems, or concerns. ◆ LIBRARY (917-4638)

◆ **Writing Center and OWL (Online Writing Lab)**

**Writing Center Assistants and Writing Peer Tutors will provide assistance (not copy editing, not correcting!) with specific paragraph and essay assignments.**

**GRADE BREAKDOWN**

Final Essay (40%) A formal essay focused on the African American tradition that grows out of your own writings i.e. the themes we will be tracking over the term. The paper should be (3-5 pages) students are welcome to use ideas developed in weekly writing assignments as the basis for these papers provided that those ideas help them to address the prompt. All papers must be posted on Moodle.

**Weekly writing assignments (30%)** Starting in Week 2, students will post a one paragraph (12-15 sentences) informal response on Moodle usually on Thursday @ 11:59 pm, you should also bring a copy (DRAFT) of your response to class for discussion and note taking. These responses offer students the opportunity to practice and refine their analytic and interpretive writing skills as well as propose new lines of inquiry for in class discussion.

**Presentation and or Enrichment Events (15%)** This is your opportunity to focus on and share with us (in any creative ways that you choose) what brought you to this class or what became most interesting to you as we explored the tradition (e.g. the blues or Hip Hop, the history of the Middle Passage or the vibrancy of the Harlem Renaissance, the advances of the Civil Rights Movement etc. You can work with some of your colleagues, bring your own interests and talents, and create a presentation that is creative and informative, and it enhances our understanding of your subject.

*Enrichment 3: Choose your own events, on or off campus, related to class concepts or artists (e.g. speakers, celebrations, exhibitions, club meetings) and write a summary and response. Format: one full page (350-500 words), include word count in at the end the paper doubled-spaced, times new roman 12 point font.*

Participation (15%) One of the **main requirements for the class is intense engagement with the readings, not only in writing but in class discussion as well.** Class discussion is an opportunity to practice the critical thinking skills that we will be developing and is needed in the course, attendance and active participation— which entails listening and responding to one another—at every class session are expected.

**4=A 3=B 2=C 1=D 0=F**

#### WRITING CENTER

From invention to revision, beginning to end, the LBCC Writing Center can help you take your writing to the next level. Please feel free to drop in during regular hours to work one-on-one with a Writing Assistant. In addition to your draft, bring your assignment and any questions you have. You may also submit your writing online at [lbcc.writingcenteronline.net](http://lbcc.writingcenteronline.net) where you will get a personalized response within 1 – 2 business days. [www.linnbenton.edu/go/learning-center/writinghelp](http://www.linnbenton.edu/go/learning-center/writinghelp)

#### **Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR):**

You should meet with me during the first week of class if:

- You have a documented disability and need accommodations,
- I need to know medical information about you, or
- You need special arrangements in the event of an emergency.

If you believe you may need accommodation services, please contact the Center for Accessibility Resources, 541-917-4789. If you have documented your disability, remember that you must make your request for accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources Online Services webpage every term in order to receive accommodations.

## Tentative Course Outline

### Week 1

Syllabus review, introduction course-What is African American Literature and why is it essential to the literary world?

### Literature of Slavery and Freedom 1746-1865

### Week 2

**1753-1784** Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America." P. 143 Vol. 1

### Week 3

**1785-1830** David Walker's Appeal in Four Articles; Together with the Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World P. 161 Vol 1

**YOU WILL NEED TO WATCH THE BIRTH OF A NATION FILM 2016 FULL MOVIE AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE**

**1799-1883** Sojourner Truth "Ar'n't I a Woman." P. 178 Vol 1

### Week 4

**1818-1895** Frederick Douglass Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass P. 330 Vol. My Bondage and my Freedom P. 393 Vol. 1 Introduction to the Abolitionists P. 393 Vol. 1

### Week 5

**1813-1897** Harriet Jacobs "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl." P. 224 Vol 1

### ENTERING RECONSTRUCTION ERA 1865-1919

### Week 6

**1856-1915** Booker T. Washington "Up from Slavery." P. 550 Vol 1

**1862-1931** Ida B. Wells-Barnett "A Red Record." P. 670

**1868-1963** W.E.B. Du Bois "The Souls of Black Folk." P. 687 Vol 1

### ENTERING THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE ERA 1919-1940 (MY FAV ERA)

### Week 7

**1887-1940** Marcus Garvey "Africa for the Africans" P. 986 Vol 1

**1891-1960** Zora Neale Hurston "Characteristics of Negro Expression." P. 1050 Vol 1  
**1902-1967** Langston Hughes "Mother to Son," P.1305; "I, Too" P. 1308; "Harlem" P. 1319

### **ENTERING REALISM, NATURALISM, MODERNISM 1940-1960**

#### **Week 8**

**1908-1960 Richard Wright** "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow, Autobiographical Sketch"  
P. 132 Vol 2

**1917-2000 Gwendolyn Brooks** "The *Chicago Defender* Sends a Man to Little Rock"  
P. 332 Vol 2

**1924-1987 James Baldwin** "If Beale Street Cold Talk" – ***NOTE IN YOUR TEXT, BUT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON MOODLE***

### **ENTERING THE BLACK ARTS ERA 1960-1975**

#### **Week 9**

**1935-1998 Eldridge Cleaver** "Soul on Ice" P. 740 Vol 2

### **ENTERING THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD**

#### **Week 10**

**1961 Barack Obama** "A More Perfect Union" P. 1411 Vol 2