



Course Name: African American Literature

Course Number: ENG 251

Credits: 3

PREREQUISITES: ENG 102

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: This course is an introduction to the literature of the African American diaspora, which includes but is not limited to, people from the Americas and the Caribbean whose ancestors are primarily from West African countries. Significant emphasis is placed on the cultural and historical perspectives emerging from the literature. Short stories, poetry drama, novels, and essays/sermons are covered.

General Education Competencies Satisfied:

HCC General Education Requirement Designated Competency Attribute Code(s):

AESX **Appreciation of the Aesthetic Dimensions of Humankind**

Additional CSCU General Education Requirements for CSCU Transfer Degree Programs:

HISX **Historical Knowledge & Understanding**

Embedded Competency(ies):

None

Discipline-Specific Attribute Code(s):

HUM **Humanities elective**

Course objectives:

General Education Goals and Outcomes:

Appreciation of the Aesthetic Dimensions of Humankind: Students will understand the diverse nature, meanings, and functions of creative endeavors through the study and practice of literature, music, the theatrical and visual arts, and related forms of expression.

Historical Knowledge & Understanding (for CSCU Transfer Degree Programs): Students will study the interrelatedness of various realms of human experience from multiple historical perspectives.

Course specific outcomes:

1. Identify the elements of fiction, such as plot, character, conflict, historical context, point of view, and theme.
2. Use the basic principles of poetry, such as imagery, speaker, symbol, figures of speech, stanzas, and meter to interpret meaning.
3. Identify the elements of drama, such as tragedy, comedy, dialogue, catharsis, soliloquy, and dramatic irony.
4. Interpret and evaluate individual works of literature from one or more critical perspectives, such as formalist, historical, biographical, psychological, sociological, feminist, reader-response, and deconstructionist.
5. Write critical essays interpreting and evaluating works of fiction, poetry, and drama.
6. Articulate ways in which major historical and social movements, such as The Civil Rights Movement, The Pan African Movement, The Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movements impacted African American literature, music and visual art.
7. Demonstrate the value of the slave narrative to American history and culture.
8. Produce a detailed documented 1,200-1,500 word essay, on a major literary work from a specific historical movement.
9. Recognize and demonstrate the impact of Hip Hop culture, jazz, R&B, and Gospel music on popular culture.
10. Recognize the contributions of the African American church on popular music, and political movements in the United States.
11. Respond to an argument in a complex text and synthesize perspectives in multiple texts.
12. Demonstrate knowledge of a specific historical period in an art form of your choice: Music, visual art, dance, poetry, literature, theatre.
13. Evaluate information in complex texts for accuracy, validity, and relevance, with particular attention to the type and purpose of source material.
14. Locate and evaluate sources appropriate to the rhetorical voice.
15. Reflect on and explain writing choices with respect to audience and purpose.
16. Cite varied sources using MLA format.
17. Identify and use the elements of audience context.
18. Receive and utilize criticism for speech effectiveness.
19. Identify specific works of art in literature, visual art, music, and drama, from major historical, political, and social movements such: The Harlem Renaissance, The Black Arts Movement, and The Civil Rights Movement.
20. Identify and give examples of the contributions of the African American to The Civil Rights Movement.
21. Give examples of specific speeches, essays, poems, photography and theatrical performances which impacted ethical, legal and political decisions and outcomes of The Civil Rights Movement.

Course Content:

I. Eng. 251 is primarily comprised of reading, discussing, and writing about African American literature. Also, the sharing of ideas, opinions, and experiences that relate to the literature is an integral part of the learning process in this interactive class. The nature of the literature creates

the need for emphasis on historical context and cultural perspectives which are the driving force behind the literature.

II. An introduction to writing about literature, including such topics as cultural vernacular, the structure of the critical essay, quoting from literary works and citing primary and secondary sources are covered.

Although more emphasis is placed on key historical and social movements such as: The Harlem Renaissance and The Literature of Slavery and Freedom, selective representative literature is taken from all of the following historical eras: The Harlem Renaissance, Slavery and Reconstruction, Realism/ Modernism, The Civil Rights Movement, The Black Arts Era and literature since 1975. Writers of fiction, poetry, Drama, Slave Narratives, Sermons/Essays, and Songs are covered. The following is a sample listing of the voices and visions of writers from each genre.

III. Fiction: Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, Zora Neal Hurston, Nella Larson, Arna Bontemps, Octavia Butler

Poetry : Phillis Wheatley, Paul L. Dunbar, Langston Hughes, Claude Mckay, Gwendolyn Brooks, Nikki Giovanni, Lucille Clifton, Maya Angelou

Drama: Lorraine Hansberry, Ntozake Shange, August Wilson, Ed Bullins

Slave Narratives: Frederick Douglas, Sojourner Truth, Olaudah Equiano

Songs and spoken word: Sam Cooke, Nina Simone, Naz, Oscar Brown jr., Gill Scott Heron, Duke Ellington, Queen Latifah,

Essays: Marcus Garvey, Shelby Steele, Alain Locke, Bell Hooks, W.E.B. Dubois, Booker T. Washington, Edwige Danticat

Sermons/Speeches: Martin Luther King jr., C.L. Franklin, James Weldon Johnson

IV. This course requires a mandatory semester project which combines college level writing skills, research skills including MLA format, the use of appropriate literary terms and critical thinking skills. Students must produce a detailed, documented, 1,200-1,500 word critical analysis of a major literary work from a specific historical period.