

Department: AFAM/ ENGL (Note: The cross-listing applies only to the W variant)

Course No.: 3214W [276W]

Credits: 3

Title: Black American Writers I

Contact: A. Harris Fairbanks

Diversity: CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism

WQ: Writing

Catalog Copy: AFAM/ ENGL 276W. Black American Writers I

First semester. Three credits. Prerequisite: ENGL 110 or 111 or 250 or both 105 and 109.

Critical and historical examination of the literature of black American writers from Phyllis Wheatley to the present.

Course Information: -a)The course surveys the main currents of African-American literature. The objective of the course is to induce students to read these classic works with an understanding of their cultural context and distinctive stylistic features. The objectives of the course also overlap with those of general education courses and CA 4 courses as detailed below.

b) The English Department recently adopted the following guidelines: Writing in literature courses forms an essential part of a student's learning. In addition to a midterm and final, some form of writing assignment, whether an essay, series of shorter papers or reading responses, or a reading journal, should be included among the forms of student work and instructor assessment for English department courses. The English department expects the assignment of multiple kinds of writing, ungraded as well as graded:

For 100-level courses other than Freshman English: a minimum of 6-8 pages of writing.

For 200-level courses: a minimum of 8-12 pages of writing.

In addition to these assignments the course will include a midterm and final examination.

c) Major themes and issues: Slavery and freedom; segregation, prejudice , and civil rights; love, rivalry, and aspiration; "passing."

Meets Goals of Gen Ed.: -1) This course helps students become articulate (a) by attending closely to the ways that nuances in language shape meaning in the literature covered by the course and (b) by requiring students to articulate their responses to the literature through writing (see item b under "course information." 4) This course helps students acquire moral sensitivity because the literature covered typically deals with injustice as well as moral decisions faced by literary characters. 6) This course helps students acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience by attending to the modes of perception, experiences, and positions in human society unique to African Americans.

CA4 Criteria: Through the study of such non-fictional literary forms as the slave narrative as well as through poetry and the fictional depiction of black experience, this course . . .

- 1) . . . emphasizes the experiences, thoughts, and values brought about by the social conditions unique to African Americans.
- 4) . . . stresses the human rights issues raised by slavery, segregation, and other injustices suffered by African-Americans.
- 5) . . . emphasizes how political and economic systems (including slavery and Jim Crow) shaped the experiences of African Americans.

W Criteria: Writing in relation to reading and discussion of literary texts is the central mode of analysis and student learning in the course.

Writing assignments require in-depth critical analysis of the texts under discussion. Typically papers are five to seven pages long and total at least 15 revised pages by semester's end. Typically the writing component comprises of at least 50% of the course grade. Students who do not pass the writing component of the course will not pass the course.

The modes of writing instruction include one-on-one tutelage, peer review, required revisions, lecture, and written commentary on papers.

A certain percentage of assignment will require multiple drafts based on instruction and peer feedback.

Role of Graduate Students: Advanced graduate students may serve as primary instructors of certain English courses. Their major advisor will normally be their primary supervisor, responsible for training them as teachers of the course and overseeing their work. If for some reason the major advisor is not available or, as will only rarely happen, lacks expertise in the course, he or she is responsible for finding a competent faculty replacement. When the graduate student first teaches the course, the supervisor will approve the syllabus, tests, and writing assignments, will sit in on at least one class session, and will review the grade distribution. If the graduate student teaches the course subsequently, supervision will naturally be more relaxed, but the advisor will continue to oversee the instructor's performance.

If courses taught by advanced graduate students are also "W" courses, additional supervision of the "W" component will be provided for all graduate instructors the first year by a faculty expert in the teaching of writing. The "W" supervisor will receive a syllabus from all graduate students teaching "W" courses. Normally this supervisor will be the Associate Director of the Writing Center. When he or she is not available, the Head will designate a replacement in consultation with the Director of Freshman English. After a graduate student's first year of teaching "W" courses, full supervisory responsibility will revert to the major advisor.