**Course Description**
This course is a survey of writings by African American authors. Studying fiction, essays, and poetry, we will close read representative texts to identify formal and thematic elements that characterize the African American literary tradition. We will consider how these works exemplify and complicate lived and literary identities. In other words, how do these texts fit into or defy ideas about race, gender, and class on the one hand and classifications of genre, period, and literary style on the other? We will study relationships among these works to uncover how they reflect on, depend on, or revise one another. We will also look for relationships between these works and other art forms, such as blues, jazz, folklore, and visual arts. The goal of this course is to help you engage with African American literature, improving your writing, reading, and critical thinking skills in the process.

**Required Book** (available at the UO Bookstore and the Knight Library reserves desk):

**Course Requirements and Policies**
Reading, participation, and attendance are mandatory. Bring the assigned readings to class and be prepared to discuss them. Your participation grade is based on class discussion, in-class writing and reading, and group work.

Missing class more than twice in the term will result in reduction of your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade for each absence beyond the two permitted. There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes for that day from a classmate and otherwise catch up on any material you have missed.

Assignments must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on the due dates listed below and formatted according to current MLA guidelines (1 inch margins, single-side printed, stapled, correct citation and quotation, and a works cited page). Consult the *MLA Handbook* if you are uncertain of correct format. I will mark late assignments down by 1/3 of a letter grade (B becomes a B-) for each day they are late. No assignments will be accepted more than one week after the due date.

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please meet with me in office hours soon. Please request that the Accessible Education Center (http://aec.uoregon.edu/) send me a letter outlining your approved accommodations.

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Students should acknowledge and document all sources of
information. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, see me.

We will discuss each assignment in detail as it approaches. Please also print and consult the assignment sheet posted on Blackboard.

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close Reading #1 (2-3 pages)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close Reading #2 (4-5 pages)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event Response (2 pages)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**Week One**

T 1/7  
Introduction  
Phillis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America” (1773) (p 219-220)

Th 1/9  
**No Class - Make-up session February 19th (see below)**

**Week Two**

T 1/14  
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, A Slave, Written by Himself* (1845) (p 387-421)  
Assignment Sheet (Blackboard)

Th 1/16  
Douglass, *Narrative* (p 421-452)  
Close Reading Handout (Blackboard)

**Week Three**

T 1/21  
Harriet Jacobs, from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) (p 280-315)  
Passive Voice Handout (Blackboard)

Th 1/23  
**Close Reading #1 Due (2-3 pgs)**

**Week Four**

T 1/28  
Guided Tour of Kara Walker Exhibit  
Meet curator Jessi DiTillio in the lobby of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art on campus at Noon.

Th 1/30  
Paul Laurence Dunbar, all poems (1893-1903) (p 907-927)
Week Five
Th 2/6  Midterm Exam

Week Six
T 2/11 Johnson, *Autobiography* (p 841-883)
Th 2/13 Sterling Brown, all poems (1927-1980) (p 1248-1266)

Week Seven
T 2/18 Langston Hughes, all poems (1921-1965) (p 1291-1311)
Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (1926) (p 1311-1314)
W 2/19 5:30-7pm Prof. Arlene Keizer talk in conjunction with Kara Walker exhibit, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art or PLC 180
Th 2/20 Gwendolyn Brooks, all poems (1945-1981) (p 1625-1649)

Week Eight
T 2/25 Ann Petry, from *The Street* (1946) (p 1504-1516)
Event Response Due (2 pages)
Th 2/27 James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues" (1957) (p 1728-1749)

Week Nine
Sonia Sanchez, “for our lady” (1969) (p 1965)
Th 3/6 Lucille Clifton, all poems (1972-1993) (p 2032-2035)
Close Reading #2 Due (4-5 pgs)

Week Ten
Th 3/13 Final Exam