

## **ENG 360 African American Writers 1870-1920, CRN 17431**

Fall 2013, T/Th 2-3:20pm, 301 Gerlinger

Professor Thorsson

Email: thorsson@uoregon.edu

Office Hours: T/Th 11:30am-1pm and by appointment, 521 PLC

### **Course Description**

In this course, we will study African American writing from a period the writer Charles Chesnutt called "Post-Bellum, Pre-Harlem." As Chesnutt's phrase suggests, some scholars think of this as a low point in African American history, a kind of gap between the ante-bellum era and the Harlem Renaissance. Historians refer to this period as "the Nadir" because of its intense racial repression and violence. The years 1870-1920 were, however, among the most fruitful for African American literary production, rivaling the Harlem Renaissance in scope, significance, and influence in the African American literary tradition. In this course you will engage in literary study, scholarly discussion, and analytical writing about literature. This course thus requires substantial reading and writing and vigorous participation. 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 Readings** - at the UO Bookstore and on reserve at Knight Library or on Blackboard

- Frances E. W. Harper, *Iola Leroy, Or, Shadows Uplifted* (1892), Dover Edition
- Frances E. W. Harper, selected poems (1854-1901)\*
- Sutton Griggs, *Imperium in Imperio* (1899), Modern Library Classics Edition
- Charles Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman and Other Tales* (1899), Duke University Press Edition with Introduction by Richard Brodhead
- W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Oxford World Classics Edition with introduction by Brent Edwards
- Paul Laurence Dunbar, *The Sport of the Gods and Other Essential Writings* (1890-1902), Modern Library Classics Edition
- Close Reading Handout\*
- Poetic Meter Handout\*
- Assignment Sheet\*

\*Available on ENG 360 Blackboard site.

### **Course Requirements and Policies**

Reading, vigorous participation, and attendance are mandatory. Bring the assigned readings to class in hard copy and be prepared to discuss them. Your participation grade is based on class discussion, in-class writing, and group work. Speak up or otherwise participate 10 times during the term and you will get a perfect participation grade.

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 (including 1 inch margins, single-side print, stapled, correct citation and quotation, and works cited). Consult the *MLA Handbook* if you are uncertain of correct MLA format. Late assignments will be marked 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 make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please request that the Accessible Education Center send a letter outlining your approved accommodations. You can find the ACE at: <http://aec.uoregon.edu/>

The University Student Conduct Code ([conduct.uoregon.edu](http://conduct.uoregon.edu)) defines academic misconduct. Students shall not commit or attempt to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, including plagiarism, it is the student's obligation to clarify the question with the professor before committing or attempting to commit the act.

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

**Grading:**

Participation	10%
Close Reading Exercise (3-4 pages)	20%
Film Response (2 pages)	5%
Secondary Source Exercise (3-4 pages)	20%
Paper Proposal (2-3 pages)	15%
Final Paper (7-10 pages)	30%

**Week One**

T 10/1	Introduction
Th 10/3	Frances E. W. Harper, <i>Iola Leroy, Or, Shadows Uplifted</i> (1892), Introduction and Chapters I-IX

**Week Two**

T 10/8	Frances E. W. Harper, <i>Iola Leroy, Or, Shadows Uplifted</i> (1892), Chapters X-XXI Close Reading Handout*
Th 10/10	Frances E. W. Harper, <i>Iola Leroy, Or, Shadows Uplifted</i> (1892), Chapter XXII- Note Assignment Sheet*

**Week Three**

T 10/15	Frances E. W. Harper, selected poems (1854-1901)* Poetic Meter Handout*
---------	--

Th 10/17 Sutton Griggs, *Imperium in Imperio* (1899), Preface, Introduction, pages 3-95

#### **Week Four**

T 10/22 Sutton Griggs, *Imperium in Imperio* (1899), pages 96-177

#### **Close Reading Exercise Due**

Th 10/24 Screening of documentary film *Slavery by Another Name*  
Guest instructor: Bethany Jacobs, PhD student in English

#### **Week Five**

T 10/29 Charles Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman and Other Tales* (1899), Introduction, pages 31-81

#### **Film Response Due**

Th 10/31 Charles Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman and Other Tales* (1899), pages 82-145

#### **Week Six**

T 11/5 Charles Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman and Other Tales* (1899), pages 146-207

Th 11/7 W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Introduction, pages 3-92

#### **Secondary Source Exercise Due**

#### **Week Seven**

T 11/12 W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), pages 93-178

Th 11/14 Paul Laurence Dunbar, *The Sport of the Gods and Other Essential Writings* (1890-1902), General Introduction, Chronology, pages 3-50

#### **Week Eight**

T 11/19 Paper proposal workshop

#### **Paper Proposal Due – bring 2 copies to class**

Th 11/21 Screening of film *Ethnic Notions*  
Guest instructor: Professor Kirby Brown, English Department

#### **Week Nine**

T 11/26 Paul Laurence Dunbar, *The Sport of the Gods and Other Essential Writings* (1890-1902), pages 51-88

Guest instructor: Professor Matt Sandler, Clark Honors College

Th 11/28 No Class (Thanksgiving)

#### **Week Ten**

T 12/3 Paul Laurence Dunbar, *The Sport of the Gods and Other Essential Writings* (1890-1902), pages 297-356

Th 12/5 Paul Laurence Dunbar, *The Sport of the Gods and Other Essential Writings* (1890-1902), pages 357-433

T 12/10 **Final paper due to Prof. Thorsson's office (521 PLC) by 5pm. If you would like your paper back with comments, attach a self-addressed stamped envelope when you turn it in.**